

Thank you for agreeing to complete the South Central Brooklyn United for Progress City Council District 45 candidate questionnaire. Please be sure to familiarize yourself with how our endorsement process works - a candidate must receive $\frac{2}{3}$ of the ranked choice vote in order to win our endorsement. [More details here.](#)

Your answers to these questions will be made available to the public on our website, <http://scbkunitedforprogress.org/>, and will be promoted on our Facebook page and twitter feed.

Answers are due 24 hours prior to your scheduled interview time if you want to be considered for endorsement!

Campaign Information

What is your name? [Farah Louis](#)

What are your preferred pronouns? [She, her, hers](#)

What office are you running for? [City Council](#)

Who is the point of contact for your campaign and what is the best way to get in touch with them? [Debbie Louis](#), Email: FriendsofFarahLouis@gmail.com, Cell: (347) 497-9462

What is your campaign address? [2425 Nostrand Avenue Brooklyn, NY 11210](#)

What is your campaign phone number? [\(347\) 497-9462](#)

What is your campaign email? FriendsofFarahLouis@gmail.com

What is your campaign website? www.FarahLouis.com

Is your campaign on social media? If so, what platform(s) and what are the names? [We utilize this handle for all social media platforms: @FarahNLouis](#)

Campaign Issues

What would you do to improve **health care** as a city council member?

Previously, I spent eight years as a mental health professional and healthcare administrator in Brooklyn. At the time, I was an active 1199 member. Having this as my backdrop, I continue to endeavor to improve health care as a city council member. Black maternal mortality and morbidity is a top priority. East Flatbush has among the highest rate of maternal complications in the city, resulting from racial disparities in healthcare. As Co-Chair of the Women's Caucus and Vice Co-Chair of the Black, Latino, and Asian Caucus, I called for an oversight hearing on Black maternal health and morbidity to hear from affected families, advocates, and the administration on the challenges and practical solutions. Black women who sought medical treatment for pain or symptoms related to their pregnancy have been ignored and dismissed. Currently, I am putting full force behind decreasing these instances and, as a result, I have sponsored and cosponsored legislation to increase reporting, transparency, and accountability while expanding access to doulas and midwives:

- Int 2179 - Increasing access to data on maternal mortality and morbidity.
- Int 2042 - Posting information about midwives online.
- Res 1239 - Making doulas more accessible to individuals with Medicaid and those without health insurance.
- Res 1408 - Accreditation, approval, and operation of midwifery birth centers.
(A.10440/S.8307)

Should I be re-elected, I will continue in this pursuit, along with launching the first Women's Health Clinic in Flatbush. As the first woman to represent the 45th District, I understand the health issues that are specific to women's bodies but that impact the entire community.

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in your district specifically **immigrant rights and access to resources** and what would you do to address them?

The immigrant population in my community faces myriad challenges which include access to resources in the languages they speak, the uncertainty around TPS or temporary protected status and increased deportation rates. 30% of the district have applied for immigration-related support services. We provide DACA related support services in my office and citizenship/visa renewal application support. I support DACA, TPS, Citizenship, expanding and changing the terms of TPS, permanent immigration, Protection of Refugees, Asylees, and other Vulnerable Populations. Additionally, in my capacity as Council Member, I've coordinated judicial workshops to educate the community on the judicial process and civil rights.

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in your district regarding **civil rights and criminal justice** and what would you do to address them?

During my nearly two-year tenure as the Council Member for District 45, I hit the ground running to close our city's disparities. The COVID-19 pandemic is a prime example of how the racial inequities in healthcare, education, housing, justice, and parks devastated our communities. I fought alongside advocates to address the systemic racism and the worsening crises faced by Black and Brown people. We created programs to educate black and brown youth about their history and engaging activities with leaders across the city. Police reform and racial profiling is an apparent and consistent major concern for districts that are similar to the one I represent. It could not have been more obvious with the illustration of domestic terrorism faced by our nation on January 6th, when our country's capital was overrun by terrorists. If it had been people of color running into the capitol building, it would have definitely been a different story. We know this based on the treatment of Black protesters by armed and uniformed officers asserting their right to dignity. Whether they were in different cities around the country or in the capital, they were met with brute force and resistance. I have and will continue to work diligently and cooperatively with our State Legislature, the Governor and the Mayor to push real police reform that ensures accountability and transparency within the NYPD and the CCRCB. With regard to the settlement Breonna Taylor's family received, I spoke out and against the clear bias within the New York Police Department. I spoke out against the curfew implemented in response to peaceful protests during the summer 2020 and I advocated and am a co-sponsor for the chokehold ban in New York City.

Some criminal justice reforms that we must address are mass incarceration, reducing prison population, sentencing reforms, reform for justice-involved youth and the closing of private prisons.

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in your district regarding **public schools and education** and what would you do to address them?

On the broader issue of protecting public school funding: The City, unfortunately, has limited control over more than 40% of funding for our public schools. Part of my job is to ensure my state and federal colleagues who fight for fully-funded NYC public schools have my voice and support in their budget battles.

However, there are some issues, like Fair Student Funding and SAMs, that the City does control and do make a demonstrable difference for students in schools without the same tax base as wealthier districts. One of my fights this year was to ensure that school districts could hire social workers and nurses. Those are part of the larger benefit of the allocation formula that began more than a decade ago and must remain in place to ensure students with greater needs and less means do not find themselves shut out of educational opportunities in the City.

COVID-19 removed the veil that hid many inequities that exist in our City-- the ugliness of one of these inequities, the digital divide, was on full display. I have fought for every student to receive a modern laptop with built-in WIFI; I have fought for the telecomm carriers to provide better plans for parents and students with limited means; and I have advocated for the Department of Education to step-up its support model for students during the pandemic. I will continue to pursue justice for public schools and education.

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in your district regarding **housing** and what would you do to address them?

The biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in my district are access to affordable housing and housing stability. As a council member, I supported the following:

- Res 1484 - extensions of the back end for mortgages and rents

Resolutions such as this one urges the governor to sign legislation that would add, at minimum, a six month extension to the back end of a lease or mortgage. In addition, I was sure to add that this would not penalize or create a balloon payment to the arrears that were accumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic—a global issue that has negatively impacted income, access to resources and maintenance of one's residence. Prior to the pandemic, Brooklyn was already facing large scale development and gentrification that forced many long time New York residents to evacuate their homes. The selling of Brooklyn to those who have historically held wealth, destabilized many. Rents were increased to exorbitant rates and New York City was essentially sold off. I joined the committee on housing and buildings because of this.

In addition to the above, I secured funding to build the first affordable housing development exclusively for seniors in the district. Seniors can now age in place at the BPHN Residence. Currently, I am working with Riseboro on a second senior housing project to combat the displacement of our aging population who live on a fixed income. I will continue to deepen partnerships with housing advocates and organizations to provide application assistance and services to support tenants and homeowners. Housing is a right, and housing stability is my top priority. Everyone in the district deserves to have a place to raise their families that is safe and in livable condition. I will continue to address housing challenges and advocate for access to affordable and safe housing in New York City.

What would you do to improve **transit and street (pedestrian/bicycle/car) safety** for New Yorkers in your district?

During my tenure I voted on transit reform initiatives presented by my colleagues. I would love to partner with community stakeholders to address concerns from constituents to ensure that all needs are met. We need to create clear safety protocols for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. I believe we need proper demarcations for modes of transportation and updated street signs, streetlights and in high density areas enforced traffic safety rules.

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in your district regarding **the environment, including access to, maintenance, development and preservation of parks and other open spaces** and what would you do to address them?

One of my proudest achievements this year was an agreement with the de Blasio Administration and Parks Department to build the first recreation center in Council District 45 at Nostrand Playground. After years of debate and delay in Council District 45, we were able to come together as neighbors to identify this centralized location for youth, adults, and seniors to engage in year-round programming. During our participatory budgeting process, we heard incredible ideas from residents to improve our parks and, in response, we allocated the necessary funding for lighting in addition to other upgrades.

Our parks have been a refuge for families throughout this pandemic. The layoffs were yet another example of the City breaking its promise after the Council passed the FY21 budget. The staff layoffs compromised public health and the safety of our open, green spaces which were no longer regularly monitored or cleaned. Parks staff is vital to maintaining the safety of park goers and for preserving our parks by holding those same park goers accountable, not only for their neighbors but also the wildlife who call these spaces home.

As our students struggled with remote learning, I helped close the digital divide in our schools and sought ways to provide tech support and increase computer literacy among parents. I pushed for equity in parks and recreation and housing stability within our community. I have sponsored legislation to help protect and empower the marginalized populations of our city. We need leadership that will champion inclusion, representation, and equity for all. I am seeking re-election to help restore our community from the pandemic, ensure that our families and economy are in a healthier state, create safe spaces to address social injustice, and nurture the next generation of leaders. Our path to recovery begins with providing support for our frontline and essential workers in addition to bolstering our district's small businesses.

New York City will use **Ranked Choice Voting** for your June primary. How do you feel about this and why?

Ranked Choice Voting is a new way of voting. We want our representatives to be elected with a majority vote, this is good democracy. The challenge is being able to educate everyone in the middle of the pandemic. It is much harder to reach our elderly and most vulnerable populations. If all community partners and stakeholders do their part we will be able to reach everyone.

What other issues do you consider important and how will you address them?

As a legislator, I will continue to enact measures that promote economic, food, and housing security while ensuring fairness in our schools, healthcare institutions, and small businesses are at the forefront. I will work with my colleagues in the city and state to ensure we identify funding that accelerates efforts to end racial and gender disparities in COVID-19 prevention, treatment

and mental health support services. I look forward to continuing efforts to transition from response to recovery as we approach the one-year mark of the COVID-19 pandemic concurrently with the citywide vaccine rollout that is currently in full swing.

If your district had a musical anthem, what would it be and why?

A timely musical anthem would be “*Don’t Stop*” by Jon Batiste. As a community, we’ve endured many challenges within the last year and we sought to band together as a unified front. However, despite disingenuous, racist, biased and partisan actions from people and groups within the community, we did not let their deceit result in our despair; it activated our hope. This song reminds us to exemplify the truth, respect, and the grace we wish for this world.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIntPMYpnfU>

What is your favorite restaurant in your district?

I have several, I can not choose! But I will note that Caribbean restaurants are my favorite and one of my favorite smoothie shops is The Juicy Box.