



Queens Central Democratic Club
Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire 2021
New York City Comptroller

Thank you for applying for the Queens Central Democratic Club (QCDC) endorsement. If you have any questions about this document or the endorsement process, feel free to email us at qcdcny@gmail.com. Please email us the completed questionnaire by Friday, March 5.

Full Name:

1. What is the single most important issue to you as a candidate for elected office? Why?

Our city is in crisis, with half a million people out of work, thousands of small businesses struggling, and so many families facing eviction and hunger. I'm running for Comptroller to secure a just and durable recovery for NYC from the Covid-19 crisis, to rebuild a more equitable economy, and to make sure we are more prepared for future crises.

Even before coronavirus, our democracy was in peril and trust in government was eroding. People doubt that our government will do what it promises, that it will spend our money wisely, that it will tell the truth, that it can serve as a vehicle for people to come together with their neighbors, across lines of difference, to confront our problems and make our life in common better.

The COVID-19 crisis has revealed and exacerbated many flaws in our governing institutions and society. Gaping inequality in the economy, housing, education, health care, and policing has left us fractured, and far from the ideals of equal justice or opportunity.

Our next Comptroller will be in office through a once-in-a-generation test of our city's ability to govern: helping to control and end the COVID-19 crisis, thoughtfully bringing our city back to life, helping millions of struggling families get back on their feet and investing now in a long-term rebuilding, with far great attention to long-neglected issues of equity, sustainability, and resilience, to ensure our city's vibrant future.

I'm running for NYC Comptroller to help our city rise to meet this challenge. The NYC Comptroller's fundamental responsibility is to instill and maintain public confidence in the workings of government. That means:

- Telling the truth about our finances so we are informed to make difficult but necessary fiscal choices that lie ahead (with an eye toward Keynesian solutions, rather than austere ones).
- Making City government work better, and more in sync with our values, by auditing City agencies using new tools and partnerships, improving City contracting and procurement, and engaging communities in strengthening the work of local government.



- Investing the City's pension funds wisely and consistently with our values, to guarantee city workers have the full pensions to which they are entitled, and to help insure a more equal and sustainable future for them, their families, and their neighbors.
- Taking the long-term view on our city by accounting for our future. That means supporting economic policies that help our city thrive more equally, and evaluating and preparing for the major risks facing our city (especially the climate crisis).

The Comptroller's office has the tools and the responsibility to ensure that we are budgeting wisely, investing strategically, governing democratically, and living up to our commitments to each other and to future generations. As both the city's Chief Financial Officer and its Chief Accountability Officer, the Comptroller leads a staff of over 700 employees to oversee the City's finances, audit City agencies, review City contracts for integrity and accountability, underwrite municipal bonds to invest in the city's physical and fiscal future, enforce prevailing wage and living wage laws, and serve as a fiduciary to the City's five public pension funds.

The tools of this office can and must be put to work to help NYC recover from one of its most daunting crises, and to help build a better, fairer, more resilient city that is more prepared for coming crises -- and especially the climate crisis, which we can all see coming, so there's no excuse not to get ready.

2. How would you use this position differently from your predecessor?

Comptroller Scott Stringer has done many good things during his tenure, including setting New York City's pensions funds on the path to divesting from fossil fuels while preserving high returns through responsible fiduciary investing. Here are several ways in which I would strengthen, improve upon, and transform the work of the office:

- **More strategic and values-driven audits:** I'll make New York City government work better through more strategic use of the Comptroller's Audit Bureau, using first-rate data analytics, stakeholder engagement, whistleblower reports, in-depth auditing, and research to identify shortcomings and solutions. I won't shy away from asking tough questions about our City's operations that we need to answer in order to improve them, from the NYPD to NYCHA to the Department of Homeless Services. I've set out plans to audit for waste and fraud, performance, equity, sustainability, and accessibility. And I won't let the audits sit on shelves (or websites) gathering (virtual) dust. Through strategic action, by involving New Yorkers in the audit work, by partnering with stakeholders working for change, Brad will fight to make sure that City Hall makes the changes needed. <https://www.landerfornyc.com/audits>
- **Raising the floor for NYC's workers:** I will expand the Comptroller's Bureau of Labor Law to ensure companies pay workers a living wage, raise the floor for workers in the gig economy, establish protections for essential workers, and support apprenticeship and job training programs, especially for young people of color who have lost jobs at high rates during the pandemic. As part of this effort, I will publish an annual "Exploitative Employers Wall of Shame,"



modeled on the Public Advocate's "Worst Landlords List," to shine a spotlight on employers who abuse their workers through wage theft, dangerous working conditions, abusive scheduling, and unfair labor practices, to make sure we use all our tools to win better conditions for New York City's workers: <http://bit.ly/worstemployers>.

3. Will you pledge not to take any campaign contributions from for-profit corporations, corporate PACs, real estate developers, corporate lobbyists, and professional landlords?

Yes, I am the only candidate currently in the race who has committed not to take contributions from for-profit real estate developers or large rental property owners (as well as contributions from private equity or hedge fund managers, fossil fuel executives, or for-profit lobbyists). I am running a grassroots campaign, fueled by small-dollar individual contributions from regular New Yorkers. As of the January 11th filing, our campaign has raised \$816,593 from 4,613 contributors -- more than twice as many contributors as any other candidate in the race -- with support from neighborhoods in every borough. With matching funds included, we have raised a total of \$3.7 million and have a balance of \$3.3 million.

4. Do you support reducing the NYPD budget? How would you work with the Mayor and City Council to reflect your position?

Yes. I strongly believe that we can keep our communities safe while spending less on policing, and more on smarter, fairer, more effective ways to achieve public safety. Last year I voted no on the City budget because it did not meaningfully reduce the NYPD, or begin to transform how we achieve public safety in New York City. This year, sadly, we appear to be on the same course. Mayor de Blasio's budget proposes to cut CUNY, youth services, arts and cultural support, and sanitation by tens of millions of dollars -- but to increase the NYPD budget by nearly \$200 million.

We can and must transform how we achieve public safety in New York City, so that we can keep all New Yorkers safe, reduce overreliance on policing, end abusive and racially discriminatory policing, and better support all communities to thrive. I have been working on police reform for much of the past decade, generally following the leadership of Communities United for Police Reform, and often working in partnership with Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, including passage of the Community Safety Act to establish the NYPD Inspector General, prohibit racial profiling, and combat discriminatory stop-and-frisk.

I was the first City Council Member to call for an NYPD hiring freeze in April 2020, believing we should not be hiring new officers if we were not hiring new teachers. I approached last year's budget with simple principles in mind: Divest at least \$1 billion from policing to preserve as much investment as we possibly could in education, youth, and social services. Prioritize public health to get us through the pandemic. Invest in a just recovery. And take a smart, long-term approach to our city's economic and fiscal health. I voted no on the FY21 budget because it did not come close to meeting those principles.



We need to move away from having policing as the primary response for every problem, from homelessness to mental health to gender-based violence to traffic safety, and, instead, must invest in the resources that do better to keep all communities safe. Earlier this year, I released a campaign platform to transform traffic safety, outlining a model that would remove the NYPD from routine traffic enforcement, and instead move to a data-driven, problem-solving approach that reduces reckless driving in order to prevent crashes and save lives. I believe it can be a model for how we transform public safety in New York City to keep our communities safe with less policing.

<https://www.landerfornyc.com/traffic-safety>

5. What is your plan to address the massive deficit crisis the City is facing?

We must continue to fight for a fair federal stimulus package, because only the federal government has the power to borrow in times of crisis without the constraints that states and cities have to balance their budgets. I am heartened to see that the current federal relief package includes state and local COVID-19 fiscal relief, a bailout for mass transit including the MTA, support for the costs of public education during the pandemic, expanded unemployment and rent assistance, fund our public hospitals, and a renewed PPP program for small businesses. The \$4 billion that we anticipate from the American Rescue Plan to help address New York City's budget gap will go a long way to helping us address the City's budget deficit without needing to resort to layoffs, short-term borrowing, or cuts to our social safety net.

However, we must still take smart steps at the City level to confront budget deficits in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis, in a way that achieve budget balance without shredding the social safety net, and while continuing to invest strongly in our city's future, and more equal, thriving:

- **End 421-a:** New York City is currently giving away \$1.7 billion annually to for-profit, private developers for a 35-year property tax break that produces overwhelmingly market-rate housing, and requires no units cheap enough to help homeless New Yorkers get off the streets. It's time to end it.
- **Use "focused attrition"** to thoughtfully phase out programs: This year, the City will rightly only replace 1 City worker for every 3 who leave, outside of core health and essential services. In future years, we should use "focused attrition" through which Commissioners would identify programs that can be phased out, in order to invest in more strategic areas.
- **Reform economic development programs to end outdated tax breaks** and instead grow the economy through sustainable innovation.
- **Reduce NYPD spending**, as outlined above.
- **Reduce settlement payouts through systemic reform:** The City pays out tens of millions of dollars each year for police misconduct and traffic crashes caused by City drivers. Through transparency and systemic reform, we can prevent future harms and reduce payouts.



- Improve capital projects management: 50% of the City's capital projects go over budget, some by hundreds of millions of dollars. I've outlined a plan to spend smarter on infrastructure here: <https://www.landerfornyc.com/infrastructure>
- **Rainy Day Fund:** I am proposing legislation that would requires the City to begin putting money in a Rainy Day Fun as the economy improves, that could only be used in future downturns.

Beyond just looking at areas to cut, Keynesian economics instructs us to utilize long-term debt to invest in infrastructure, public hospitals, affordable housing, economic development and job creation (e.g. in sustainable urban innovation, technology, mobility, manufacturing the care economy, etc), and in climate resilience through a green new deal. New York City has substantial room to increase our Capital Budget by several billion dollars, while still keeping debt service below the 15% of revenues threshold. I led the effort this spring to restore cuts to the City's capital budget, which resulted in \$466 million for supportive and affordable housing.

NYC's capital budget dollars offer the opportunity to create good jobs now, and sustainable, resilient infrastructure for a better future. We must ensure they are used as effectively as possible. New York City cannot continue with years-long delays, wasting hundreds of millions of dollars on inefficient and ineffective capital projects management. I will fight hard to implement reforms and keep City agencies accountable to deliver more, better infrastructure, on-time and on-budget. Overhauling the City's planning, design, procurement and construction process will deliver the critical infrastructure New York city needs to recover from the COVID-19 crises equitably, create good jobs for New Yorkers, make our communities healthier, mitigate climate change, and create a stronger future for generations to come.

6. Do you support taxing millionaires and billionaires? What specific tax policy changes would you call on the New York State legislature and the Governor to implement in order to increase City revenue?

Yes, I believe we must fight for progressive revenue in Albany, because the State Legislature has the power to tax billionaires, close the carried interest loophole for private equity income, explore a stock transfer tax, impose a pied-a-terre tax, and/or restore the commuter tax. All of these progressive revenue strategies are off-limits to New York City without action by the State Legislature. Those resources could help to fill the State's budget gap, and allow it to restore cuts in foundation aid, public education support, and funding for health and human services to cities, including New York City.

7. The New York City Pension Fund is in part funded through investment in oil and gas companies, and pipeline manufacturers. Do you support divesting in fossil fuels? If so, how much divestment would you target by the end of your term in 2025? What are other types of assets that the City currently holds that would you divest from?



Yes, I support the responsible divestment of \$4 billion of New York City's pension funds from fossil fuels, and commit to achieving this by the targeted timeline of 2025, or earlier if possible. Beginning in 2014, I joined advocates and exemplars (including the Rockefeller Brothers Fund) in pushing Comptroller Scott Stringer to divest from fossils -- and I was thrilled with the announcement this fall that a \$4 billion divestment is underway. This past spring, in partnership with the Stop the Money Pipeline, 350.org and New York Communities for Change, I introduced a resolution in the City Council calling on banks, asset managers, and insurers to stop lending to, investing in, and insuring the fossil fuel industry.

I am running for New York City Comptroller in large measure to continue this work. The Comptroller is responsible for taking the long-term view on our city, evaluating the risks we face, and making sure we do all we can to be resilient in light of those risks. The climate crisis is quite clearly the greatest long-term risk we face. So it must be at the top of the Comptroller's priorities. That's why our ["Accounting for Our Future: Confronting the Climate Crisis"](#) was [the first platform we released](#) as part of our campaign:

- As fiduciary of the City's five pension funds, I will complete responsible divestment from oil, gas, and coal corporations, join and lead strategic alliances of shareholders to compel bold climate action by publicly-traded corporations (utilities, banks, car and technology companies), help address financing gaps, and provide investment for the transition to clean energy.
- As the city's chief fiscal officer, I will assess the financial risks that the climate crisis poses for our city's future, and use that analysis to transform the city's spending, contracting, banking, and infrastructure to mitigate climate risk and create economic opportunities. We are currently developing an innovative proposal to use City capital financing to install rooftop solar on buildings across New York City (paying a rent to building owners), establishing a substantial municipally-owned clean energy utility, and dramatically scaling up solar energy in NYC.
- As the city's chief accountability officer, I will establish a new, dedicated audit team to focus on agency sustainability and environmental justice performance, hold public- and private-sector actors to NYC's ambitious clean energy targets, and bird-dog the city's oft-neglected investments in coastal resilience and climate readiness.
- As an innovator in public engagement, I will work in partnership with NYC's communities to build democratic and equitable solutions from the ground up, and offer accessible ways for New Yorkers of all backgrounds to participate in the transition to a sustainable economy. We will develop a first-of-its kind interactive ["climate dashboard"](#) to track our City's progress toward meeting our climate goals (including the implementation of the Climate Mobilization Act and the status of climate resiliency infrastructure to protect our coasts and frontline communities).

Beyond fossil fuel divestment, to consider ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) goals, I will undertake an inclusive and proactive process to produce a "Strategic Plan for Responsible Fiduciary Investing." Together with fund trustees, I will design a process through which members of the funds will



engage with stakeholders to discuss other potential areas for action (not only divestment, but also shareholder activism, proxy resolutions, and economically targeted investments), in areas including treatment of workers, diversity on boards and senior management, affordable housing, and investing in New York City's communities.

8. How would you leverage the City's economic power and priorities to encourage an agenda of socioeconomic justice?

I am running for Comptroller to achieve a just recovery, build a more equitable economy, and address the racial and economic disparities we have seen all-too-clearly during this crisis. Work for racial and economic justice has been a hallmark of my time in public service. Legislation that I've passed helped fast food workers win a living wage, paid sick leave, stable schedules, and protection from unfair firings; Uber & Lyft drivers to achieve a groundbreaking minimum wage raising their pay an average of \$5000 per year; helped car wash workers win safer and better jobs; and protected freelancers from wage theft through the Freelance Isn't Free Act.

The City has many economic levers, and the Comptroller's office has many tools, to promote an agenda of socioeconomic justice:

- **Raising the floor for NYC's workers:** I will expand the Comptroller's Bureau of Labor Law to ensure companies pay workers a living wage, raise the floor for workers in the gig economy, establish protections for essential workers, and support apprenticeship and job training programs, especially for young people of color who have lost jobs at high rates during the pandemic. As part of this effort, I will publish an annual "Exploitative Employers Wall of Shame," modeled on the Public Advocate's "Worst Landlords List," to shine a spotlight on employers who abuse their workers through wage theft, dangerous working conditions, abusive scheduling, and unfair labor practices, to make sure we use all our tools to win better conditions for New York City's workers: <http://bit.ly/worstemployers>.
- **Investing smarter in our infrastructure** can play a vital role in a just recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. Just as the New Deal helped New York City recover from the Great Depression, investing now in our city's future can create tens of thousands of good jobs, promote health in the hardest-hit neighborhoods, support new business creation and M/WBEs, and provide a platform for shared economic prosperity in the years ahead: <https://www.landerfornyc.com/infrastructure>
- **Smarter economic development:** Instead of giving away billions to corporations whose promises for jobs regularly fall short, we should prioritize economic development investments in public infrastructure and programs that support sustainable innovation and opportunity in the fields of the future -- technology, clean energy, green manufacturing, arts and culture, and the care economy -- with commitments to sustainable business practices, good living wage jobs, apprenticeship programs, and local hiring requirements. As Comptroller, Brad will fight to ensure that every single dollar the City spends is used wisely, cracking down on bloated



corporate giveaways and redirecting that spending into bold investments that will ensure a just and durable recovery.

- **Reviving arts and culture:** NYC's vibrant creative sector is the soul of our city and a key driver of our economy. But jobs in arts, entertainment, and recreation shrunk by 64 percent in 2020, the greatest decrease in any industry in NYC. This drastic reduction of the sector's workforce has severe implications for the city as a whole, given that it employs nearly 300,000 people, and constitutes \$110 billion of the city's economic activity, nearly 13% of the city's total economic output. Brad will fight for a New Deal-style program to invest in the arts, paid work for artists in public infrastructure projects, a minimum wage for freelancers (many of whom are artists), ongoing relief for unemployed workers, and assistance to help Broadway and arts organizations get back on their feet.
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 - **Auditing for Equity:** As outlined in my audits platform, I plan to produce Equity Audits to identify and reduce disparities across race, gender and ethnicity citywide, in how our city agencies deliver services, pay and treat their workers, and hire contractors. I will also soon be releasing a detailed plan for producing these equity audits which will include: assessments of ACCO's compliance with and implementation of existing M/WBE policies and laws; RFP evaluation criteria of prior bids with M/WBE participation goals; racial/gender demographics of evaluation committees; and frequency of training for ACCOs, contract managers, and other staff. In addition, I will rigorously audit the City's provision and delivery of services to root out racial disparities with respect to the City's responses to quality of life complaints, provision of housing and shelter, economic and workforce development services, health and mental wellness disparities, and the repair and maintenance needs of essential infrastructure in communities of color citywide.
9. How will you use your role as sole trustee of the NYC Employees Retirement System to vote shares and influence corporate actions?

Unlike the New York State Comptroller, the City Comptroller is not the sole trustee for NYCERS or the City's other pension fund. In addition to the Comptroller and the Mayor, the members of the funds are represented by trustees elected by their unions, who make decisions together, including on shareholder actions.

The Comptroller does have a key role to play, however, since the Comptroller's Bureau of Asset Management provides staffing for all five pension funds, and is therefore responsible for developing and proposing strategies to bring pension fund investments more in line with the values of the workers whose money they hold.

To achieve better ESG integration and adopt more coherent and effective strategies, I will undertake an inclusive and proactive process to produce a "Strategic Plan for Responsible Fiduciary Investing." Together with fund trustees, I will design a process through which fund members can engage with a range of stakeholders (including labor unions representing workers at companies the funds are invested in, environmental advocates, etc) . Through that process, I will prioritize shareholder actions to engage



companies we invest in to promote change and nurture success by adopting more inclusive, innovative, and sustainable business practices consistent with their thriving. I will build on the work by Comptroller Stringer to use the City's position as a major institutional investor to work together with peers to push corporations to implement stronger ESG practices.

With respect to boardroom diversity, I will build on the work of the Boardroom Accountability Project, including the newest initiative to apply the "Rooney Rule" to require that women and people of color are welcomed in the door and considered for every open director seat as well as for the job of CEO. I will also consider helping investee companies recruit BIPOC and women board members, so many of whom are New York City residents.

Given NYC pension funds represent the money of union workers, it is especially appropriate to hold companies accountable for the way they treat their workforce. As Comptroller, I will fight for workers' rights and for the inclusion of workers representation in boardrooms, which has been shown to increase responsible capital formation. Finally, I will explore funds' requirements to report corporate political spending to shareholders.

10. In January 2021, New York City announced intentions to terminate business contracts with Donald Trump after the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. How will you improve City procurement and contracting to ensure the City does not do further business with fascist right-wing interests?

During my time in the City Council, I have repeatedly exposed inefficiencies and injustices in City government and led campaigns to fix them. My hard-hitting reports on schools, housing, traffic safety, infrastructure and capital projects have won tangible results.

I will bring this aggressive watchdog approach to the Comptroller's office. As New York City Comptroller—our city's chief government watchdog—I will make our city's government work better, and more in sync with our shared values. Through sharp, honest, data-driven, and transparent audits, I will root out waste, fraud, and abuse, target programs that aren't meeting our goals, and show what's needed to fix them.

I will use first-rate data analytics, stakeholder engagement, whistleblower reports, in-depth auditing, and research to identify shortcomings and solutions. I won't shy away from asking tough questions about our City's operations that we need to answer in order to improve them, from which agencies are wasting money to whether there are private interests that don't share our values profiting from public money.

11. What is your plan to increase women and minority-owned business representation and investment in City procurement and contracting?

If elected Comptroller of New York City, I will undertake the following actions to ensure more opportunities for M/WBEs:



- Provide more financial support and opportunities to M/WBEs through loans, bonds, and direct investment.
- Provide start-up capital and small business loans to MWBE and Black- and Brown-owned businesses.
- Support the creation of a separate loan and bond program for M/WBEs to expand and grow.
- Grow M/WBE business capacity by ensuring contractors are paid on-time and advocating for the expansion of support and mentorship programs:
- Expand M/WBE mentorship and support programs
- Push for more accountability of the City's progress of supporting M/WBEs

12. How will you use your position as Comptroller to implement a small business recovery plan?

NYC's small businesses are the lifeblood of our neighborhoods and a key source of jobs and economic activity. Thousands have already closed, and many more are on the brink. Federal aid has been distributed unevenly, with hard hit neighborhoods of color receiving far less access to loans and grants. The high costs of commercial rents, which have gone up by 50% on average over the last decade, has been one of the biggest challenges facing small businesses, even before the pandemic. I am working to create a [Small Business Recovery Lease program](#) to address past arrears, enact commercial rent control, pass a vacancy tax, and provide access to capital to help small businesses and M/WBEs recover and thrive.

13. What economic policies do you support to address the affordable housing and homelessness crisis in New York City?

Building on New York City's robust history of "social housing" -- limited and shared-equity cooperatives (many built by unions), non-profit affordable and supportive housing, community land trusts -- I have proposed an ambitious plan to create and preserve social housing at a range of affordability levels, with the goal of doubling the citywide footprint of housing that will remain permanently insulated from the speculation of the real estate market. I recently released a comprehensive social housing platform, which called for requiring that all city-owned land that is disposed for housing go to social housing entities, that city subsidies for housing development be distributed equally between for-profit developers and non-profit ones (currently it is 80% to for-profits), and that we grow the footprint of social housing from 10% of the city's housing market now (mostly NYCHA) to 20% (with a more robust mix of community-land trusts, limited equity cooperatives, and nonprofit rental and supportive housing) in the years to come. At the same time, we must preserve every unit of social housing we have, which will especially require investing in NYCHA buildings before they deteriorate to the point where they cannot be saved, and preserving public ownership.

The current private-sector model of developing affordable housing has done far too little to produce units affordable to very low-income, extremely low-income, and formerly homeless New Yorkers who



need it the most. The families at 0-50% of AMI make up some of our city's most essential workers: home health aides, retail workers, building cleaners, and childcare providers. These workers have kept New Yorkers safe during the COVID-19 crisis and continue to power our economy, but have the fewest options for safe, quality, and affordable housing. They are also most likely to be rent-burdened, doubled up, or living in more dilapidated conditions. Social housing, developed and managed not by private actors motivated by profit -- but by non-profit, cooperative, or government entities focused on protecting a public good -- provides an opportunity for the city to create hundreds of thousands of units for very low-income, extremely low-income, and formerly homeless New Yorkers.

For years, together with Councilmember Antonio Reynoso and the Thriving Communities Coalition, I have been one of the leading voices for comprehensive citywide planning, with a strong role for communities, and grounded in values of equity, affordability, and sustainability. A comprehensive citywide plan would guide the creation of new affordable, supportive, and social housing, shelters, schools, social services, and infrastructure in ways that minimize displacement risks and maximize access to opportunity. This long-term strategic vision, informed by real public input, would help ensure fair distribution of development and resources throughout the city and prioritize resiliency, fairness, equity, and access to permanently affordable housing. In my own backyard, I have worked to model this approach, in our extensive, decade-long community planning for Gowanus, and in welcoming homeless shelters, supportive, and affordable housing to our district.

14. The future of Rikers Island will have tremendous social and economic impacts on the city, what is your position on what should be done with Rikers Island?

I support the Renewable Rikers proposal to transform the island into a hub for environmental sustainability and green jobs. As the city moves forward with its plan to close Rikers Island, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reimagine the use of this 400-acre site. There is a significant opportunity to build the infrastructure of our future: to generate and store clean energy, build green infrastructure and create new green jobs, especially for the New Yorkers who have suffered harm as the result of Rikers Correctional Center. As Comptroller, Brad will support the vision of Renewable Rikers to advance a just transition, create high-quality green jobs, reduce the environmental burden on the South Bronx and surrounding communities, and move us towards our goals of climate justice.

15. How would you use your position as Comptroller to address increasing income inequality within New York City?

After the fiscal crises of the 1970s, 9/11, and the Great Recession, NYC's leaders handed over public land, subsidies, and tax breaks to the private sector for too little in return. I will take a different approach -- one that invests in public infrastructure as a platform for shared prosperity. By making investments in the green energy, housing, and infrastructure we need for the future, we can create jobs in the present and lay a foundation for a more resilient future. By providing rent relief along with stable, long-term leases we can keep people in their homes and enable small businesses to thrive. By supporting the arts, our public health system, and universal child care, we can sustain a care economy that supports all of us. As Comptroller, I will ensure we are budgeting wisely and investing strategically to rebuild an economy that works for all New Yorkers.



Throughout my time in the City Council, I have fought successfully for good jobs, fair pay, and workplace protections, particularly in sectors like ridesharing, fast food, car washes, and delivery workers which predominantly employ immigrants and people of color. I will use the tools of the Comptroller's office to ensure companies pay workers a living wage, [hold employers accountable when they abuse workers' rights](#) through a new "Exploitative Employers Wall of Shame" (modeled on the Public Advocate's Worst Landlords List), raise the floor for workers in the gig economy, advocate for protections for essential workers, and support local hiring, apprenticeship, and job training programs, especially for people of color who have lost jobs at high rates during the pandemic.

Where appropriate, I will use the office as an organizing vehicle for advocates, as I have done my entire career in public service, and produce audits, draft reports, and release data in partnership with organizers running campaigns centered on racial, social, and economic justice. To ensure that we are accountable to the needs of the people, my office will continue to center the voices of our most vulnerable community members by inviting them to participate in government decision-making with us.

16. What is your position on the BDS movement?

As someone who strongly supports Israel's existence as a Jewish and democratic state, I am also deeply committed to the human rights and self-determination of the Palestinian people. Ending the occupation is necessary first and foremost to end the egregious harms that Palestinians face on a daily basis, and also to make it possible for Israel to live up to its founding values. While I do not support BDS, I support the right of individuals and organizations to pursue nonviolent strategies, including boycott and divestment, to achieve justice for Palestinians, and would not use my office to punish or smear individuals or organizations who do so.

17. How will you use your position to initiate a city-wide conversation about race and racial injustice?

The job of New York City Comptroller should be "accounting for our values" (especially the oft-stated but too-rarely-honored value of racial justice) and "accounting for our future" (which requires a laser-focus on climate justice, workers' justice, immigrant justice, and racial justice, still). I therefore plan to expand the office's audit bureau, the largest division of the comptroller's office, to conduct audits focused on equity specifically, including diversity and inclusion in City agencies including the Comptroller's office and its management of City pension funds. This audits team will focus specifically on auditing to reduce disparities across race, gender and ethnicity citywide, including in how our city agencies deliver services, treat their workers, and hire contractors to prioritize M/WBEs and provide them with the support they need to navigate the City's contracting and procurement process.



In addition, through the Comptroller's Asset Management Bureau, I will focus specifically on increasing boardroom diversity building on the work of the Boardroom Accountability Project, as well as increasing the diversity of the pension funds' managers by building on the Comptroller's Emerging Manager program, which seeks to foster the growth and development of successful managers with whom the Systems invest, including M/WBE fund managers that typically do not have access to large institutional investors.

At a broader level, the work of advancing shared accountability for racial justice cannot be done through individual audits, or by specific actions in the Comptroller's office, but most -- as the question implies -- involve an honest reckoning and citywide conversation about racial injustice. I have worked to convene and be part of these conversations throughout my time in the City Council, and to push for action after them. I have been a leader and partner in the movement to combat school segregation, both in my own district (Brooklyn's Community School District 15) and citywide; our process in District 15 was a model of thoughtful, honest, hard conversations about systemic racism that led to real and meaningful change. After the killings of Philando Castile and Alton Sperling, and on too many other occasions, I teamed up with the Brooklyn Movement Center and then-Council Member Jumaane Williams for a conversation about racial justice and policing in my largely-white district.

In the Comptroller's office, I would continue to innovate around public engagement on racial justice, using "citizen juries" for equity audits that bring stakeholders together for hard conversations, and help to win real change, so that New York City can rise to a vibrant future as a genuinely inclusive multiracial democracy. That path is not only the morally right one, but also the one that hold the brightest future for our city as a whole.

18. When filling out your ranked choice ballot, which candidate will you rank second and why?

If the election were held today, I would rank Reshma Patel second. I know Reshma through her work on the board of Chhaya Community Development Corporation, which serves South Asian and immigrant communities in Queens, and with whom I have had the honor to work on affordable housing and other issues, as well as through her activism with Democratic political clubs on Manhattan's East Side. I have been impressed with her experience, knowledge, leadership, and the progressive values and vision she brings to the race.