



Queens Central Democratic Club
Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire 2021
New York City Council District 29

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 qcdcnyc@gmail.com. Please email us the completed questionnaire by Friday, March 12.

Full Name: David Aronov

1. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a large number of businesses closed their storefronts in our district. As Council Member for CD29, what is your plan to bring back businesses to our storefronts? Additionally, how do you plan to support the storefronts that already exist?

Small businesses are the backbone and lifeblood of our city's economy. We need rent relief, less fines for small businesses, an expansion of the Visiting Inspector Program to educate small businesses about regulations, and increased language access. We need to level the playing field between e-commerce and our local businesses. During this campaign, I've met with small business owners in every part of the district to hear their struggles and frustrations. I also organized a press conference on the steps of Queens Borough Hall with local small business owners who were getting no support from the city or state government. I am a supporter of the Small Business Jobs Survival Act to help bring our businesses back and ensure our current ones can stay open. If elected, I will hire a staff member to serve as a small business liaison and regularly host small business visits and roundtables to address any issues the small business community may face.

2. The Mayor and DOE Chancellor just announced that they will be disbanding the gifted and talented program in NYC Public Schools. Do you agree with this cut? Why or why not?

No, I don't agree with this cut. The G&T program should be expanded to provide more opportunities for our students to excel. We should have the availability of rigorous and accelerated education in our public schools for students who want to participate.

3. We have seen our neighbors suffer from food insecurity unlike any other point in recent memory. How will you work with NYC to provide emergency food services to our neighbors (particularly seniors) and support to our food pantries such as Masbia, Queens Community House, and Commonpoint Queens?

I was proud to partner with local food pantries during the height of the pandemic last spring to pack groceries, distribute food, and deliver meals to our neighbors in need. I will work in the Council to allocate increased funding to our food pantries to meet the demand and make sure we address food insecurity. I will also work to expand Meals on Wheels for our seniors and expand language access services to our food pantries.



4. We have a couple of citywide races coming up - if a citywide candidate wanted to see some of the best food and shops CD29 had to offer, where would you take them on a tour?

I would definitely take them to Dani's Pizza in Kew Gardens, show them the commercial corridor of 108 street for Middle Eastern/Eastern European specialty foods, take them shopping on Austin Street, and take them to Taste of Samarkand for Bukharian food on Woodhaven Blvd. There's so much to see and do in the district, but those are just a few stops.

5. Business is a lifeblood to any community, and that also translates to jobs. If a major commercial business (i.e. Target or Key Food) wanted to come and open shop in CD29, what requirements would you ask of them in order to bridge them into our community?

If a major commercial business wanted to open up in the district, I would ask how they would ensure to hire local, hire union, and what incentives would come back to the community overall?

6. In your view, what are the biggest criminal justice concerns in CD29? What changes, if any, need to be made, and how?

The city as a whole is experiencing a rise in crime right now. We need to keep our communities safe while also ensuring reform to rebuild trust with the NYPD. Some reforms that I would propose are:

- An elected Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) to increase accountability
 - Residency requirement for new NYPD recruits – a recent report said that a majority of uniformed officers don't live in the five boroughs. This needs to change.
 - Reimagining community policing – the current NCO program often has more police officers in attendance than members of the public. It's a waste of resources and overtime funds. We need increase participation from the public.
 - The Police Commissioner should go through a confirmation process in the City Council once the mayor nominates.
7. Forest Hills Hospital provides front line, life saving work on a daily basis, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. What reforms need to be implemented for our healthcare workers, and what recommendations would you provide to help streamline vaccine distributions?

Our healthcare workers have experienced a year like never before. We need to implement legislative policies such as mandatory minimum staffing, an expansion of primary health care providers, as well as uniform patient care standards. My campaign has helped over 120 people in the district receive a vaccine appointment. We need a NYC Vaccine Corps based on the city's 2020 census model to engage community-based organizations and serve as trusted messengers. While vaccine distribution needs to improve, we also need to make sure communities who are hesitant to take the vaccine know that it is safe and effective. Every neighborhood should have a vaccination site, so no one has to travel far, especially seniors. I am currently proposing Forest Hills Stadium to serve as a mass vaccination site.



8. CD29 has a large senior population, and Queens as a whole has one of the fastest growing senior populations in NYC. How would you work with the Department for the Aging to provide more resources to our district and support our seniors?

Our seniors deserve to live and age in dignity. I will work to fully fund our senior centers, overhaul the Access-A-Ride program, support a property tax freeze program for homeowners aged 65+, work with aging apartment buildings to ensure ADA-accessibility, create a one-stop-shop for seniors to apply for services and reduce the burden on recertifying for benefits too frequently, and have a dedicated staff person from the Dept. for the Aging at every senior center for ease of access to services.

9. According to the Bowery Mission, there are nearly 80,000 homeless individuals in NYC, with over 60,000 of those individuals utilizing a public shelter and 4,000 that live on the street. How would you as a Council Member help stem the tide of homelessness in New York City?

Our city is experiencing an affordability crisis. Rents keep going up, rent regulated apartments continue to disappear, wages are stagnant, and the number of people experiencing homelessness has been increasing since the 1980s. Throwing more money at ideas that don't work will not solve the problem such as housing homeless individuals in hotels. We need real investment in affordable housing and to fix how the Area Median Income (AMI) is calculated for NYC to ensure truly affordable housing units. Every New Yorker should have the right to a safe, stable, and affordable place to live. If elected, I will work with community leaders and stakeholders to have an active voice in any city developed housing plan, increase the number of senior affordable housing units in the district, and design a proactive housing system that prioritizes the most at-risk families for affordable housing units in order to prevent the perpetuation of the homelessness cycle in NYC.

10. Our district is one of the few in Queens without a homeless shelter. What are your feelings on homeless shelters to address NYC's growing number of homeless individuals? Should a shelter be developed in this area?

Homeless shelters are a temporary fix to a crisis that requires a long-term solution. I don't agree with building additional homeless shelters. We should be working to curb homelessness by building supportive housing and more affordable housing. Homeless individuals need supportive services such as case management, workforce development, and mental health services. We should adopt a Housing First Model which has been proven to reduce homelessness.

11. Our community boards are considered the first line of local government interaction. Similarly, the Council Member has a say in nominating community board members. If elected, how would you work with our community boards and strengthen them?

I'll work with the community boards to ensure the diversity of our neighborhoods are accurately represented on the board, while also involving community board members more into the decision-making process for local projects. Too often, community board members feel like they don't have a voice and that needs to change.



12. Bike lanes were installed along Queens Boulevard as part of Vision Zero, resulting in the removal of parking spots. Are you in favor of extending bike lanes along Queens Boulevard?

The current bike lane design on Queens Boulevard must go back to the drawing board. It's not safe for pedestrians, cyclists, or vehicles. There must be adequate community feedback to decide how to move forward in the project. If there is a plan that works for cyclists, small business owners, pedestrians, and the community at large, then I will be in favor.

13. The City Council reviews certain parts of the ULURP process, including housing and urban renewal plans and zoning map changes. What are the factors that would lead you to go against the recommendations of the local community board in the ULURP process? How do you view the tradeoffs between the affordable housing that new construction can bring against the impact of potential overdevelopment?

Any potential development in the district should have adequate community feedback. I pledge to work with the local community board to come to an agreement on how to move forward. Ideally, any rezoning project should be adding good-paying union jobs, real affordable housing, senior housing, while taking into consideration the number of school seats we have as well as transportation infrastructure. Any new construction of affordable housing has to be looked at on a case by case basis to evaluate how to limit overdevelopment. Greater housing and population density in the district will make sense only if the infrastructure for schools and transit is expanded. Our schools and transit system are overcrowded, and with greater population density we need to ensure we can keep up across the board.

14. What is your long-term plan for the Kew Gardens jail?

Keeping our community safe during these difficult times is a priority. At a time when our City is running a deficit, we cannot afford to spend upwards of \$10 billion on the construction of borough-based jails. The construction of new jails will not fix the root problems they are trying to solve, and will continue the culture of incarceration that breaks apart communities while costing the city millions in recidivism.

We need to use existing facilities, and focus our resources and efforts on where the most effective strategy for change lies: rehabilitation and re-entry. We can keep our communities safe and invest in critical resources at the same time such as healthcare, homeless services, youth development, and workforce development.

15. What are your three priority budget items for our Council district?

The top three budget items would be building a new middle school, funding the Queensway project, and opening a new senior center.

16. How would you propose closing the City's budget gap?

The City is about to get a big bailout from the federal government, but we must ensure that we maximize efficiency across all city agencies to reduce spending where we can. I am also in favor of



several State proposals to raise revenue such as the pied-a-terre tax, legalization of marijuana, wealth tax, and legalization of downstate sports betting.

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

I will work with our schools, nonprofit organizations, and local community boards to form a racial equity taskforce in the district. This will involve town halls, regular meetings, responding to hate-fueled attacks, empowering MWBEs, partnering with agencies such as the Commission on Human Rights, and more. This will be an effort to bridge to every demographic in the district.

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

I don't know as of yet.