



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

Full Name: Lynn Schulman

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?

I will work with our small business community, who are the backbone of our economy, to ensure that they can continue to afford skyrocketing commercial rents by providing incentives for landlords to re-negotiate leases as a result of the pandemic.

I will organize a local small business task force to address the issue of burdensome regulations that are crippling our economy, and also work with small businesses on ideas of how to maintain current customers and attract new ones. I believe that government should not only be effective, but also transparent, and this task force will help develop a relationship with the small business community so they can have input on the decisions that impact their future. At the same time, I will fight for smart development in the district that ensures adequate infrastructure such as hospitals, transportation, schools, supermarkets, etc. – and fight over-development that does not address the needs of the new population these projects bring to the community.

My vision is to:

- Prevent layoffs and/or cuts to NYC budgets by making the rich pay their fair share of taxes
- Implement the Small Business Survival Act to combat skyrocketing commercial rents that push our mom and pop shops out of business
- Focus on the creation of living wage and union jobs when negotiating city contracts
- Invest in infrastructure to put people to work and build a better future

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?



Our children only get one shot at a great education. Sadly, the coronavirus pandemic has taken a tremendous toll on our children's learning. Moving forward, we need to afford parents and teachers alike the support they need to ensure all students are given every opportunity to succeed.

As part of this, I support the expansion of Gifted and Talented Programs to all local elementary schools to provide access to these resources to all children.

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?

As a staff member in the Office of the City Council Speaker, one of my responsibilities has been food insecurity. I would work closely with organizations such as Met Council and Food Bank NYC (which provide services to Masbia and Commonpoint) to ensure that our community has the resources it needs to address food insecurity. I would also provide discretionary funds to our local organizations.

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?

CD29 offers such a diverse and wonderful selection of food and shops, and it's hard to make a selection! But some that come to mind are the restaurants Barosa and Diner Bar in Rego Park, Eddie's Sweet Shop and Aigner Chocolates on Metropolitan Avenue in Forest Hills, Austin Ale House in Kew Gardens and the Classic Diner on Myrtle Avenue and Jamaica Avenue in Richmond Hill. As for shops, there are The Potter's Wheel in Kew Gardens, Martha's Bakery in Forest Hills, Fox's of Forest Hills, the Cheese Shop, Forest Hills and Olioli on Metropolitan Avenue.

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?

I would work with the local Community Boards to ensure all voices are heard about the project and to enlist input on what is needed to bridge the business into the community. I would also inquire about union and community jobs.



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

As I do outreach in the district, I am hearing that there is a concern about Public Safety, especially regarding hate crimes against the community. The current NYPD needs to be reimagined in a way that focuses on public safety and fosters true community partnerships. I would redirect mental health and homeless services out of the NYPD and to community based organizations best equipped to deal with these issues.

I would also make sure that the NYPD pays more attention to hate crimes and advocate for Language Justice to ensure effective communication between constituents and the NYPD. In addition, I am an advocate for education curriculums in our public schools to inform students about hate crimes through the lens of historical and current events.

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?

First, the COVID-19 pandemic is the biggest healthcare crisis of our lifetimes and tragically, it has exposed the deep vulnerability of the borough of Queens. Over the past two decades, Queens has lost an alarming number of hospitals and other healthcare resources. The consequences have been devastating. As a Council Member, I will push legislation that will require all development projects under land use review to include a hospital impact assessment in addition to the required environmental assessment. Not only are we in desperate need of additional hospital capacity, but we need a healthcare system that can provide affordable preventive and primary care, and also have the ability to react to acute issues such as the current pandemic. As someone who has had first-hand experience working in the healthcare field (10 years at NYC Health + Hospitals), and who has worked on health issues in the City Council, I will move these issues to the forefront to ensure our lives aren't put in jeopardy because of the government's inability to make smart decisions about our public health.

As the pandemic hit New York and we saw our hospitals pushed to breaking point, physicians and other healthcare and essential workers were sometimes forced to work in unsafe conditions. To help these essential workers, I would advocate for hazard pay to be made part of any future stimulus packages. In addition, I would work to implement a Healthcare Emergency Program for any future healthcare emergencies. Once an emergency is declared, it would trigger hazard pay for all frontline and essential workers, including hospital workers. This should also be part of basic emergency protocols for NYC Health + Hospitals.

Further, I would urge the implementation of a Healthcare Emergency Program for any future healthcare emergencies that would trigger child care, safe transportation, mental health



services and accommodations, in addition to hazard pay. I would advocate these support services be directed through the city's office of emergency management.

With regard to vaccine distribution, the current system has been chaotic at best. Many residents are forced to travel long distances to receive their first and second shots. We need to ensure that those most vulnerable, particularly seniors, have ready access to the vaccine. The system needs to be streamlined and made easier to navigate. I am an advocate for a one-stop appointment system and will introduce legislation to make that a reality. In addition, as the vaccine is made more available, I propose mobile vans and the opening of senior centers to provide the vaccine.

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?

It is unacceptable that in the wealthiest city in the history of the world that thousands of seniors are living in poverty. We must protect the most vulnerable in this community and make sure they have access to the help they need. Our senior citizens deserve to live with dignity and support. COVID-19 has exposed the lack of adequate services for our senior population.

District 29 has one of the highest concentrations of seniors in the city – with real needs for affordable housing and healthcare services, including mental health, as well as those struggling with food insecurity.

As City Council Member, I will work to expand Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs), and re-open our senior centers, which provide vital services and include enriched programming that includes comprehensive social services for this vulnerable population. In addition, I will work with the relevant government agencies on a comprehensive senior safety agenda that addresses the issues of elder abuse and multiple scams that have targeted our senior citizens since the pandemic.

- Increased support for obtaining Social Security benefits for all recipients
- Expand NORCs and re-open our senior centers
- Guarantee home and community based long-term care services for all New Yorkers
- Protect our most vulnerable seniors by increasing funding for senior centers and expanding other programs seniors rely on.
- Expand and train the home aide care workforce we need to provide support for our growing senior population.

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?



The next Council needs to review the requirements and put regulations in place to ensure Mandatory Exclusionary Housing (MIH) is more successful. In addition, although a federal matter, changing the Area Median Income (AMI) is critically important and will help with making housing more affordable. There also may be opportunities to revise the AMI on a State level.

The City also needs to provide more rental vouchers, with increased funding. The Council is currently reviewing legislation to achieve this which I support. I would also advocate for more supportive housing developments to help those who have mental health and substance abuse issues (majority of the street homeless have some type of substantive health issue) and work with organizations such as Comunilife, a known and successful community based organization in this space, to create these new developments

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?

The City has not done enough to ensure homeless individuals have a pathway to housing. As a result, homelessness has increased throughout the City, including our district, within the past few years. HRA/DHS is a multi-billion dollar agency that needs a deep dive on how resources are spent on providing services to homeless individuals. More rental vouchers are needed, along with increased supportive housing for those who need extra assistance. In addition, the shelter system needs to be revamped as a temporary solution that provides a safe environment and protects the dignity of homeless individuals and families.

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 support consistent funding of Community Board budgets to give them greater independence, and provide funds for professional support and training. I would also ensure board appointments are diverse and that the Board reflects the district it serves.

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?

Mobility is a fundamental part of making our city function for everyone. For too long, our public transportation options have been overcrowded, unreliable, and inaccessible. Now, in the wake of the pandemic, it is crucially important that we address the challenges plaguing our mass transit system once and for all. The ability of our community and our city to get back on its feet, depends on it. Our public health depends on it.



It means expanding bus service instead of curtailing it. It means making every MTA station accessible to people with disabilities, the elderly and parents with strollers. It means treating MTA service in Queens as an integrated system where LIRR fares are affordable to the communities they run through. In addition, we need to prioritize pedestrian and cyclist safety by bringing together members of our community and other stakeholders in favor of smart solutions to make better use of our streets.

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?

I intend to work closely with the Community Board on ULURP issues and do not foresee going against the Board's recommendations on a development. I will fight for smart development in the district that ensures adequate infrastructure such as hospitals, transportation, schools, supermarkets, etc. – and fight over-development that does not address the needs of the new population these projects bring to the community.

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

There is no question that Rikers needs to be closed. The Council vote was to close Rikers and move away from an institutionalization model and move toward restorative justice. Now that the vote is done, the focus of the next Council, and me as a Council Member, is to ensure that the wrap around services and other promises made by this Mayor and his Administration are kept. As part of this, I intend to form a broad coalition of community and criminal justice leaders to ensure that the center proposed for Kew Gardens is a success. In addition, final plans for the jail are in the hands of the Mayor and I will be an advocate to bring community concerns about the jail to the next Mayor.

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

Following are my 3 top priorities for the district:

1. **Healthcare is a Human Right.** Tragically, the biggest healthcare crisis of our lifetime has exposed how deeply vulnerable the borough of Queens really is. Over the past two decades, Queens has lost an unprecedented amount of hospitals and the consequences have been devastating. The lives lost to the coronavirus pandemic underscore that there is nothing more important than access to healthcare. Currently, land-use items that are reviewed by the city include an environmental review. A hospital review should be added for future projects, to ensure communities like Forest Hills, Rego Park, Kew Gardens and Richmond Hill aren't underserved by hospitals. Not only are we in desperate need of additional hospital capacity, but we



need a healthcare system that can provide affordable preventive and primary care, and also have the ability to react to acute issues such as the current pandemic. As someone who has had first-hand experience working in the healthcare field, and who has worked on health issues in the City Council, I will move these issues to the forefront to ensure our lives aren't put in jeopardy because of the government's inability to make smart decisions about our public health.

2. **Investing in our Schools and Bridging the Digital Divide.** Our children only get one shot at a great education. Sadly, the coronavirus pandemic has taken a tremendous toll on our children's learning. Moving forward, we need to afford parents and teachers alike the support they need to ensure all students are given every opportunity to succeed. First, New York City needs to fast track and expand its 3-K program throughout the city. Secondly, we need to demand reduced class sizes, which has been proven to improve learning. We must also invest in daily physical education which in addition to its health benefits, also yields better learning. Also critical is the investment in our schools' dual language programs. Studies show that bilingual students have increased cognitive development, better academic achievement, and increased economic opportunities. In the most diverse city in the world, we should ensure language is not a barrier to a quality public education. Lastly, it's important to keep gifted and talented programs and expand them to all local elementary schools. Speaking with parents, educators and the kids themselves will be critical to ensuring everyone has a voice in this important aspect of their education.

We also must provide students with the technology and broad band access they need to succeed. All New Yorkers should have access to free high-speed internet access. All families at New York Public schools should receive access to at least a basic laptop or other device to use for school. We should also focus on using our public channels to provide school lessons. That means ensuring that all New Yorkers have access to basic cable. We also need to ensure broadband and Wi-Fi access for homeless students.

3. **Fix the MTA and Build Safe Streets.** For too long, our public transportation options have been overcrowded, unreliable, and inaccessible. Now, in the wake of the pandemic, it is crucially important that we address the challenges plaguing our mass transit system once and for all. The ability of our community and our city to get back on its feet, depends on it. Our public health depends on it. This means expanding bus service, not curtailing it. This means making every MTA station accessible to people with disabilities, the elderly, and parents with strollers. This means treating MTA service in Queens as an integrated system where LIRR fares are affordable to the communities they run through. In addition, we need to prioritize pedestrian and cyclist safety by bringing together members of our community as well as stakeholders, around smart solutions to make better use of our streets. Lastly, we need smarter parking management including the expansion of residential parking permits in our neighborhoods. Only through a comprehensive approach can we move forward toward a future that offers every alternative for people to move about reliably, safely and conveniently.



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

I support efforts to pass a tax on the ultra-wealthy of New York City to help raise revenue. Also, we need to close corporate tax loopholes within our State. I would work with the NYC Congressional delegation to lobby the Biden administration for additional State and Local government bailouts. I would also use the Council's oversight powers to shift funds from our most bloated City agencies and diverting those funds to more essential parts of the budget such as healthcare, education and social services.

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

In the Forest Hills community, I have been an activist for equality and justice for decades, and have the experience to help propel the issue of racial equality in CD 29.

The pandemic has further exposed the unfortunate racial injustices that exist within our communities. As an example, COVID has hit communities of color hardest, inflicting new devastation and highlighting the longstanding truths about the public health system. We now have an opportunity to address many of its root causes through education and legislation.

I intend to facilitate forums with experts and community-based organizations to navigate discussions about racial injustice in CD 29 and how to help make government better.

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

I support ranked choice voting and, like many voters, I will be doing my research and due diligence about the other candidates in this race. In my 2nd ranked choice, I am looking for a candidate who is progressive, accessible to everyone, and capable of doing the work. Someone who understands our community and understands how to get things done.