

Candidate: Grace Lee

Office: NYS Senate District 27

Question: Please provide a brief statement about why you are running for this office. What would be your #1 policy priority if elected? And please provide one accomplishment that you believe illustrates why you're the best candidate for the job.

Candidate Response:

I've been in this work alongside DID from the very beginning of my political life. My career started in this community - organizing with this club and our neighbors, long before I ever held a title. Whether I won or lost, whether I had a formal role or not, I never went away, because for me, the work has always come first. DID took a chance on me in 2020 as my only major club endorser, and has stood with me ever since, something I will always be deeply grateful for. That trust has kept me grounded in the community I came from.

For me, becoming a State Senator isn't about a bigger title; it's about having more resources to scale the community-centered work we've been doing together and to deliver more for New Yorkers. I will be honored to represent over 300,000 New Yorkers, and I take that responsibility seriously.

At a time when healthcare is under threat, when affordability is pushing families out, and when immigrants are under attack, New York needs leaders who are rooted in community, battle-tested, and ready to fight. That is the leadership I will bring to the Senate.

My number one policy priority in the Senate will be affordability, with a focus on keeping New Yorkers in their homes and in the communities they have built. Housing is the core affordability issue faced by our constituents, and I have already demonstrated my commitment to being on the frontlines of this fight. As an Assemblymember, I helped pass Good Cause Eviction to protect tenants from unreasonable rent increases and retaliatory evictions, and secured a 50% tax cut for Mitchell-Lama developments to help stabilize buildings and keep rents down. In the Senate, I will continue this work by fighting to eliminate the remaining Shelter Rent Tax, expand SCRIE and DRIE for seniors and people with disabilities, and ensure reliable funding for the Housing Access Voucher Program.

I will also continue treating childcare as essential infrastructure—building on my work to expand universal 3-K and Pre-K, and pushing for sustained investments statewide, including fair pay for childcare workers. And I will keep fighting to strengthen food security, including full implementation of chip-based EBT cards to prevent benefit theft and advancing an agenda that funds the SNAP program in the face of federal cuts.

One accomplishment that best illustrates why I'm the right candidate is my work to fund the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) to provide rent support to public and subsidized housing residents. When others said it could not be done, I organized with tenant leaders and advocates, brought residents to Albany, and forced decision-makers to confront what was at stake. Together, we secured an unprecedented \$391 million in ERAP funding to save families from eviction—a win the Governor later called a highlight of the budget. That result reflects how I lead: by building power with the community, pushing back against entrenched systems, and turning organizing into real legislative outcomes.