

Candidate: Jay Jacky Wong

Office: NYS Assembly District 65

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:

1) I am running for the AD65 seat because this district has shaped who I am, and this moment calls for leadership that understands policy and people. I have lived in Lower Manhattan for over two decades, and my professional life has been rooted in public service to Chinatown, the LES, Seaport/FiDi, and surrounding neighborhoods.

I have served as a journalist, affordable housing executive, community advocate, and as a member of Community Board 3, where I chaired the Land Use Committee. In that role, I was directly involved in rezonings and housing decisions across the district. Many housing projects in the LES bear my involvement.

AD65 faces urgent challenges. Limited new affordable housing displaces long-term residents, while immigrant communities face heightened threats from federal enforcement, language barriers, and fear. I am an immigrant myself, having moved to the US at age 26 and spending most of my adult life in Lower Manhattan. These are lived realities.

I am the District Leader for AD65 Part B. Through this role, I have learned, listened, and built a broader political and leadership network across Lower Manhattan. This district has given me opportunity, purpose, and community. I believe public service is a way of giving back, and I feel a responsibility to step up and serve at a higher level.

2) I spent more than a decade as a journalist reporting on immigrant communities and how their voices are often ignored or misrepresented. Since the pandemic, I have advocated against anti-Asian hate crimes and for public safety, particularly for vulnerable monolingual senior immigrants in Lower Manhattan.

As ICE enforcement intensified and federal policies shifted, I partnered with elected officials and legal organizations to organize multilingual immigration legal workshops in Chinese and Spanish. These workshops focused on NYCHA and Section 8 residents and other at-risk neighborhoods, recognizing that undocumented residents, green card holders, naturalized citizens, and mixed-status families are affected when due process and constitutional protections are weakened.

3) One experience that helped prepare me for this role comes from my work as a journalist investigating the hazing death of the son of a LES immigrant family, a case the U.S. Army initially sought to close quietly. While the parents were under pressure to bury their son as a hero, I noticed inconsistencies in official accounts that did not align with the public narrative. I gathered information, verified facts, and helped the family understand that seeking truth and justice was possible.

Working with advocates, legal experts, and elected officials, including then Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez, we brought sustained public attention to the case, leading to prosecution, accountability, and federal legislative reform. The work was recognized with the national Asian American Journalists Association Award for Civil Rights, the first awarded to a non-English publication. This experience reflects how I approach public service: with care and passion, attention to detail, respect for process, and the ability to work across communities and institutions to achieve fair outcomes.