

Candidate: Sommer Omar

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:

Downtown is under intense pressure from rising rents, skyrocketing utility bills and hospital closures. This moment calls for a relentless local champion who shows up wherever the fight is and isn't afraid to stick their neck out to stand up for this community.

To build truly affordable housing downtown, we need to push for bold legislation in Albany to build Mitchell-Lama style permanently affordable housing, not more luxury developments. For the housing laws we already have on the books, like Good Cause Eviction or the rent freeze programs for seniors and New Yorkers with disabilities (SCRIE/DRIE), we need to actually show up downtown to get those protections to tenants. These are crucial tenant protections but too many neighbors still don't even know they exist.

Standing up for this community also means preparing for the local fights we know are coming to our backyard. When public land is developed, including on 388 Hudson and Gansevoort Square, it must be 100 percent permanently affordable, no loopholes or half-measures. And as Gateway prepares to negotiate its lease, we need to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the tenants to vigorously defend rent stabilization and have the courage to push for its expansion, not just its survival.

We're years deep into an affordable housing crisis, and if we truly believe this is an emergency, then we need to start treating it like one by flooding the community with resources and unwavering support. This will unequivocally be my number one priority.

To rein in skyrocketing utility costs, we need to hold Con Edison accountable for endless rate hikes in a system so broken that our bills help fund lobbying for higher prices. New York state actually has the power to set Con Edison's rates and yet instead Albany abdicates responsibility.

To ensure access to healthcare, we need to stop incessant hospital shut downs. Lower Manhattan has lost Cabrini, St. Vincent's, and now Beth Israel, leaving us with one small hospital with barely over 100 hospital beds for 200,000 people. We need laws with real teeth, not rubber-stamp approvals for closures that leave communities worse off.

Good representation means showing up relentlessly and even when it's hard. I'm proud that when Beth Israel was on the chopping block, I sued Mount Sinai and the Department of Health to help win concessions to invest in healthcare downtown. When the statewide abortion rights measure Prop 1 was written off, I got the governor to come stump for it at a rally here in Lower Manhattan. And when Eric Adams tried to demolish the Tony Dapolito Recreation Center, we pushed back and secured a commitment from Mayor Mamdani to repair it. That's the kind of relentless representation this community deserves, and that's what I'll bring to Albany.