

South Central Brooklyn United for Progress State Senate District 21 candidate questionnaire.

Thank you for agreeing to complete the South Central Brooklyn United for Progress State Senate District 21 candidate questionnaire. Please be sure to familiarize yourself with how our endorsement process works - a candidate must receive $\frac{2}{3}$ of the ranked choice vote in order to win our endorsement. [More details here.](#)

Your answers to these questions will be made available to the public on our website, <http://scbkunitedforprogress.org/>, and will be promoted on our Facebook page and twitter feed.

Answers are due 24 hours prior to your scheduled interview time if you want to be considered for endorsement!

Campaign Information

What is your name? *David Alexis*

What are your preferred pronouns? *He/Him/His*

What office are you running for? *State Senate, District 21*

Who is the point of contact for your campaign and what is the best way to get in touch with them? *Campaign Manager: Devin McManus, (541) 510-9123*

What is your campaign address?

1179 Flatbush Avenue

Brooklyn, NY 11226

What is your campaign phone number?

Candidate Cell Phone: (516)-350-0337

What is your campaign email? *info@davidforbk.com*

What is your campaign website? *https://www.davidforbk.com/*

Is your campaign on social media? If so, what platform(s) and what are the names?

Campaign Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/David4BK>

Campaign twitter name: @david4bk

Campaign instagram name: david4bk

Campaign Issues

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in your district regarding **health care** and what would you do to address them?

My wife suffers from a chronic illness, sickle cell, and watching the profit-driven closure of our local hospital devastated my family and propelled me into healthcare activism. So many people — especially low-income, Black and Brown people — in our district cannot access the healthcare they deserve. I believe it is vital that everyone have access to free, high quality medical care that puts constituents' health and well-being first even if it's not profitable for wealthy shareholders. In Albany, I will: pass and implement the New York Health Act, which will provide comprehensive healthcare free at the point of service to everyone living or working in NY; place a moratorium on hospital closures; guarantee fair pay and dignified working conditions for home care workers; prohibit new for-profit nursing homes that put profits over patients' health and safety.

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in your district regarding **COVID-19 and recovery from its effects** and what would you do to address them?

COVID has been a testament to the human cost of our threadbare community hospital capacity: thousands of lives were lost because we did not have enough beds for patients when our hospitals were hit with a sudden surge of demand. The closure of Kingsbrook Hospital, for example, devastated East Flatbush right before the Delta and Omicron surges. It would be catastrophic for us to lose any more hospital beds. I support imposing a moratorium on community hospital consolidations and closures, which disproportionately happen in communities of color. I also believe that independent public representation on the state body that must approve hospital closures (the Public Health and Health Planning Council) should be strengthened. If our healthcare system were democratized, we would see fewer decisions made for corporate bottom lines and more for the needs of marginalized communities.

The COVID crisis is not over: as I type, case rates are once again increasing in New York City. We must do everything possible to ensure that our healthcare system can keep going throughout the ongoing COVID crisis. The system will collapse if we don't ensure that nurses continue to work in New York, and it makes sense to provide retention incentives with federal relief funds

until structural reforms can hire and train more healthcare professionals. Care work is the backbone of our society, and our healthcare policy, wages, and labor protections should reflect that.

Covid testing is finally widely available throughout the population, but as we saw in December with the Omicron wave—when testing sites had been shut down and our system was overloaded—our representatives are too often caught unaware by predictable crises. We need to be prepared for whatever comes our way so that working people don't bear the brunt of government neglect.

Finally, Covid-19 revealed the close relationship between different forms of injustice in our district. Unemployment remains high in New York City and in Flatbush, even as the labor market gets better for working people around the country. High rent and homelessness have also exacerbated exposure and risk for poor folks in the district. We must fight for commonsense and moral pro-worker laws that protect people from health risk at their jobs and housing policy that keeps people safe.

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in your district regarding **prejudice, hate crimes, and racial justice** and what would you do to address them?

Every aspect of my policy platform seeks to uplift working people, which in turn, will uplift people of color who make up the majority of New York's working class. I support a comprehensive racial justice platform to address structural racism in New York, including the Justice Roadmap, which would take major steps toward dismantling the carceral state that disproportionately locks up Black people and disrupts our communities. I also support Assembly Bill A2619A in the New York State Legislature which would establish a commission to investigate and develop a program of reparations to remedy the lasting effects of the enslavement and oppression of Black people in New York.

I will particularly center Black women in thinking through my policy priorities. Black women often sit at the intersection of multiple injustices: racial inequality, misogyny (and misogynoir), and very often, the struggles of poverty. In my roots as an organizer in the sickle-cell and drivers' communities, I have seen first hand how Black women not only see so clearly the intersectional nature of oppression in our society, they also see the solutions. I have sought to intentionally build a policy platform that reflects the priorities of Black women, and will govern with that same intention.

It is the duty of every elected official to not only explicitly call out and reject white supremacy in all parts of our society, but also to serve as affirmative leaders in the movement to end white supremacy in all its forms. Police, too often agents of white supremacy themselves, have failed to protect all of our communities from white-supremacist spike in hate crimes.

We cannot solve hate violence through carceral approaches. Instead of investing even more money in jails and police, which we know does not work, we must rather invest in violence prevention and interruption. By investing in our neighborhoods, education, and healthcare systems (including mental health care), we can prevent the desperation that turns people towards violence. We must also invest in restorative justice approaches that repair and defuse hatred.

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in your district regarding **public schools and education** and what would you do to address them?

*Our education system has been plagued by an emphasis on competition: students and teachers are pitted against each other, and so are school districts, fighting over reduced resources for what should be a **universal** good. Infamously, this was exemplified by the effective command that No Child Left Behind made that greater numbers of students would perform above average, an idea that is mathematically impossible.*

Reforms I would like to see implemented would be a greater emphasis on both raising the performance of students across the board and on bringing students from across the community together to strengthen themselves and their families, with schools being a point for government to help them do this. The charter school lobby and what mainstream media calls the “education reform” movement has manifestly failed at this and even set us backwards in many ways.

True reformers like Alliance for Quality Education have fought to treat education as a basic right and equalize state aid to schools to counteract the pernicious effect property tax funding has had on our education system, particularly for Black and brown communities. Teachers unions have fought for not just better staffing levels and pay for their own membership, but for social resources like nurses, social workers and counselors to be present in schools in order for students' full needs to be looked after, not just whether they can answer a narrow set of multiple choice questions. I would fight alongside these allies to build on their successes and bring their demands into the halls of Albany. It is imperative for the health of our communities that we fund and integrate our schools across racial and class lines so that our children learn to live together by learning to learn together.

In concrete policy terms, New York has the opportunity to enhance all our schools by fully funding Foundation Aid via taxes on the rich, so that all students across the state receive the funding necessary for a sound education. Once we achieve Foundation Aid funding, we must fight for a massive increase in funding for public schools so they can be beacons of our communities.

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in your district regarding **homelessness and housing** and what would you do to address them? What is your philosophy about housing development in the district?

Housing is a human right and the government must ensure that every New Yorker is guaranteed a safe, dignified home that they can remain in long-term. People in our district are drowning from out-of-control rising rents, struggle to find safe and affordable housing, and face harassment from their landlords when they advocate for their rights. This is especially true for low-income, Black and Brown people, who face additional housing struggles due to the legacy of redlining and other longstanding inequities. I plan to: Give every renter the right to renew their lease by passing the Good Cause Eviction bill in Albany; fight for legislation to hold landlords accountable for repairs and upkeep without passing the costs on to tenants; give tenants the right to make the first offer when their building is up for sale, putting properties in the hands of the people and not luxury developers (the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (S3157 / A5971)); create a new state level Housing Access Voucher Program (S2804B / A9657); fully fund NYCHA and stand up new public housing authorities across the state and provide rental assistance to homeless people so that every New Yorker is guaranteed a safe, dignified home; end tax breaks for luxury developers and ensure mortgage relief for small property owners; I also support eliminating the wasteful 421-a and 485-a subsidies that have allowed developers to get richer without creating meaningful amounts of affordable housing.

What more do you think could be done in regards to **pedestrian / bicycle / automobile safety** in your district and/or in all of New York City / State?

Public transit, like all public goods, should be free at the point of service, well-run, and fossil-fuel free. I will fight to eliminate fares for all public transit in the city, ensuring that no one is excluded from our public transit system for the “crime” of being poor. I’ll work to electrify our bus system and increase both the frequency and quality of bus service, by supporting an expanded network of bus-only lanes. I’ll also work to expand bike lanes and pedestrianization to all parts of the district, ensuring that people taking advantage of the healthiest forms of transportation we have- biking and walking- don’t risk their lives from traffic violence. Finally, I’ll work to make sure the subway system is fully accessible to all people regardless of their physical ability, by finally generating funding to make every subway station accessible.

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing New Yorkers and those in your district regarding **voting access and voter suppression** and what would you do to address them?

I support re-passing the constitutional amendment to enact same-day voter registration, and putting it on the ballot in 2024. I also support re-passing the constitutional amendment to enact no-excuse absentee voting, and putting it on the ballot in 2024. I support a transition in New York into a vote-by-mail system by 2030, where each voter is automatically mailed a postage-paid ballot for each election in which they are eligible to vote. We should move to non-partisan professionalized boards of elections. The NYC BOE should adopt the civil service system used by other NYC agencies. Each county board of elections should be mandated to operate polling places that are safe, accessible, and have robust language services beyond those covered in the federal Voting Rights Act.

This is a grassroots campaign that rejects all donations from corporate, real estate, carceral (including police union), fossil fuel, and real estate sources. Accepting donations from those sources would be antithetical to our mission to uplift working people. Small donor matching will help level the playing field for grassroots candidates like myself refusing dirty money, and I would be honored to participate in that system in 2024.

What other issues do you consider important and how will you address them?

***Climate:** The same corporate interests that pollute our neighborhoods with asthma-inducing dirty air and plastic trash are fueling the climate crisis. As someone whose family has been caught in an “asthma alley,” which led both me and my daughters to develop asthma, fossil fuel pollution isn’t some abstract political issue for me, it’s personal. Our community has suffered multiple devastating storms in the last few years; it is urgent that we transition to renewable energy. If we do not, the consequences of our warming planet will continue to fall on low-income, Black and Brown people, who are most vulnerable to the crisis and least able to move out of harms’ way. In Albany I will: Clean up the trash in our streets by funding sanitation services and driving initiatives to reduce waste; protect against floods, build environmentally-friendly energy plants, investing in a just transition to green energy by passing the Green New Deal for New York; end New York’s addiction to fossil fuels and create thousands of good, union jobs by building publicly-controlled renewable energy sources like wind and solar farms; clean up the air our children breathe and put an end to “asthma alleys” by transitioning to renewable energy. I have been deeply involved in the effort to pass the NY Build Public Renewables Act and the New York Utility Democracy Act. In 2021, I spoke at the Brooklyn public power rally and launch event, helped coordinate a June direct action event, and organized members of the East Flatbush community impacted by blackouts to support the bill. I also organized constituent calls to demand that current State Senator Kevin Parker — the incumbent and my opponent in the primary — act to pass the bill. Parker’s refusal to move the NYBPRA legislation forward is part of what inspired my run for office. Albany has not passed any major climate legislation since 2019. Meanwhile, New Yorkers have literally drowned in their homes. The climate movement needs to be emphatic in holding legislators accountable, including by outing legislators who have failed to act on climate. I also support a suite of other bills targeting the climate crisis, including but not by any means limited to: the All Electric Building Act (S06843/A08431), the Clean Futures Act (S05939/A06761), the Climate and Community Investment Act (CCIA) (S4264A/A6967), the cryptocurrency mining ban (A7389), the bill to require Public Service Commission programs to provide job training funds to priority populations (A03996), the Fossil Fuel Subsidy Elimination Act (S7438/A8483), the Proposed Actions on Environmental Justice Communities (S1031/A2103), and the Teachers’ Fossil Fuel Divestment Act (S4783/A6331). Additionally, I will fight for state agencies to aggressively implement and fund the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).*

For fun (answers to these questions are not required)

If your district had a musical anthem, what would it be and why?

Solemnly by Ciph Boogie <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qspW9CAjv2c>

What is your favorite restaurant in your district?

Los Tres Chiflados!