

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? *Kaegan Mays-Williams*

What are your preferred pronouns? *she/her*

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? *Rebecca An, campaign manager, 281-813-8602, rebecca@kaegan.org*

What is your campaign address? *N/A*

What is your campaign phone number? *267-285-3995*

What is your campaign email? *kaeganfornystatesenate@gmail.com*

What is your campaign website? *kaeganfornystatesenate.com*

Is your campaign on social media? If so, what platform(s) and what are the names?  
*@KaeganForNY on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram*

## 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?

*We need affordable, accessible, high-quality health care - including mental health care - for all, including our fellow New Yorkers who are unable to work due to disability or not yet citizens. We need to make sure we have culturally competent and multilingual health care providers so that those with limited English proficiency can still receive quality care and be treated with dignity. To do so, we also need to recruit and train more providers from marginalized communities and pay them a competitive, living wage.*

*In our district, we also need to address the Black maternal mortality crisis. This includes hiring and training more doulas, and increasing the amount of maternal healthcare facilities in the district where staff and health care providers are culturally competent and can speak the languages of the birthing people seeking care. To start addressing some of these issues, we need to pass the New York Health Act.*

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?

*I feel there needs to be a just economic recovery for small businesses and families enduring food, health, education and housing insecurity, as well as support homeowners struggling with mortgage defaults and foreclosures. The crumbling of the social safety net has made recovery even harder for already marginalized communities. We need to pass the Good Cause Eviction Bill to help tenants hold commercial residential landlords accountable for inhumane practices and unaffordable rent*

*We need to also offer small businesses tax credits to provide competitive wages and benefits (health care, childcare credits, etc), and provide universal childcare for working families and invest in more jobs in the District (child and elder caregivers, doulas, small business staff, etc.)*

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?

*Violence upon our Asian-American neighbors has increased exponentially over the past few years during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is shameful and has created a sense of deep fear and safety insecurity for many of our neighbors. Historically, both Jewish and Muslim communities have also endured a disproportionate amount of prejudice and hate crimes.*

*While I was an Assistant District Attorney at the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, I worked in the Hate Crimes Unit where I investigated and prosecuted several hate crimes cases. One of the most interesting investigations led to a restorative justice solution rather than a standard penal one. A man who had been harassed and beaten by a stranger because he was perceived as a gay man, agreed to sit down with his attacker at a now defunct museum which used to be located on 42nd Street between 3rd and Lexington Aves. During our hours together, they read letters to one another and walked through the museum which displayed how hate grows through images, words, and ultimately violence.*

*Addressing hate crimes through a more holistic and restorative lens creates an environment where learning and empathy can be prioritized. While this is just one example, I would love to reimagine hate violence and other forms of community harm through a restorative justice lens.*

*Representation and education are also means of combating prejudice and advocating for racial justice. If elected, I would like to hire members who are representative of our District, including Asian, Jewish, Muslim and Caribbean staffers who speak Mandarin, Cantonese, Urdu, Creole, Spanish, and the many other languages of this diverse district.*

*I would also work with our City Council representative to advocate for school curriculums that teaches a thorough history of Black, Hispanic, Asian, Jewish and Muslim contributions to our city and country's history and to diversify our schools so that children of every race and faith start interacting with each other from early childhood.*

*The majority of the individuals who reside in the District are Black, first-generation or immigrant and women. The intersectional impact of the discrimination faced by many people holding one or all of those identities can be ameliorated by starting with advocacy for economic justice – meaning ensuring that people holding any of the above-mentioned identities are being paid not only a living wage, but a wage that reflects the true value of their work. Specifically, many of the women who work within this District are healthcare workers, educators, childcare and elder care providers, amongst many other professions – and while these professions hold a great amount of value to those who seek their services, their compensation is typically less than reflective of that truth.*

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 K-16 public schools are woefully underfunded. I would fully fund our public schools, increase teacher pay, and train a new generation of teachers and educators. I also support a New Deal for CUNY.*

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?

*We need to repeal 421-a or amend it so we can hold developers accountable for building truly affordable housing. We need to fully fund NYCHA to ensure that those units are safe, energy efficient, and climate resilient. To address the growing homelessness crisis, we need to increase housing vouchers, expand long-term housing assistance, and invest in jobs programs for those experiencing homelessness. We need to replenish ERAP and LRAP & deploy multilingual operatives to provide language access to help both renters and small landlords with limited English proficiency, and we need to help small landlords with mortgage and foreclosure relief.*

*Unethical landlords need to be fined and regulated to protect tenants from eviction and harassment.*

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?

*We need to have more protected bike lanes in our District to keep our streets safe. There have been far too many car accidents on Cortelyou Road alone in 2022. I would support the Crash Victims Rights & Safety Act and fully fund complete streets to keep pedestrians and cyclists safe. I look forward to working with groups like TransAlt to increase safer, greener, more reliable and efficient public transit across the city.*

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?

*It is shameful that the amendments to pass same-day voter registration and no excuse absentee voting didn't pass in 2021. As State Senator, I would advocate for them to be on the ballot again by 2024 and continue to list COVID as a reason to request an absentee ballot. I would also work with District Leaders to ensure that poll workers can speak the languages of the communities that vote in individual poll sites, regularly host voter registration drives across the district, and host multi-lingual voter education events before every election.*

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

*Reducing gun violence. I want to fully fund violence interruption programs, such as hospital-based intervention programs and street outreach, while also strengthening the public safety net. Providing for stable and affordable housing, high-paying jobs, accessible health care – including mental health care – are all gun violence prevention strategies.*

*Increasing affordable childcare/eldercare and a living wage for caregivers. As a working mother of a young child, I also want to fight for affordable, reliable, trustworthy childcare for working families and advocate for a living wage for caregivers that respects their value and reflects their importance to families and communities.*

*Enhancing small business recovery from COVID-19. The small business owners in our District are also neighbors who employ other neighbors. The health of these businesses is directly tied to the economic health of our larger community. We need to hold corporate landlords accountable for sky-high commercial rents and offer tax credits to small businesses so that they can offer competitive wages and benefits (health care, childcare tax credits, etc.) to employees.*

## For fun (answers to these questions are not required)

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

*Everyday People by the Sly and the Family Stone. There is a great diversity of cultures, languages and lived experiences within the District, and overall, I'd say there's a great feeling of community throughout the District.*

What is your favorite restaurant in your district? *Purple Yam - I have been going there for over a decade for a number of occasions – I met my brother and sister-in-law there for the first time, I've taken my mother there for countless Mother's Day celebrations, I've had a parents-night out dinner there with my child's friends' parents and have had countless New Years dinners or takeout there. It is truly one of the greatest staples besides within my neighborhood. I also cannot refuse any restaurant that sells roti or doubles.*