

September 29th, 2020

Dear Kings County Democratic Committee leadership,

We, the undersigned Democratic District Leaders write to you regarding the proposed amendment to the rules of the Kings County Democratic Party regarding the upcoming County Committee Organizational Meeting. At the national level, our country faces an unprecedented crisis to our public health, to free and fair elections, and to our individual rights and freedoms. As Democrats, we share a common goal in organizing and fighting back against those forces which threaten and undermine our democracy. Unfortunately, we are disappointed to learn that in our own borough, we must divert our attention to that which threatens the voices of our neighbors.

We are elected leaders who strongly advocate for furthering transparency, inclusion, and participation in the Kings County Democratic Party. We cannot support a rule change that would eliminate the only opportunity for County Committee members to meet and participate in party functions and operations. The proposed rule change sets a dangerous precedent by eliminating County Committee members' ability to play a direct role in crucial party business by mandating that County Committee members' proxies be automatically given to District Leaders, therefore disenfranchising their voices.

We fully support the party's efforts to mitigate the spread of coronavirus by not conducting an in person meeting. Furthermore, we are very aware that there is a digital divide that could pose obstacles to participation for some County Committee members. However, the proposed rule change would inhibit *all* members from meaningfully participating -- the answer to some members being unable to access the meeting should not be to prevent access to all. We believe that it would be possible for the Brooklyn Democratic Party to create a virtual meeting plan that addresses the digital divide while also solving for the technical complexities that come with hosting a meeting for a body as large as the KCDC. [Over 160 County Committee members across the borough have already publicly expressed their willingness to support and help plan for a virtual County Committee meeting](#), including some [County Committee members creating a viable virtual meeting plan proposal](#). Locally, The Queens and Bronx/Manhattan County Committees have already set up their meetings digitally. We are confident Brooklyn can rise to this challenge.

Under the current climate of voter suppression, as Democrats we should be working hard to further direct democracy; this means enfranchising County Committee members to be active participants in the most grassroots level of the Democratic Party. We can't in one breath encourage voters to support Democrats and voter protections, while in our own house limiting the voices of those most affected in our community from participating in democracy. The County Committee meeting is a valuable opportunity to engage Brooklyn Democrats for organizing ahead of the November election. Failure to hold a meeting would be a betrayal of our party

principles and a major setback to all of the progress toward greater participation we've achieved in recent years.

We believe Brooklyn should lead the way in championing democratic practices. This starts with ensuring that we practice what we preach. We strongly encourage you to withdraw the proposed rule change and look forward to working with you on a plan to conduct a digital County Committee meeting that is accessible to all.

Respectfully,

Emile Bazile, District Leader & State Committee Member, AD 50

Jesse Pierce, District Leader & State Committee Member, AD 52

Josh Skaller, District Leader & State Committee Member, AD 52

Julio Peña III, District Leader & State Committee Member, AD 51

Kristina Naplatarski, District Leader & State Committee Member, AD 50

Maritza Davila, District Leader & State Committee Member, AD 53

Samuel Nemir Olivares, District Leader & State Committee Member, AD 53

Shaquana D Boykin, District Leader & State Committee Member, AD 57

Walter Mosley, District Leader & State Committee Member, AD 57

Robert Carroll, Assemblymember, AD 44