Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats: 2025 Candidate Questionnaire

- Candidate Name: Lincoln Restler
- Office Sought: City Council District 33
- Campaign Contact Name: Lincoln
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- Name of person filling out this questionnaire: Lincoln

Please answer each of the following questions to the best of your ability:

1) If (re-)elected, what would be your **top 3 priorities** in your term?

1. tackling affordability crisis, strengthening climate protections, improving transportation system

2) What **personal and/or professional experiences** do you believe make you uniquely qualified to run for City Council?

1. i have spent most of my career working in city government and local reform politics. That experience has helped my team and i be highly effective government problem solvers to deliver for our constituents and provide rigorous oversight of the Adam administration.

3) Given the role and responsibilities of the City Council, how would you use the office to **combat harmful policies that the Trump administration rolls out**?

1. We must strengthen local laws to limit problematic coordination with the feds, identify funding to fill gaps created by federal budget cuts, and mobilize our communities to push back and put maximum pressure wherever it is needed (GOP house members, media actions, etc)

4) How much money has your campaign raised - both in district donations and overall donations. Are there donations that you have and/or would refuse, and why?

1. I have raised about 70K to date from over 300 contributors. Approximately 200 of those donors live in District 33. I do not accept money from real estate developers, corporate pacs, fossil fuel companies, and police unions.

5) How have you, or will you, commit to constituent services and **local quality of life issues**? How will you advocate and organize for community services, such as food stamp applications, immigration applications, sanitation issues, etc.

1. I take my responsibility seriously as a 24/7 problem solver for our district. We do our absolute best to provide robust constituent services and navigate city bureaucracy on behalf of our neighbors. We try our best to address every quality of life condition, individual constituent issue, and more. We have a rigorous system for tracking constituent issues and ensuring we respond promptly and effectively solve cases. I am proud and grateful for my team's hard work delivering for D33 constituents.

6) What measures would you take to improve **educational opportunities for all students** in NYC? How do you plan to ensure that all NYC children are able to attend high-quality, integrated schools?

1. I have strongly supported integration efforts across the three school districts that comprise District 33 - school districts 13, 14 and 15. I am actively working to replace a gifted and talented program to desegregate an elementary school in our district. I have been a leading voice in the Council to push for universal 3K and protect funding for our public schools. We recently launched a new initiative - D33 School Equity - to prioritize investments in five of the highest need schools in our district based on poverty rates. This is comprehensive new effort to bring greater academic rigor, capital investments, parent engagement, and family supports for these five school communities.

7) Do you support any campaign finance reforms for NYC? If so, please describe.

1. Yes - I have introduced a series of bills to reform our campaign finance system. These changes would eliminate loopholes that allow campaigns to not report intermediaries / bundlers that raise money, prohibit people on the doing business data list (lobbyists etc) from bundling contributions, empower the CFP to refrain from providing matching funds to campaigns that are non-responsive to their inquiries, and would require the CFB to send postcards or emails to donors confirming their contribution to prevent straw donor campaigns.

8) The existing plan to **Close Rikers Island** involves closing the Rikers Island jails (including the Boat in the Bronx), reducing the jail population to approximately 4,200 people in custody or less, and establishing four borough based jails as well as therapeutic housing units in three city hospitals. **How would you support this implementation? Is there anything you would do to improve on this plan?**

1. The Brooklyn Borough based jail is in my district and this is one of the projects that I spend the most time on in my district. I worked on the Close Rikers plan in the de Blasio admin. I strongly support the closure of Rikers Island and the borough based jail plan. Unfortunately, the Adams administration had made changes to the plan that are problematic - including slashing the number of therapeutic beds for people with mental health needs by half and eliminating access to real outdoor space for the detainees. I have been working hard to fix these deficiencies.

I also released a plan with Council Member Kevin Riley to get the Close Rikers plan on track by laying out the necessary investments to meet the population reduction goals.

9) What policy and administrative changes are needed for NYC government to ensure sufficient **quality housing that is actually affordable** for existing residents in Brooklyn neighborhoods? Do you have a plan to **reduce and prevent homelessness** in Brooklyn and NYC? Explain your plan.

1. We need to significantly expand our investment in affordable housing, expand total housing supply, and strengthen tenant protections.

   To reduce and prevent homelessness, we must expand safe haven shelters, redesign our shelter system to improve safety and service quality, enhance access to vouchers, invest in supportive housing and formerly homeless housing, and provide universal access to counsel to reduce evictions. Homelessness is a policy choice and I am deeply committed to driving down the homeless population in New York City.

10) If elected, how would you support a **Medicare Advantage Program that supports retirees**? Do you promise to **confer with NYC retirees** before proposing any future changes to our health care coverage and other benefits?

1. Yes, I am in active communication with retirees in my community. I am staunchly opposed to ever forcing retirees into Medicare Advantage programs. It is imperative that retirees - who dedicated their careers to public service in New York City - have the option to keep their current healthcare options.

11) Describe your vision for **public safety** in New York City? What, if any, functions would you like to see removed from the police department? What agencies would assume the functions removed from the NYPD? How would these changes be funded?

1. Safe communities have great schools, clean parks, quality healthcare and robust opportunities for young adults. I work closely with the NYPD in my district and value the hard work of our precincts - but I believe the Adams administration has brought dysfunction and mismanagement to the senior ranks of the NYPD. We need the police department to focus on preventing and solving serious crime - rather than minor enforcement that is sweeping up more and more low income Black and brown New Yorkers in our criminal justice system.

12) What is your view of the **City of Yes decision and your views on how it may impact zoning changes** in the district? How do you view the balance between additional affordable housing needs and zoning that could give more power to developers?

1. I strongly supported the City of Yes proposal. We have a severe housing shortage in New York City and I think the City of Yes zoning text amendment will help ensure that more housing is built in every neighborhood in New York City. District 33 has had significantly more housing starts than any other district in New York City over the past 15 years - and City of Yes will help ensure that the districts that have failed to build housing will no longer get a pass.

I do my best to drive tough negotiations with developers to secure maximum community benefits. I think we want to make it easier for developers to build - but with enhanced requirements that generate more truly affordable housing and other community benefits.