

Dear 2022 Candidate:

The Village Reform Democratic Club is interested in knowing about your qualifications, thoughts and plans for the office you're seeking. We have prepared this very brief set of questions to help us know you better as we decide on our Club endorsements.

Please provide your name, website URL, the office for which you're running and contact information in case our members wish to request additional information or clarification.

Vittoria Fariello

Candidate, NYS Senate District 29 (formerly 26)

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1) What are your top 2-3 issues going forward? If elected or re-elected, what will be your specific approach to each of them?

** I have a vision for lower Manhattan as a place where everyone has a home they can afford, doctors and hospitals they can visit without going broke, parks they can enjoy, schools that nurture and prepare their children for the world, and good jobs and grocery stores nearby they can get to safely and easily. In order to achieve this, our elected officials have to be connected to the members of our community and interested in our goals. We have to have local input prioritizing local needs (not those of developers or politicians). And it takes the resources the government can deploy, including money. But it all starts with the belief that it can be done.

** A top priority is affordable housing, because so much of the vision we share begins with having a stable, safe place to go to sleep in and wake up in the morning. I will be developing and passing a suite of housing legislation that prioritizes permanent affordable housing in our district to bring middle income, low income and poor New Yorkers off the sidelines. This includes not only more funding for NYCHA, but deliberate oversight of those funds - with tenant participation - to make sure they are spent quickly and effectively on much-needed repairs. We also need to convert empty office buildings into residential units and we should impose a tax on empty luxury apartments that artificially inflate the housing market. I support allowing the 421a/g tax exemptions to expire in 2022. I will work to replace them with programs that provide true, permanent, affordable housing. I will find additional state and federal funding to support more affordable apartments throughout our district. And I support a Good Cause eviction law that reflects realities on the ground.

Like all I do, I will prioritize ideas and input from our district to drive solutions. For example, I heard the community say, "We want 100% affordable housing at 5WTC." So I've helped define the vision, organize advocates, and relentlessly promote this bold idea. I pressured elected officials to hear us, not laugh at our audacity. Today our local officials and members of Congress

have come out in support of 100% affordable 5WTC. State agencies that turned a cold shoulder at first are now committed to working with us.

** I will energetically support passing the game-changing New York Health Act to bring universal healthcare to all New Yorkers, giving everyone the ability to thrive physically and mentally, free from the threat of debt or bankruptcy. I will also fight surprise medical billing, which happened to my own family twice in the past year. My other priorities in healthcare include writing and passing new state legislation to prevent agencies that contract with the state from exploiting their workers, as has happened with the home healthcare workers. I also believe we must address the underfunding of nursing homes along with stronger oversight to address the tragic realities revealed by the Covid pandemic.

2) Please list 2-3 things you have done for our community (the greater Greenwich Village area) and the results you achieved. What were the challenges, how did you address them, and how did you involve the community?

** I have stood with opponents of the SOHO/NOHO rezoning plan forced on our community by the outgoing council. This was yet another example where the community came together to work on a plan to bring needed zoning changes and increase affordability only to be disregarded by our representatives. While the City administration claimed their plan would bring affordable housing, many of us recognized it for what it was - a false promise with no guarantees that the meager number of units would ever be built and a blatant giveaway to developers. It is another platform for broken promises. I was invited by members of Community Board 2 to testify at their public hearings and at the City Council's hearings on the rezoning where I echoed the community's call for true participation and affordability. I support the current lawsuit against the plan. As a State Senator, I won't be shy about using my bully pulpit to advocate on critical issues in our district when I know my voice will make a difference.

** I will dedicate time and resources to fully fund a new school for dyslexic children on Bleecker Street. I am proud of the advocacy by local mothers and community leaders that have fought for this school and I will make sure that NYU lives up to its promise to maintain a grocery store for the community. I will continue to provide oversight and advocacy until it is complete and engage residents in the process.

** I have a vision for a government that's not beholden to political machines and corporate donors. Part of the breakdown of our ability to deal with so many issues stems from political corruption. I have worked with our local political clubs - including members of VRDC - to bring needed change to our County Committee. I've stood up to the Manhattan Democratic Political Machine twice since I was elected District Leader in 2017, and succeeded both times. Our current State Senator was selected by the party machine. Even though the Democratic County

Committee members in our district voted overwhelmingly for his opponent, the County Leader gave him the nomination because the rules allowed it. I organized and built a coalition and pushed the County Committee to change the rules. Now, the County Chair must abide by the vote of the committee members on special election nominations. In 2019, I brought a successful lawsuit to stop another attempt at disenfranchisement. I'm proud that I won the fights but kept the relationships in tact. Currently, I am legally representing Kings County reformers trying to bring similar progress to their County Committee. Making our Party processes more democratic is an achievement for all of us because the influence of our Democratic Party is an important tool to expand our grassroots power.

3) What do you most want our club members to know about you and why you believe you're the best candidate for the position?

My family immigrated to America when I was four years old. By the time I finished high school, we had moved 13 times. As a result, I developed a curiosity and an easy openness to different perspectives. I've seen how we all benefit as a society when we lift up and privilege people and ideas that have been historically oppressed or invisible. Moving a lot as a kid taught me not to worry about whether I fit in or not and I learned that one thing you always carry with you is your integrity.

No matter where we lived, I always had my eye on New York City. Even as a kid, I saw it as a place where the whole world came together. So after graduating from the University of Wisconsin, I moved to Brooklyn. I've been a New Yorker ever since, renting in lower Manhattan since 1998, raising four children here.

My husband and I run an independent public service-oriented law firm that we've built up from scratch. Having our own firm has given us the freedom to bring cases that more traditional firms might not take. The kind of public services cases we have brought include #MeToo, consumer fraud, qui tam (false claims), whistleblower cases, racketeering and human trafficking.

We intentionally opened our office near our home in lower Manhattan not only to stay close to our home in Battery Park City, but also to be part of the economic recovery here after 9/11. The attacks on 9/11 and their aftermath shaped my commitment to lower Manhattan and New York City. Those of us who survived and stayed bonded with each other. Like all of you, I love our City. I believe each of us deserves to be heard and respected by our leaders, and I know that when we're united, we have what it takes to solve our problems. That's why I cannot sit quietly when I see promises broken and our voices ignored. This is one of the key reasons I'm running for office.

Community leaders asked me to run for this Senate seat because they've seen that I show up, speak up and I deliver. I have a proven track record of fighting for my community alongside local problem solvers and bringing results. I will continue to work collaboratively with others and to challenge the status quo when necessary to get the results we deserve.

My promise to you is this: I will listen to you, I'll meet with you, I'll take your calls, and I'll take your voices to Albany. I would be honored to earn your endorsement, and your votes on June 28.