



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.

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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?

Currently, as a community and a country, we face two existential threats. First, the crisis in our democracy here in the United States, aided and abetted by the rise of extreme antisemitism, racism and alt-right nationalism. Second, the imminent climate catastrophe that we see wreaking havoc upon all of us in the form of extreme weather, increasingly scarce critical resources, pandemics and soon, mass migration.

To address these critical threats, Democrats must win in November 2022. Otherwise our civil rights, our environmental protections, our economic equities will continue to be destroyed by rapacious, criminal greed and indifference.

Ten years ago I co-founded and began Chairing the **NYSDC's Progressive Caucus**, to more effectively integrate both progressive issues and progressive activists into the Democratic party. We created our Caucus in the wake of a successful battle to get then Governor Cuomo to place a moratorium on fracking in New York. Since that time, the Progressive Caucus under my leadership has led the New York State Democratic Party in issues of critical concern to all of us from ousting predatory State officials who sexually harassed female staffers, to calling for New York to become a Sanctuary State, to marijuana decriminalization and reparations, to criminal justice and bail reform, to passing strengthened laws to protect against domestic violence, to extending the statute of limitations on sexual abuse, ensuring legal protections for transgender

individuals, to strengthening reproductive rights freedoms – including insuring that abortion was covered by Obamacare, and demanding marriage equality for all New Yorkers.

**One of our most important political victories was in ending the IDC.** We passed a Resolution requiring that all candidates who ran on Democratic party lines and who wanted access to the important resources of the State Committee could not be members of the IDC. We were the first political entity to promulgate this restriction – well in advance of the Working Family Party and others.

To achieve these significant and varied successes in both policy and political terms, I forged alliances between upstate and downstate State Committee members, the party's progressives and the party's leadership, with County Chairs throughout the State, and with other political and issue-oriented organizations. In the wake of last November's ballot losses, I convened a meeting of the full State Committee to do a synopsis on what went wrong – and how we could prevent this kind of damage in the critical elections of 2022. That meeting in turn led to the creation of a new Marketing and Messaging subcommittee of the State Party, which is to be led by both downstate progressives and upstate Democrats in swing Districts – in other words it includes and is responsive to all of us.

We have also been speaking directly to all the statewide candidates and elected officials and pressing them to come up a united response to the effective Republican organizing effort we saw displayed last November – and to think of how to meet the needs of Democrats more broadly and use the statewide races as a platform to win critical House seats and down-ballot races in smaller townships and Counties. I'm happy to say that message has been heard and we see unrolling at the State Committee one of the most integrated political organizing efforts that I have witnessed in my times at the State Committee.

- 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 addressed some of the many issues I have worked in question one, including banning fracking (New Yorkers' water reserves), helping to win marriage equality, transgender rights and expanded sexual harassment and sexual assault protections (New Yorkers' civil rights), and fighting against the IDC members (ensuring fair and progressive political representation for New Yorkers).

In terms of community engagement, I believe that my most helpful and effective community involvement is through my work on political campaigns of both local, statewide and national candidates and through community service in organizations that serve New Yorkers. I have served as the Co-Chair of the Board of the **New York LGBT Community Center on 13<sup>th</sup> Street**, on the Board of **Everyone Reading**, an organization whose mission is to redress dyslexia both through direct student intervention and through teacher trainings, and on the Board of **Eleanor's Legacy**, an organization dedicated to electing pro-choice Democratic women to non-

federal offices throughout New York, and am past President of **GLID (Gay & Lesbian Independent Democrats)** – Manhattan’s first borough wide LGBT political club.

- 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?

**I have served as the Democratic State Committeewoman for the 66<sup>th</sup> AD since 1997, and respectfully request, and would be honored by, VRDC’s endorsement of my candidacy.**

I first became active in downtown Manhattan politics by working on Assemblymember Deborah Glick’s initial race for the Assembly. I have worked at the NYC Department of Health for then-Commissioner Margaret Hamburg as the Director of State Legislative Affairs and then attended NYU School of Law. After graduating from law school I worked as a commercial litigator at Greenberg Traurig and then as Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs for Safe Horizons, New York’s largest victim service organization. I am married to Roberta Kaplan, a litigator whose firm Kaplan, Hecker and Fink combines both a commercial litigation practice and public interest docket (her most recent case was winning an almost \$27 million judgment against the Charlottesville neo-Nazis who organized the Unite the Right violence in August 2017, all the monies to go directly to the victims). We have an amazing teenage son!

I think that my specific experience as a long-term State Committeemember, my broad and varied work and community experience and knowledge, and deep commitment to social justice make me the best candidate for this position.