



504 DEMOCRATIC CLUB

The First Democratic Club in the Country Focusing on Disability Rights

www.the504democraticclub.org



2009 Mayoral Candidate Screening Questionnaire

Please save as a Word document, complete & return by e-mail to: president@the504dems.org by June 5, 2009.

Candidate Name: _____

Contact Person: _____

If there is a Campaign office, is it wheelchair accessible? _____

Campaign Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____ Website: _____

Endorsements: (Political, Community & Labor)

I. Action Shows Commitment!

a. While in public office/prior to this campaign, what have you accomplished in regard to advancing disability rights? This can include work towards accessible housing, transportation, employment, health care, education, and including people with disabilities in the political process?

b. Will you commit to only attend / sponsor events that are accessible to people with disabilities (PWDs including providing written materials in alternate formats, providing assistive listening systems, and sign language interpreters as well as ensuring that locations are physically accessible)?

II. General Questions:

a. What personal and professional experience have you had with people with disabilities in your personal life and in the workplace?

b. What type of jobs would you be willing to hire and to provide reasonable accommodation (e.g. flex or part time) for staff members with disabilities?

c. How will you work closely with the disability community to assure passage of vitally needed legislation through the City Council? What will be your strategy?

d.. Neither Mayor Bloomberg nor his predecessor have ever met with the leadership of disability community, although they have met with other communities. What would you do to have more direct contact with our community?

III. Housing:

- a. What is your position on extending the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) to low-income, eligible persons with disabilities under the age of 62 on the same basis and income level (currently the income cap for seniors is \$24,000, *but for persons with disabilities it has been set at \$17,000*)?
- b. What have you done/accomplished in regard to extension of SCRIE or similar programs? What alternative programs will you propose to allow persons with disabilities to stay in their own homes/apartments? Perhaps a dedicated housing trust fund should be established for persons with disabilities? Would you provide a data base of available accessible housing?
- c. The general definition of what's "affordable" in housing doesn't apply to many, particularly those who receive SSI or SSDI. Government-funded housing programs, such as those of H.P.D., are required to set aside apartments for people with disabilities, but these apartments go largely unfilled, regardless of whether the individual is eligible for rent subsidies such as Section 8 and Nursing Home Diversion voucher, because the minimum income required is \$17,000 or higher. What would you do to increase the housing supply for persons with disabilities who don't meet minimum income requirements?
- d. The City Human Rights Law currently permits civil penalties to be assessed against discriminators to vindicate the public interest, but these penalties are seldom if ever assessed against housing providers who have failed to make reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. Will you commit to imposing such penalties so as to create a greater incentive for housing providers to comply with the law?
- e. Emergency evacuation for people with disabilities: what would you do to ensure that provisions are put in place to improve survival rates of people with disabilities in the event of fire, attack, blackout, or other emergency situation?
- f. What would you do to ensure that "Visitability" is enacted in New York City? Visitability = the movement towards establishing guidelines providing that newly constructed multi-family dwellings have basic accessible/adaptable features that permit friends and family with disabilities to visit, and for residents to "age in place," without having to move out when age and/or disability set in.
- g. Will you develop new and renovated housing for people with disabilities?
- h. What efforts are you willing to commit to assuring that people with disabilities do not become homeless - are able to stay in their own apartments with adequate supports?

IV. Employment:

- a. People with disabilities have one of the highest rates of unemployment and underemployment as a result of both physical and attitudinal barriers. What have you done in your present office to advance employment opportunities for people with disabilities? Would you ensure that all 55-A Non-Competitive job slots are filled?
- b. What else would you do as Mayor to increase the employment of people with disabilities in both City government and the private sector?

V. Organization:

- a. Although Mayor Bloomberg elevated the Director of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities to Commissioner-level, he failed to increase the Office's budget and responsibility. How would you ensure that city departments/agencies coordinate through MOPD?
- b. What implementation/authority should MOPD have, and/or how would you ensure that MOPD have?
- c. Since presumably MOPD is a Mayoral Office, how would you enforce and do oversight regarding the work of the office and be certain of the implementation and its efforts?

VI. Accessibility:

- a. Under Mayor Bloomberg, the City settled with the United Spinal Association and agreed to install curb cuts -- pedestrian ramps, on all corners which presently don't have one. However, no provision has been made to repair or replace those current ones which are unsafe. How would you ensure that curb cuts—pedestrian ramps — are provided on or repaired on streets that need them? What would you establish as a timetable?
- b. What steps do you think NYC should take to encourage business owners to make their establishments more accessible?
- c. Do you believe that landmark buildings can be made accessible without losing their historical integrity?

VII. Transportation:

- a. Would you support an expansion of affordable wheelchair accessible transportation in NYC, including taxi, livery service, express buses, airport shuttle service, more accessible subway stations, etc.?
- b. Efforts to secure a 100% accessible fleet of medallion taxis have been hampered by opposition from Mayor Bloomberg and the taxi industry. Wheelchair accessible taxis are present in many cities as a result of strong support from local Mayors and City Councils. What would you do to assure that *all* New York City residents, commuters and tourists have access to an important form of public transportation, our medallion taxis and community car services?

c. Access-A-Ride has denied rides to many eligible consumers, caused unnecessarily long trips, and has left many consumers stranded at the curb. What would you do to improve the quality of service for those who must use Access-A-Ride? Would you support the use of a “smart card” where Access-A-Ride consumers can obtain taxi or local car service transportation at a lower cost than a para-transit and receive better service?

d. Do you favor the construction of the Second Avenue Subway? If so, is this a priority?

VIII. Civil Rights:

Under the Bloomberg Administration, the Corporation Council intervened on the side of the city of Sacramento when it sought to challenge the Americans with Disabilities Act regarding the requirement to maintain accessible sidewalks. Do you pledge to use your office to affirm or strengthen, rather than weaken, civil rights protections for persons with disabilities?

IX. Long Term Care:

The Consumer-Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP): Enables self-directing senior citizens and younger disabled persons (or their surrogates) receiving home care under Medicaid to recruit, hire, train, supervise and (if necessary) discharge their workers, with the home care agency servicing as a "fiscal conduit" to pay salaries, taxes and benefits based on information provided by the consumer and worker. Although CDPAP is a product of the disability rights movement, HRA no longer allows consumers to serve on the Boards of provider agencies and has encouraged agencies to move away from the "self-directing" model to the more traditional "medical" model. Currently only about 2,500 consumers and their surrogates are enrolled in CDPAP. Would you, as Mayor, seek to reverse that policy and strengthen and expand CDPAP? Please describe strategy and time frame for such policy change.

X. Education:

a. Children with disabilities often attend schools with segregated placements, insufficient supports to function in a regular classroom, or travel in poorly maintained buses to attend schools far from their homes because their neighborhood school is inaccessible, cannot or will not provide an appropriate education. Months have passed before an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed or implemented. What will you specifically direct the Chancellor to do to assure that the policies of the Department of Education are more user friendly to children with disabilities and their parents? Provide time frame.

b. Do you support a name change for the IEP Diploma, which really isn't a “diploma?”

C. As a result of cutbacks in Federal funding, programs serving students with disabilities in the CUNY system are being eliminated and these students often do not receive mandated supports and services. What would you do, as Mayor, to assure that disabled students in the CUNY system have the required services to assure their academic success?

Date: _____