



2009 ENDORSEMENT PANEL REPORT

Mayor

We interviewed both Democratic Party candidates for Mayor, City Comptroller **William Thompson** and City Council Member Tony Avella.

Comptroller Thompson has met regularly with our community's leadership. He has been on the forefront of issues such as opposition to doubling the Access-A-Ride fare and is will soon release Access-A-Ride audit. He has hired disabled employees in policy making positions and is represented on the Taxis For All Campaign Steering Committee. He has testified before the City Council on issues of importance to our community. Unlike the Incumbent, he knows the leadership of our community well. He holds an annual awards ceremony. We are reasonably confident that if elected, this positive relationship with us will continue.

Council Member Avella also submitted a questionnaire. He has co-sponsored virtually every bill that seeks to advance the concerns of our community, although he is not currently a sponsor of our accessible taxi bill. His father was a disabled World War II veteran who was only able to work part time as a street vender. As a result, he is particularly cognizant of the employment needs of our community. While he strongly supports the issues of our community, we believe that Comptroller Thompson is a better bet win to the Primary and be a formidable challenger in the general election.

New York City Comptroller

We interviewed three of the four candidates for Comptroller.

City Council Member **John Liu** has had a long relationship with 504. We endorsed him when he first ran against an incumbent and lost, and well as his last two tries when he has won. On the Council, he has served as Chair of the Transportation Committee, and has dealt with issues involving Access-A-Ride, mass transit, and accessible taxis. He has not always been as supportive as we would have liked, however, he has engaged in dialogue. His opponents have either been weak in their support of our issues and/or been more strongly in opposition to us. While we know we may sometimes continue to disagree, we believe that his door is always open to us and he will continue to listen to our concerns.

City Council Member David Weprin also submitted a questionnaire. He has generally been supportive of our issues, including introducing legislation several times to increase penalties for violation of disabled parking space rules. He has had a good

relationship with our community and has sometimes supported our issues, but not aggressively. The death of two of his deaf/hard of hearing constituents led him to introduce legislation mandating the installation of carbon monoxide detectors with visual cues. He proposes to create five satellite offices for the Comptroller's office.

Council Member David Yassky also submitted a questionnaire. His district office is inaccessible and has not had a good relationship with his district's nor the city's disability community and leadership. He has advocated a 100% "green" taxi fleet without consideration for accessibility. He and Council Member Garodnick recently met with some Access-A-Ride users to create a survey to assess their trip experiences. To his credit, Council Member Yassky participated in our screening procedure, despite having a sometimes contentious relationship with us. Furthermore, he asked that whatever problems we had with him not be extended to Council Member Garodnick.

Public Advocate

We interviewed all four candidates for Public Advocate.

Former Public Advocate **Mark Green** is seeking to return to the position he inaugurated. As Public Advocate, he set a standard that the other candidates would do well to emulate. He filed a successful civil rights action against Access-A-Ride which mandated that they could no longer deny service. He led an undercover investigation which found NYCT bus drivers were passing by wheelchair users at bus stops, and obtained significant improvement in service. He has fought for the right of poor people to obtain lawyers in civil cases. As Public Advocate, he employed persons with disabilities on his staff, and has always been accessible and available to our community and our club both in and out of office.

Council Member Bill deBlasio, as Chair of the General Welfare Committee, has been a forceful advocate about many issues we care about, including some that relate to our community. However, he has been unsupportive on wheelchair accessible taxis without any explanation, and is not a sponsor of the resolution in support of the Community Choice Act. It has proven to be very difficult to even get a meeting with him to lobby on behalf of our issues, which speaks poorly of what we can expect if he is elected as Public Advocate.

Council Member Eric Gioia gave a stirring presentation, but his campaign manager rushed him out of the interview before he could answer questions. He has a spotty relationship with our community, and has not always been supportive of our issues.

Civil rights attorney Norman Siegel also submitted a questionnaire. He believes that as the Public Advocate, he will lead the fight for equality-- racial, gender, disability and income. He wants an "army" of volunteers. He is outraged that the entrance to City Hall is not accessible. We endorsed him four years ago when he previously ran.

Borough President, Queens

We interviewed one of the candidates for Queens Borough President. **Helen Marshall**, the incumbent, submitted a questionnaire.

We have admired Helen Marshall for her long career as Assembly Member, Council Member, and Borough President. She has met with us in the past and has attended some of our events. She has a functioning Disability Advisory Committee which meets monthly and at which she has been on occasion a presence. She recently granted \$500,000 for the Association for the Neurologically Impaired Brain-Injured Children.

We interviewed Marc Crawford Leavitt, an elder law attorney, who is making his first run for office. He has been a long-time opponent of the Queens County Democratic Organization. He is also an actor and political satirist. He has a “high-functioning retarded” sister and as a child was part of a siblings’ group. He speaks warmly of the relationship his eight-year old son made with a camp-mate who has Cerebral Palsy. We look forward to a future candidacy by him.

District Attorney, Brooklyn

Brooklyn District Attorney **Charles “Joe” Hynes**, who submitted a questionnaire, is running for re-election. A program within his Family Justice Center assists intellectually challenged victims of domestic violence. He has persons with disabilities on his staff, including at least one Bureau Chief. He has a Mental Health Court which attempts to divert non-violent mental health consumers from the criminal justice system.

District Attorney, Manhattan

We interviewed all three candidates who are seeking to replace the legendary Robert Morgenthau for Manhattan D.A. All three have served under him in the office.

Richard Aborn is on leave as Chair of the Citizens Crime Commission and a partner in his law firm. He was a principle mover behind the “Brady Bill,” which placed controls on the possession of handguns. He favors the creation of a Mental Health Court in Manhattan, which diverts non-violent mental health consumers from the criminal court system, and favors treatment over incarceration. He believes that incarceration makes offenders better criminals.

Leslie Crocker Snider is a former D.A. and Judge who served as a special prosecutor. She states violent gang members and white collar criminals have threatened her life. She lost a previous race against Robert Morgenthau. She favors medical marijuana and a Mental Health Court. Her husband is a pediatrician specializing in patients with developmental disabilities. She has retreated somewhat from her previous position strongly in favor of the death penalty.

Cyrus Vance, Jr. is a trial lawyer and son of the former Secretary of State. He has assisted the parent of a nephew with Down syndrome to obtain needed services. He

has employed persons with disabilities and favors flex time and time sharing. He favors assigning Assistant District Attorneys to communities to help the ADA better understand the community as that has been shown in other localities to reduce crime.

Civil Court (Brooklyn) 5^h District

Acting Supreme Court Justice Rachel Adams who is running for re-election submitted a questionnaire. She has a disabled son and has participated in his care for the past 28 years. She has a strong knowledge of disability issues as regards to the courts and has generally supportive positions. However, we are concerned about widely circulated reports of possible ethical lapses during her career.

City Council, District 1 (Manhattan)

The incumbent, Council Member **Alan Gerson**, submitted a questionnaire and we have questionnaires from two of his opponents, one of whom was interviewed.

Alan Gerson who we have endorsed in the past has a long and amicable relationship with our community. He is fighting to make the plans for development of Governors Island accessible. He is fighting to mandate grab bars in bathrooms for tenants with disabilities. He was the lead sponsor of “Dignity In All Schools Act,” which will protect children with disabilities and others from bullying, and continues to work for enforcement. He is a strong proponent of affordable housing. He believes taxis should be both “green” and accessible.

We interviewed and received a questionnaire from B. J. “Jin” Kim, who only recently entered the race. He believes the district is growing and changing, while the political structure hasn’t kept up. He is a lawyer has a housing and community organizing background. He believes in encouraging economic self-sufficiency. While his parents were graduate students, he grew up in Louisiana and Tennessee on Medicaid and Food Stamps. He has raised the most money. We believe that he is an up and coming leader whom we look forward to working with him in a future candidacy.

Margaret Chin was unable to be interviewed due to illness, but submitted a questionnaire. She has campaigned for this office several times in the past. She has worked to develop new affordable housing which is fully accessible, and has relocated disabled tenants from old buildings to accessible units. She wants to remedy problems with curb cuts/pedestrian ramps within a year. She believes that all new businesses should be accessible and existing businesses should be made accessible within a timeline.

City Council, District 2 (Manhattan)

We interviewed incumbent **Rosie Mendez** and a representative of challenger Dodge Landesman who also submitted a questionnaire.

Rosie Mendez has been an ally for our issues since before she was elected to the Council. On the Council, she has generally supported our issues. She recently shepherded a street co-naming through the Council for Frieda Zames, a pioneer leader in our community. We had high expectations that she would be a strong advocate for our issues, given that she had been Chief-of-Staff to former Council Member Margarita Lopez. However, she does retain a warm relationship with our community.

Dodge Landesman is an 18 year old high school Junior with a learning disability. He is primarily in the race to advocate for “Special” Education students. He is articulate and has a great deal of poise. He has managed to attract a great deal of attention in the press and in the community. We believe he can be a terrific future leader of our community.

City Council, District 3 (Manhattan)

Council Speaker Christine Quinn has three challengers for re-election. She did not participate in our endorsement process.

Yetta Kurland, a civil rights lawyer and an activist in the LGBT community, was interviewed and submitted a questionnaire. She has been extremely aware of disability concerns in this campaign. Every aspect of her campaign, including her web site, campaign headquarters, and fund raisers, has been chosen with an eye toward accessibility. She has reached out to club members over the past year to request assistance in reviewing accessibility. She has two businesses, both of which are wheelchair accessible, including bathrooms. As an attorney, she has taken on many discrimination and civil rights cases, including disability related cases, many of which were pro bono. She wants to give small business owners tax and other incentives to make their businesses accessible. Her top priority to increase the number of curb cuts/pedestrian ramps in her district. We believe that Yetta would be an excellent addition to the Council and would be a terrific fighter for her district and our community.

City Council District 4 (Manhattan)

Council Member **Daniel Garodnick**, who has no primary, nevertheless appeared before us. We supported him when he first ran in a contested primary four years ago, and continues to be supportive of our issues and our community. He and Council Member Yassky have been working with community members to develop a survey of Access-A-Ride service. He and his staff all vote using Ballot Marking Devices. He has funded several disability programs and has worked with landlords to relocate tenants with disabilities to other units, instead of a hospital, during an emergency.

Council District 5 (Manhattan)

Council Member **Jessica Lappin**, who is running for re-election without a Democratic Primary opponent, appeared before us. She represents a large disabled community. We supported her four years ago in a contested primary, She continues to work with

our community. One of the two new parks in her district will have an ADA accessible swing for children who use wheelchairs. The new Roosevelt Island park committee includes residents of Goldwater-Coler Hospital, to insure issues of accessibility are taken care of.

Council District 6 (Manhattan)

Council Member **Gale Brewer** has had a long and positive relationship with our community. She is running for re-election without a primary. She was interviewed and completed a questionnaire. One of her sons is developmentally disabled and prior to her election she was an activist who sat on many boards that dealt with disability issues. She could be a model of how an elected official should interface with our community and integrate disability concerns in all aspects of her public life. Her questionnaire goes into great detail about all of her activities in this regard.

Council District 7 (Manhattan)

Council Member **Robert Jackson** is seeking re-election. He maintains a warm relationship with our community and is responsive to and supportive of our concerns. We have supported him in the past races.

Council District 9 (Manhattan)

Council Member **Inez (“Betty”) Dickens** is running for re-election. She is a nearly life-long friend of our Vice President, Pat Walls. Her husband has developed a visual disability; she spoke of how community organizations assisted him in adjusting to his loss of sight. She has funded various organizations in our community. She has appointed persons with disabilities on her Community Boards and has worked to assure that they receive whatever accommodations they need to participate. As Vice-Chair of the Democratic State Committee, she has fought for increasing the number of persons with disabilities as delegates to the National Convention and making the Democratic Party more accessible for us.

We received a questionnaire from one of her challengers, Nick Simpson, the Chair of Manhattan Young Democrats and a NYCHA employee. His answers are generally supportive of our issues, but we believe that the incumbent will continue to do an excellent job for her community.

Council District 10 (Manhattan)

We interviewed **Miguel Martinez**, the incumbent. This was the first time he has appeared before us. He is concerned about the lack of access in community car services, while much of the emphasis is placed on taxis. He has been responsive to our local community leadership.

Cleofis Sarete, a former member of Community Board 12M and a Department of Education employee submitted a questionnaire. Although she is a former substitute teacher of School District 75, she seems to have little understanding of “special” education issues. She also seems to lack understanding of disability issues in general.

Council District 11 (Bronx)

We interviewed the incumbent, **G. Oliver Koppell**, Chair of the Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Alcoholism, Drug Abuse and Disability Services Committee. For many years, he has had a distinguished record in support of our issues. He is the lead sponsor of our bill to create a 100% accessible and “green” taxi fleet, and has taken numerous other initiatives on our behalf. He has a long record of employing persons with disabilities.

Council District 12 (Bronx)

The incumbent, Larry Seabrook, as in the past, did not participate in our endorsement process, despite our reaching out to him. We interviewed two of his opponents.

Andy King is an organizer for SEIU Local 1199 Health Care Project and the husband of their Executive Vice President. He started a youth program that worked with the Special Olympics. He will form a diverse council to advise him on issues of concern to his district. He is concerned about the ability of individuals to age in place within their apartments. He has received the support of the Bronx Democratic organization and labor unions, and seems to be the major challenger to the incumbent.

Jerome Rice completed a questionnaire. He has a number of endorsements from law enforcement organizations. As a law enforcement officer, he fought for more humane handling in cases involving mentally ill individuals. He has fought for greater access in his Co-Op City community. He demonstrates good will but little understanding of the political process.

Sebastian Ulanga is a former SEIU Local 1199 Delegate. He worked as a CAN in nursing homes, group homes and hospitals. He has a major concern about the presence of sexual predators in Co-Op City. He is concerned about the lack of services for seniors and persons with disabilities in other parts of the district.

Council District 14 (Bronx)

Maria Baez, the incumbent, states that caring for her father, an amputee, gave her a very special insight into disability issues. Following a meeting with the disability community, she moved her district office from an inaccessible 2nd floor to a storefront, and, as a result, was much criticized in the press for the necessarily higher cost. She provided capital funding to provide an elevator in the Fordham Road/Jerome Ave. subway station, and is advocating for increased accessibility two other stations. In her

meetings with developers, she insists that walls be secure enough to support grab bars, rails, along with roll-in showers, and other accessible features.

Fernando Cabrera is a minister and licensed Mental Health Professional who formerly worked as a counselor in New York City middle and high school. He has extensive experience and is very knowledgeable about special education. He is generally supportive of our other issues. We look forward to supporting him in the future.

Council District 16 (Bronx)

The incumbent, Helen Foster, didn't participate in our endorsement process.

We interviewed **Daryl Johnson**, an Assistant Chief Financial Officer for an insurance company. His mother has advanced multiple sclerosis, and his only brother is mildly intellectually challenged. He has served on the Family Board of AHRC for over 16 years, as well as serving on the Boards of the New York City Chapter of National MS Society and Guiding Eyes for the Blind. He is very aware and supportive of the group homes in the district, which he believes are appropriate for some, but also believes in more independent living. He believes persons with disabilities in public housing should be moved to lower floors. He noted that the incumbent has an inaccessible district office and he has pledged his office would be accessible. He has an incredible knowledge of and sensitivity for our concerns.

Council District 18 (Bronx)

The incumbent **Annabel Palma** submitted a questionnaire. She is a caregiver for her cousin who has a mental disability. She started her career working in a nursing home. She has supported legislation friendly to our community. She unsuccessfully attempted to get a major advocate from our community on his community board, who was turned down by the then Borough President. She is a reliable supporter of our issues and is receptive and responsive at hearings. She believes that Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities should be independent of both the Mayor and the Council and should be asked to weigh in on decision making by other agencies.

Council District 19 (Queens)

We have interviewed two candidates and have received questionnaires from two other candidates for this seat being vacated by Tony Avella, who is running for Mayor.

Tom Cooke, a C4/5 quadriplegic, is a long time disability advocate. Currently, he is President of the Board of Directors of United Spinal Association. He has fought for funding and programming to increase visibility and accessibility for persons with disabilities. He has a friend from childhood who is deaf. In addition to the potential of his being an outstanding advocate for us on the Council, we believe that the Council will be more responsive to our issues by his very presence.

We also interviewed Steve Behar, a lawyer and advocate for progressive causes. He previously worked for Congress Member Wiener. He told us that if elected, we would have no better advocate on the Council, but urged us to endorse his good friend, Tom Cooke. We look forward to supporting him in the future.

Jerry Iannece, a community leader who has run unsuccessfully for this seat in the past, submitted a questionnaire. His answers were generally supportive.

Kevin Kim submitted a questionnaire. He seems to be aware of our issues, but needs to have greater reflection regarding his solutions. He appears to be an attractive candidate for the future.

City Council, District 20 (Queens)

We interviewed two of the candidates who are seeking to succeed John Liu, who is running for City Comptroller. They both submitted questionnaires.

S. J. "Social Justice" Jung, a community organizer immigrated to the US at the age of 23 in 1987. He explained he has little experience with disability and equated the language barrier with disability. Within his organization, he has worked with persons with disabilities to obtain benefits and accommodations.

Isaac Sasson is a retired scientist and cancer researcher who previously ran for this office. He won the Lottery and used his winnings to found a charity which works in his community. He is supportive of our issues and believes that these are essential human rights. He is support of breaking up the Council Committee handling disability issues to better focus on our concerns.

City Council, District 21 (Queens)

Julissa Ferraras, recently won a Special Election for this seat with our support, was interview. We've worked with her over the years in her capacity as Chief-of-Staff to her predecessor, Hiram Monserrate. She states she has encouraged community car services in her district to obtain accessible vehicles. She agreed not to support additional penalties on drivers and fleet owners for accepting street hails conditioned upon their obtaining accessible vehicles.

Council District 23 (Queens)

We received a questionnaire from Assembly Member **Mark Weprin**, who is running to take the seat of his brother, David, who is running for City Comptroller. He has worked on disabilities issues since college and received numerous awards. His responses were generally positive, but could have reflected more insight.

Council District 25 (Queens)

We interviewed the incumbent, Helen Sears, and a challenger, **Daniel Dromm**.

Helen Sears appeared before us four years ago for the first time. We did not support her. She has an office which is largely inaccessible, despite having a ramp. She believes that there should be dedicated poll workers for ballot marking devices, which she has actually tried. She believes that the Council should use their power of subpoena.

Daniel Dromm is a teacher, a major LGBT advocate and Democratic District Leader. He has unsuccessfully sought to make the Democratic County headquarters accessible through the addition of a lift, and has been instrumental in his own club's having accessible offices since he founded them many years ago. He has aggressively urged the 82nd Street Business Improvement District to adopt a "one step" program. He believes inclusiveness should begin at birth.

Council District 26 (Queens)

We interviewed two candidates, and received a questionnaire from the third, for this seat being vacated by Eric Gioia who is running for Public Advocate.

Deidre Feerick is an investigative attorney for the City Council and a District Leader. Two of her poll workers are from the disability community. As an investigative attorney, she was responsible for a report called "Access to Some," in which she followed the money for access programs in the Mayor's Management Report that were removed. She was very passionate in her objections to programs and services that did not serve the disability community.

James Van Bramer, an administrator for the Queensborough Public Library, was our endorsed candidate for another Council seat in the past. He oversaw renovations to the library system, and said that 2/3 of the branches would be "completely" accessible, yet failed to recognize the deficiencies in the area of accessible technology and large print and reading books.

We received a questionnaire from Brent O'Leary, who previously lived in Japan, where he was a leader of "Americans Abroad" in the Democratic Party. He displayed little understanding of our issues.

City Council District 27 (Queens)

We interviewed the incumbent, **Leroy Comrie**, who has turned out to be a much stronger advocate for our community than we would have originally thought. He pledged that he would help to facilitate meetings between Taxis for All and the taxi industry, and would combine that effort with a media approach, as a "back door" way of achieving accessibility. He offered to write legislation to require the Taxi and

Limousine Commission to more strictly enforce the regulation regarding requiring livery fleets to provide accessible service.

Council District 28 (Queens)

We interviewed one candidate and received a questionnaire from a second who are challenging incumbent Thomas White, who didn't participate in our screening process, and with whom we have had no relationship.

We interviewed Mireille Leroy and received a questionnaire from Lynn Nunez. Unfortunately, neither seems to have much of a grasp on our issues.

Council District 29 (Queens)

We interviewed four of the candidates who seeking to represent this district, to succeed Melinda Katz, who is running for Comptroller.

Lynn Schulman, who we have supported in the past for this seat, is a former Council Chief-of Staff. She has worked for Emergency Medical Services and Gay Men's Health Crisis. Her partner is a mental health consumer and her brother has a developmental disability. She displayed an extensive knowledge and a history of advocacy for our community. She fought for a ramp to assist a disabled employee at EMS and later refused to attend inaccessible events while at GMHC. She would do a survey with 504 of all curb cuts in her district.

Former Assembly Member Michael Cohen had a warm and supportive relationship with us when he was in office. He stepped down to take care of his terminally-ill wife. He successfully battled polio as a child. His #1 priority in the Assembly was funding for VESID. He proposed reinstating the Stock Transfer Tax.

Mel Gagarin, a young lawyer, says he will fight for affordable housing and modernizing our infrastructure, which would include accessibility.

Heidi Chain has support from a number of unions. As Chief of the local CERT she has lectured to disabled and senior residents on emergency preparedness. She is also involved with taking kids with disabilities to various events. She believes that there should be economic incentives for taxi and car service fleet owners to become accessible.

Council District 33 (Brooklyn)

We interviewed two of the candidates to succeed David Yassky, who also submitted questionnaires.

Jo Anne Simon is a nationally prominent A.D.A lawyer, Democratic District Leader and 504 Executive Committee member (on a leave of absence for the campaign). She is a lifelong advocate for persons with disabilities. Her parents were deaf, she knows

sign language, and was a coordinator of disability services at Gallaudet University. She was the lead council for the landmark Bartlett case, which established the right of a plaintiff with a learning disability to reasonable accommodation in the taking of the New York State Bar exam. She testified before the US Senate in support of the A.D.A. Amendments Act. We know that, if elected, she will be a terrific advocate for our issues.

Doug Biviano, who is running on a strong anti-war platform, was Campaign Manager for Dennis Kucinich's Presidential campaign in New York State. He has psoriatic arthritis and had childhood asthma. If elected, he would hire a part-time disability analyst. He will work with us and is generally supportive of our issues, and gave in-depth answers.

Council District 34 (Brooklyn/Queens)

Diana Reyna, the incumbent, submitted a questionnaire. She proposed a representative of our community to be appointed as the Brooklyn representative on the Taxi and Limousine Commission, and has generally been very responsive to our issues. She demonstrates knowledge of our concerns and would continue to be a strong ally on the City Council. She is aware that more than 20% of the community is composed of persons with disabilities.

Gerry Esposito is a long-time District Manager of Community Board 1 Bk. He has had employees with disabilities. He supports adding the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities to the City Charter to give it more power. He generally supports our issues.

Council District 35 (Brooklyn)

Letitia "Tish" James, the incumbent, who we've supported in all her previous races, has been a loyal supporter of our issues. She believed that it was critical for the community to identify a candidate for Transportation Chair, whom she would support. She supports the inclusion of disability criteria in the selection of city contractors.

Council District 36 (Brooklyn)

The incumbent, Al Vann, who is running for re-election, has never participated in our screening procedures.

We interviewed **Saquan Jones**, a school teacher, who presents himself as a young, bright and attractive candidate. He was a caregiver for his grandmother, who is mobility-impaired, and was aware of the obstacles which she encountered. He is concerned about accessibility in jobs, housing, and transportation. He notes that too much new construction is not in compliance with the A.D.A.

Tremaine Wright submitted a questionnaire. His experiences with his grandfather who uses a wheelchair and lives in a nursing home have made him aware of the lack of

assisted living options within the district. He believes such options must be developed so that residents can remain in their community.

Council District 38 (Brooklyn)

Council Member **Sara Gonzalez**, who is running for re-election, has been a staunch supporter of our issues. She submitted a questionnaire and was represented by a staff member. She moved her district office from the elegant space of her predecessor to a storefront, so it would be accessible. She employs a staff member with a disability, for whom she provides reasonable accommodation. Last summer, when a disabled customer complained lack of access to the free ferry and bus shuttles at IKEA in her district, she resolved the problem within a week. She provided capital funding for making the famed Sunset Park accessible.

Council District 39 (Brooklyn)

We interviewed three of the candidates running to succeed Bill deBlasio, who is running for Public Advocate. All submitted questionnaires.

Brad Lander, through the 5th Avenue Committee, developed several hundred units of low and moderate-income accessible housing with “set-asides” for persons with disabilities, as well as supportive housing, and advocated for many more. He supports all of our issues and has a clear understanding of how to achieve many of our goals.

Bob Zuckerman has a brother with Asperser’s Syndrome and has worked closely with others, which has only increased his awareness of disability issues. His answers evidence a good understanding of our issues and would be a strong second choice in this crowded field.

Josh Skaller seeks to create a more economically-just society. He generally supports our issues and we could generally count on him, however, he didn’t display much in-depth knowledge or insight.

Council District 40 (Brooklyn)

Matthieu Eugene, who won a special election last year, did not participate in our endorsement procedure.

We interviewed Rock Hackshaw, one of the top political bloggers in New York, serves on a committee developed by the Federation of Multi-Cultural Programs, which deals, in part with disability rights. He has been a long-time anti-Democratic organization activist. While his answers were generally acceptable, he apparently did not give much thought to them.

Council District 45 (Brooklyn)

Kendall Stewart, the incumbent, did not participate in our endorsement procedure. Two of his challengers were interviewed and submitted questionnaires.

Rodrick Daley is a “Special” Education teacher. He said he has worked to make community meetings including Community Board accessible. He has worked with several disability organizations in the community. He is a strong supporter of our issues.

We have supported Sam Taitt, an Associate Professor at Kingsborough Community College, in prior races for this seat, in which he was narrowly defeated. He has many disabled students and has worked with disability organizations on campus and in the community. He bemoaned the lack of accessibility in his native Caribbean. He expressed his desire to see greater access in New York City. While he would generally tend to be favorable to our concerns, he lacks the passion that we see in Rodrick Daley.

Council District 46(Brooklyn)

We supported the incumbent, **Lew Fidler**, in his last race. He is proud of his work with and funding for the Summer Youth Employment Program for children with disabilities and promises to work with us for an accessible livery bill. He states that he has requested more improvements in pedestrian ramps/curb cuts than anyone else in the Council. He says he was an ally of former Council Member Margarita Lopez on the accessible taxi bill and encouraged her to move for a hearing He fought for the city to repair and pay for sidewalks damaged by uprooted trees.

Alan Sasson has a friend who is a quadriplegic and pledged to listen to the community for guidance on supportive housing, and perhaps other issues.

Council District 50 (Staten Island)

We interviewed James M. Pocchia, the Democratic candidate opposing the incumbent James Oddo. Mr. Oddo, although a Republican, has been generally supportive of our issues. Generally, we would support a Democratic candidate against a Republican candidate, but Mr. Pocchia demonstrates little understanding of our concerns.