

How would you use this position to improve policing in New York? Do you support cutting NYPD funding in order to reallocate funds towards needed services and social programs? Where would you reallocate the funds, if so? What concrete policies would you advocate for to improve policing in NY? \*

It's hard to imagine real racial justice with a NYPD Commissioner who won't say that black lives matter.

It's hard to imagine real racial justice when we have a City more interested in policing communities of color, rather than investing in them.

When thousands of people took to the streets to demand that the City Council hold the NYPD accountable, I listened, and I voted against the budget because it did not defund the NYPD (<https://benkallos.com/press-release/council-member-ben-kallos-floor-statement-fy-2021-budget-vote>), and I am the only candidate in this race to do so. I went as far as identifying \$15 billion in spending cuts and proposed a billion dollars in spending to invest in low-income communities of color who have been hardest hit by over-policing (<https://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/ny-ben-kallos-nyc-budget-20200616-pj7mzlz3dfhbrp3wuhbmoafvha-story.html>), as a real alternative to the Mayor's budget that reinvested in over-policing. To this day I continue to fight to defund NYPD and invest in social services like universal after-school, youth job programs, and legal services. I believe one of the reasons I have been endorsed by 74 labor unions is that I have fought to secure good paying union jobs for at-risk, low income, and public housing residents throughout the borough. Most recently I have partnered with Pathways 2 Apprenticeship (P2A) (<https://p2atrades.org/>) to do so.

Defund NYPD is not just a slogan, it is how we pay for the positive change we want to see in our communities.

Once we acknowledge the problem of communities being over-policed it will be easier to see a first step in fixing the problems that got us here.

For me it starts with education, giving every single child access to the internet, giving students history books that don't just have the stories of white men and colonizers, investing in small businesses owned by people of color, especially women, and ending mass incarceration and over-policing communities of color.

We need to change how our criminal justice system treats white people differently than the black and brown people who fill our jails. We need to change how it treats poor people and people who can afford pricey lawyers. The Paul Manafort and Harvey Weinstains of the world experience a very different criminal justice system, and that is not acceptable.

How would you go about creating more affordable housing in New York? What about permanent housing for New York's homeless population? Where would you put it? How would you make sure it's actually affordable and sustainable? Would you ever support upzoning in order to create it? Will you accept money from real estate interests? Please be specific on your proposals. \*

We've got an affordable housing crisis, that never seems to go away despite generations of politicians promising to do something about it.

That's why I've always refused real estate money.

All I want is for the people who live here, to be able to stay here, and not have to be forced out because they can no longer afford it. I know it sounds simple, but that's the problem, and that's one of the things that keeps me up at night.

When greedy landlords took billions in tax breaks from the politicians that they gave big checks to without registering the affordable housing they promised, I wrote the law to recapture hundreds of thousands of affordable homes (<https://www.propublica.org/article/landlords-fail-to-list-fifty-thousand-nyc-apartments-for-rent-limits>) that had been lost and open them up for all low-income New Yorkers (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/nyregion/nyc-affordable-housing-lottery.html>).

When MIH-ZQA passed, Borough President Brewer and I mandated affordability for additional height in Manhattan below 96th Street (<https://benkallos.com/mih-zqa>). I support additional housing and population density in my district using MIH-ZQA to secure affordability and add to the 1,000 affordable homes we've already built or preserved in Council District 5. With almost half our city's residential area zoned for 0.5 FAR, I proposed doubling density to add 3 billion square feet of housing (<https://benkallos.com/press-release/kallos-testimony-hearing-affordable-housing-development-examine-programs-supporting>). And I wrote the law to recapture hundreds of thousands of affordable homes that had been lost and open them up for all low-income New Yorkers.

With 18,000 children who woke up in a homeless shelter this morning with 17,000 family members, they are the face of homelessness in our city. That's why I founded the Eastside Taskforce on Homeless Outreach and Services (ETHOS) with Borough President Brewer to do our part to help and we've built supportive housing all over the district including across the street from where I live.

Where others see a dead or dying city pointing to vacant apartments as proof, I see more vacancies than homeless families and the opportunity to house them all now, which is why I proposed it in an op-ed (<https://www.amny.com/opinion/op-ed-new-york-city-has-enough-vacant-apartments-to-house-the-homeless-its-time-to-do-it/>).

Last month I co-sponsored legislation with Speaker Corey Johnson to mandate a citywide comprehensive planning so every neighborhood does their fair share (<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4735629&GUID=BAACDD2D-290D-4F35-B0F7-578E4458498A&Options=Advanced&Search=>).

We can make affordable housing mandatory everywhere in Manhattan and welcome the homeless in off the streets as our neighbors.

Do you support taxing the wealthy? What specific tax policy changes would you support in New York State and New York City to increase State and City revenue? How will you, at the same time, restore NYC's economic health, employment, tax base, and small businesses, both short-term and long? \*

Yes. During my first months in the City Council I fought for a millionaire's tax to pay for universal pre-k. I continue to support taxes on the ultra-wealthy and on pied-a-terres to pay for programs that help everyday New Yorkers.

Most of the power to tax lies at the state government, but there are things we can do on the City level. I organized a borough-wide coalition to rezone residential districts to ban empty "voids" in buildings that propped up apartments for overseas billionaires. The new zoning will encourage the building of apartments for New Yorkers who will live here and pay New York taxes.

I also signed on to an amicus brief in support of a lawsuit against the Mayor to force the City to fix its beyond-broken property tax system. The current system unfairly under-taxes certain wealthy property owners while over-taxing many New Yorkers who are struggling to stay in their homes. As Borough President, I would continue to fight for real property tax reform.

Our City Budget is filled with waste and the first thing I would do to restore our economic health would be to make cuts to excess spending. As mentioned above, I reviewed the City's budget and found \$15 billion that could be cut to make way for cost savings and funding for social services our residents desperately need (<https://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/ny-ben-kallos-nyc-budget-20200616-pj7mzlz3dfhbrp3wuhbmoafvha-story.html>).

I do support taxing the wealthy.

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Downtown Democrat Club Candidate Survey: Borough President <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/d/1d7LrjtYSqUk0F3itmdsz0...>

How should we desegregate our schools? Do you support eliminating the SHSAT? Do you support admissions screens? What concrete changes would you make to our public school system? \*

I am a proud graduate of the Bronx High School of Science and I believe every child should have access to a world-class education.

Growing up sharing a room with my mom, living with my grandparents, I was on free and reduced school lunch, but I was so ashamed that other kids would find out how poor I was that I didn't eat. That's why I won free school lunch and want to make dinner free.

Coming from the home that I did, after school activities were a refuge, which is why I authored legislation to mandate universal afterschool. I think that taken together with universal youth jobs they could help stop the schools to prison pipeline (<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3673406&GUID=1B6154DA-D61A-4A21-BE7C-690683D69824&Options=Advanced&Search=>).

The worst part of my job is when someone tells me that they are moving out of the neighborhood because they can't afford it, usually, they mention childcare. That's why I campaigned for Universal Pre kindergarten, but was disappointed when my district only got a hundred seats. So we worked with providers and parents, to open over 1,000 new seats. Now we need to win 3K for All from the tip of Manhattan to Central Harlem, and if the pandemic has proved one thing, we need Universal Child Care more than we did before.

When children were being turned away from schools in my district I authored a law to force the Department of Education to tell us how many kids are applying for every school seat along with how they decide where

to build new seats. That forced the city to fund 800 more school seats in my district. We need to build new desegregated schools all over Manhattan (<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2962029&GUID=DB5A6F41-42F2-4EC8-9AC9-3DD4F67004CE&Options=Advanced&Search=>).

This past summer, I sent a letter to Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Carranza demanding that the City create a new desegregated citywide school district to serve every student in remote learning. With a quarter of all families opting for remote learning we had a historic opportunity to eliminate screens, desegregate classes, and organize schools based on learning style, enrichment, and common interest (<https://benkallos.com/press-release/demand-desegregate-all-remote-learning-now-letter-mayor-de-blasio-and-doe-chancellor>).

In partnership with Public Advocate Jumaane Williams and Council Members Robert Cornegy and Justin Brannan, I proposed legislation aimed at increasing racial equity in NYC's specialized high schools. The legislation would ensure that every middle school student receives free test preparation and would automatically register every 8th grader for the SHSAT (<https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/education/ny-specialized-high-school-exam-20200319-qwimqn4ogvbtzf6mji2mqdp3yi-story.html>).

I wouldn't be here without the State University of New York, but even "financial aid" left me with student debt that I won't be done paying off until I retire. That's why I support making City University free for residents who graduate and stay in our city.

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Downtown Democrat Club Candidate Survey: Borough President <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/d/1d7LrjtYSqUk0F3itmdsz0...>

As Borough President, I will fight to feed our kids, for universal childcare. Building a more equitable Manhattan for all of us starts with good schools.

What is the path forward on corrections reform? Do you support closing Rikers? Do you support constructing new, borough-based jails? In all boroughs or just some of them? Do you support bail reform? Did you support the recent partial roll back of bail reform? \*

As I mentioned above, I voted against the budget that failed to #DefundNYPD. We must invest at least \$1 billion dollars into low-income communities of color harmed by over policing.

We have a moral imperative to close Rikers. I've been to Rikers, I saw recently arrested women, on the floor, soiled, shivering, hungry, and in crisis. When I asked how we could take care of them, I was met with antipathy. That was Rikers on their best behavior, when they knew a tour of elected officials was coming. We have a moral imperative to close Rikers and end the incarceration of the innocent on an island of no accountability. That's why I voted to close Rikers.

We need to do everything we can to reduce our jail population. I opposed the recent roll back of bail reform. There is no reason to continue to criminalize poverty, jailing black and brown New Yorkers at a disproportionate rate, while the wealthy get white glove treatment. We need to double down our investment in diversion programs and support for social services and community centers in communities with a history of being overpoliced.

To close Rikers Island and move closer toward really divesting from the prison industrial complex, we need to end cash bail, not continue to roll back the progress made. We need to expand pre-trial services like supervised release. We need to invest in jobs and mental health programs especially in communities in need. We need to safely and efficiently find ways to be more humane. This includes having smaller facilities that are closer to the communities allowing those residents easier access to their families and attorneys. This is why I voted in favor of the borough based jail plan. I do not support increasing the population of people in pre-trial detention, but I do support having safe, modern, and accessible locations for the population in pre-trial detention. This is a necessary step towards a decarceral world.

The priority must be to put an end to the school-to-prison pipeline and to end over policing in our black and Latinx neighborhoods.

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Downtown Democrat Club Candidate Survey: Borough President <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/d/1d7LrjtYSqUk0F3itmdsz0...>

How can New York lead on climate change? Are there any green energy projects we can pursue? Do you support any of the existing pipeline proposals? How can we leverage our financial and economic power to encourage other jurisdictions to be better on the climate? \*

Our City is facing a climate emergency.

That is why I authored a resolution officially declaring a Climate Emergency, and when it passed, New York City became the largest city on the planet to acknowledge the seriousness of the problem (<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3940953&GUID=506493D1-9DF1-4289-8893-4AF892557355&Options=Advanced&Search=>).

With so many New Yorkers who don't own a car and I am one of them, I travel by train and bus like 5.5 million other New Yorkers. That's why I've focused on improving public transportation options from adding Select Bus off-board payment and bus lanes, to opening bike shares and adding bike lanes, to launching ferry service connecting the East Side to Queens and Brooklyn, to even opening the 2nd Avenue Subway with Congressman Carolyn Maloney who endorsed me.

New York City's biggest source of pollution is buildings, specifically large buildings. That's why I co sponsored the Climate Mobilization Act to make sure that new buildings and old buildings in our area are doing their part in combating climate change (<https://council.nyc.gov/data/green/>). Recently as the Council started to roll back this important law with a carve-out for polluting natural gas, I was proud to vote against

the loophole, unlike one of my opponents.

Every building on every block can make a difference too. As Co-Chair of the Progressive Caucus, I was a lead sponsor of the Climate Mobilization Act. We stood up to REBNY to pass the strongest green buildings law on the planet to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The law mandates photovoltaic or green roofs on all new construction and major roof renovations. Green Roofs have been shown to be extremely effective for stormwater retention, and I have been proud to fund four green roofs on public schools in my district.

Last February, the Mayor implemented my proposed ban on selling single-use plastic bottles at City owned and leased properties. On the Upper East Side we launched a Compost On-the-Go program that increases access to food waste composting for New Yorkers in the Bronx and Northern Manhattan. We've been leading the fight on the rollback of composting, and even investing in digesters for community composting that the Mayor can't rollback (<https://benkallos.com/press-clip/verge-new-york-city-cracking-down-plastic-bottles-justine-calma>).

Stormwater is the leading cause of water pollution in New York City. Manhattan has 500 miles of roads, and every block represents an opportunity to prevent storm runoff. As Manhattan Borough President I would push for a rapid expansion of bioswales, green medians, and tree pits, and I would fund them with my capital funds.

In Manhattan we have to rethink our waterways as a natural part of our landscape. As a Council Member, I have worked to secure \$275 million dollars for a resilient East River Esplanade, and have worked with state and federal officials to advance a plan to replace sections of our concrete seawall with a natural shore that aids in clean stormwater drainage. As Borough President I will prioritize building resilient

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waterfront parks, implementing resiliency measures faster in Lower Manhattan, and create a plan for flood zones in communities of color in Northern Manhattan including East Harlem, that have been left out of other plans.

Our green infrastructure is only as good as the maintenance we give it. Whether it's as basic as sweeping and collecting litter around public lakes and ponds or maintaining our catch basins, I would use my oversight role as Borough President to ensure we are not only expanding our green infrastructure, but keeping it in great, working condition. I will also work with the Parks Department, the Department of Environmental Protection, and local Community Boards to identify green infrastructure improvements in areas where stormwater is draining into bodies of water without sufficient treatment.

How will you improve procurement and contracting? How do we cut waste, and how do we make sure women- and minority-owned businesses get a fair shake in the procurement process? \*

Women and people of color face discrimination in obtaining city contracts so rampant that we must offer an MWBE preference. As Contracts Committee Chair I passed a law returning Asian American professional service providers to the MWBE program. Previously, I used my position as Chair of a land use subcommittee to pressure developers and force commitments to use MWBEs on city-subsidized affordable housing. The city should require MWBE commitments be satisfied as part of initial bids, breakout projects so that MWBEs can bid directly. As Borough President I would dedicate resources from my office and partner with SBS and

the City's office of MWBE to help existing MWBE's register with the City so that they can bid on City contracts. I have partnered with business leaders in Harlem and throughout Manhattan to hold events to help MWBE's get registered with success. Registration can be difficult and lengthy for some small businesses to navigate without help. We can and must make this process easier.

Further, as Contracts Chair, I worked to get vendors, including MWBE vendors, paid on time by pushing the Mayor's office of Contracts as well as the Comptroller's office to identify issues preventing on time payment on contracts and working with the vendors to fix them. The result has been faster payments on satisfied contracts. As Borough President, I will continue this work and ensure that the City meets its obligations to MWBE's in a timely manner.

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Downtown Democrat Club Candidate Survey: Borough President <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/d/1d7LrjtYSqUk0F3itmdsz0...>

What is your plan to save small businesses? How do we make sure, when we come back from COVID, our local businesses are still here? And how do we make sure the enormous amount of commercial vacancies get filled, and not just by big chains snatching up cheap leases? \*

In May, when our small businesses were fully shut down, I sent a letter with Borough President Brewer and Council Member Powers calling on the Mayor to implement outdoor dining so New Yorkers could safely eat at our local restaurants and get our economy moving again. Outdoor dining came to define the way New Yorkers have adapted to the pandemic and has become an essential lifeline to businesses. I was excited to co-prime sponsor the law that made outdoor dining a permanent fixture of New York City's streetlife (<https://benkallos.com/press-release/letter-open-sidewalks-and-streets-restaurants-social-distanced-service-kallos-brewer>).

In September, I introduced two bills to help small businesses stay open as New York City fights through the economic fallout of Covid-19. The first creates a low-interest small grants and loans program that would provide restaurants with up to \$250,000 in funding (<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4648609&GUID=884EDEFB-D5BE-4DAA-B710-A6B3CBE353F1&Options=Advanced&Search=>). These new funds could be used for infrastructure changes, ventilation improvements, as well as other public health upgrades to assist those who are at greater risk for developing serious complications from the coronavirus. The second bill would streamline the process for restaurants to obtain or renew a sidewalk-cafe license and would also allow for licenses to be transferred should an establishment undergo a change of ownership (<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov>

Manhattan's vacant storefronts represent one of the greatest challenges our small business community faces, but also a great opportunity. If we can change the rules so landlords are incentivized or required to rent their storefronts, it will become much easier to own a small business in Manhattan. Borough President Brewer set forth a model of how to do this when she was in the City Council when she rezoned sections of her district to maintain the presence of small businesses (<https://www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov/issues/storefronters-about/>). As Borough President, I would continue her work to bring small business zoning to every neighborhood in Manhattan. I am also a co-prime sponsor of the bill that would establish commercial rent control for small businesses, which would provide long term stability to New York's mom and pop entrepreneurs (<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4230081&GUID=B2FF2D24-F642-42A1-BEBB-D8D59E079D99>).

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Downtown Democrat Club Candidate Survey: Borough President <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/d/1d7LrjtYSqUk0F3itmdsz0...>

How do you plan to use your office as more than just a bully pulpit? What are some concrete things you plan to do, other than vocally support and oppose policy decisions made by others? \*

I believe that the position of Manhattan Borough President is what you make of it and I have big ideas.

In my district I have put a trash can on every corner and as Borough President I want to put a trash can on every corner in Manhattan. We can clean our City up one trash can at a time.

I will work to make our Community Boards representative of our City by appointing diverse candidates of different races, socio-economic statuses, genders, ages, and more.

I will open supportive housing for the homeless population in neighborhoods throughout Manhattan and found coalitions like ETHOS throughout the borough to connect homeless people with the services they need.

The Borough President can introduce legislation with City Council members and I will continue to fight to make automatic benefits and retirement security for all a reality. More than a half million New Yorkers would have improved access to government benefits with "automatic benefits", which would be provided automatically and renewed based on information the government already has from applications and forms to increase efficiency and reduce bureaucracy. More than one million private-sector workers in New York

City that do not have any access to retirement plans through their employers could finally get one as "Retirement Security for All" legislation. Employers with more than 4 employees that do not currently offer a retirement plan would be required to automatically enroll employees through payroll deduction. There would be no cost to employers with small employers and gig workers able to voluntarily join the program.

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Downtown Democrat Club Candidate Survey: Borough President <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/d/1d7LrjtYSqUk0F3itmdsz0...>

How will you utilize and empower community boards to better serve their communities? \*

I got my start on Community Board 8 Manhattan when Scott Stringer first appointed me. I think I've proven that when elected officials support their community boards we can be unstoppable.

Community boards are asked to review projects of great complexity. In 2015, I authored legislation to fund an urban planner for every community board, so members would have access to the expertise needed to ask the right questions and fight for affordable housing and community benefits when new projects are presented to them. At my own boards, I have funded urban planners through my expense funding, and we've seen much more productive dialogues on development issues as a result. In the 2018 Charter Revision process, we won a charter revision to mandate urban planners for all community boards citywide. This year I provided funding for access to an urban planner for every board in Manhattan to empower communities to stand up to developers (<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2253267&GUID=22426D1F-A1EE-47AE-9437-448C16F94636&Options=Advanced&Search=>).

I worked with Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer to introduce and pass the resolution that allowed teens on community boards (<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=1681058&GUID=072C7989-B9BD-4D8B-AEE0-7C560CA3902F&Options=Advanced&Search=>).

In Manhattan, Gale Brewer has made great strides reporting on the demographics of community boards, and we need that to happen citywide. I sponsored legislation with Congress Member-elect Ritchie Torres in the City Council to force disclosure of demographic information for all Community Boards (<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2543693&GUID=9FB005C6-D8A0-4C8A850C-0B430C883450&Options=Advanced&Search=>).

I support term limits for the President, for myself in the City Council, and for the Community Boards. I testified in favor of term limits at the Charter Revision Committee because I believe they give us an opportunity to keep our community boards reflective of the constantly changing neighborhoods they represent. The voters agreed and adopted term limits starting in 2029 ([https://benkallos.com/charter#\\_Toc525830525](https://benkallos.com/charter#_Toc525830525)).

In my local boards, I have been proud to increase the diversity of membership with Gale Brewer's partnership. We are actively recruiting and appointing new members from high school, union members, and retirees, and ensuring people of color have better representation. The boards in my district have a new face and now they're fighting for affordable housing, good union jobs, and safe streets for cyclists and pedestrians.

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Downtown Democrat Club Candidate Survey: Borough President <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/d/1d7LrjtYSqUk0F3itmdsz0...>

Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?

I am running for Manhattan Borough President because anywhere else in America, people struggle to get out, but here in New York City people struggle to stay, and together I believe we can fix that.

Together we can build a Manhattan that is affordable.

A Manhattan that is equitable.

I believe that this year, we will elect a new City Council and Borough President who haven't been corrupted by real estate and corporate money.

We can prioritize a worker-led recovery from the pandemic, and we can achieve real racial, economic, and criminal justice.

Join our team at Kallos.NYC and together we can build a fairer, healthier, more equitable Manhattan for the future.

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