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# THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

♦ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ♦ President: Joe Nunley ♦

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## **SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEETING: Democrats & the Disabled**

***We're here, we're weird, get used to it!***

The disabled are a huge minority, and one that is not discussed much by politicians. This forum will cover various aspects of disability and politics, and show why this is a key issue for Democrats, in New York and around the nation.

- **Jared Stein**, partner, law office of Michelle Siegel; adjunct professor, Columbia University School of Social Work
- **Kathryn Capella**, trustee, New York Learning Disabilities Association; Director NYS Disabilities Advocacy Association and Network
- **Peter Flom**, trustee, New York Learning Disabilities Association; author of *Screwed Up Somehow but not Stupid: Life with a Learning Disability*; member, Broadway Democrats Steering Committee

**Thursday, Sept. 22 (online)**

**Club Business 7:30 pm**

**Forum 8:00 pm**

***register at***

**[bit.ly/broadwaydems-register-Zoom-meeting](http://bit.ly/broadwaydems-register-Zoom-meeting)**

for more information, email [DistrictLeaders@BroadwayDemocrats.org](mailto:DistrictLeaders@BroadwayDemocrats.org)

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Volume 47, Issue 7

September 2022

## District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

### Local Election Wrap Up: Good News!

Our three endorsed candidates won by overwhelming margins overall, and did even better in our district. Here are the results, pending the counting of the fairly large number of absentee ballots, which should be completed in a few days:

<u>Congress, 12<sup>th</sup> Dist.</u>	<u>Our Dist.</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Nadler</b>	<b>753 (77%)</b>	<b>45,545 (56%)</b>
Maloney	103 (11%)	20,038 (24%)
Patel	116 (12%)	15,744 (19%)
Sheth	6 (1%)	832 (1%)

<u>Congress, 13<sup>th</sup> Dist.</u>	<u>Our Dist.</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Espaillet</b>	<b>2,550 (82%)</b>	<b>29,782 (81%)</b>
Hano	368 (12%)	4,709 (13%)
Spies	199 (6%)	2,286 (6%)

<u>NY Senate, 30<sup>th</sup> Dist.</u>	<u>Our Dist.</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Cleare</b>	<b>2,793 (71%)</b>	<b>12,900 (70%)</b>
Harmongoff	1,119 (29%)	5,135 (30%)

The Nadler victory was especially satisfying. Two stalwart liberals, Jerry Nadler and Carolyn Maloney, were thrown into the same district in a highly partisan political process brought to us by upstate Republicans and their headless chicken “good government” enablers. Our voters were seething that they couldn’t vote for Nadler, or even Maloney. But while Maloney has advocated for liberal principles for her entire career, Nadler did so much more than this. When pressure was brought by the Bush administration to support the Iraq War, Maloney folded, Nadler held firm. Likewise with the Iran nuclear agreement, which Nadler supported, Maloney opposed, and which kept the region nuclear weapons free—until Trump became President.

Most disappointing was the degeneration of the Maloney campaign into innuendo and ugliness at the end. But I’ll chalk this up to frustration. A good career was ended. But a great one continues.

Equally satisfying, if not quite as significant, was the lopsided victory of State Senator Robert Jackson over his former IDC opponent Angel Vasquez. The new State Senate lines were almost as bad as the Congressional lines. We knew that we ourselves wouldn’t lose, because the part of our district that

Jackson used to represent will now be represented by the outstanding Cordell Cleare.

But the threatened defeat of Robert Jackson would have been even worse for progressive politics than Jerry Nadler’s defeat, because Carolyn Maloney has a pretty good record, while Angel Vasquez, the former Chief of Staff for Marisol Alcantara, does not. Alcantara sold out both democracy and the Democratic voters of her district by voting with the IDC for Republicans to run the NY State Senate, even though more Democrats had been elected statewide.

For years, no progressive or even moderately liberal legislation got through the State Senate because of the alliance of Cuomo, the IDC, and the Republicans. Jackson trounced Alcantara in 2018, but that was mostly because of overwhelming margins on the Upper West Side, which was eliminated from the district in 2022. This time, Jackson carried the 72<sup>nd</sup> AD, home of Vasquez’s patron Congressman Espaillet; he carried the Bronx, which he had never represented and where the entire political leadership was aligned against him; and he won the Washington Heights neighborhood in which both he and Mark Levine—another *extremely disappointing* endorser of Vasquez—live by a 12-1 margin. This victory was especially poignant for the Broadway Democrats, because Robert Jackson has always been there for us—at our meetings, on the issues, in the district. Congratulations to the two Senators I will always call “ours”: Cordell Cleare and Robert Jackson.

I hope to see you in the coming weeks, both virtually and in person, as we campaign to keep our democracy. There are a lot of important races, here in New York, and only two rivers away, in Pennsylvania.

*CA*

<http://www.broadwaydemocrats.org>

[facebook.com/groups/BroadwayDemocrats](https://www.facebook.com/groups/BroadwayDemocrats)

*CA*

# The Color of My Skin

## Angela Rooks

I've lived on the Upper West Side my entire life—for more than “50” years, I've seen the good, the bad, and the ugly! Growing up in New York on West 105th Street and Broadway until eventually moving to Cathedral Parkway Towers in Manhattan Valley in the '70s, I never experienced racism. We lived in a pretty diverse neighborhood. Grosvenor Neighborhood House and P.S. 145 were both very much integrated. My friends were only different because of our backgrounds, not our skin color! Risa was Japanese, Holly and Perry were White, Stephanie was Black, and Isaac was German & Black, Bi-Racial, and none of that seemed to matter; we just got along.

### The Separation Begins

As I watched the Upper West Side change in the 2000s, with the arrival of a new population of more affluent people, often white, our local public schools began to change, mirroring the attitudes and values of the new arrivals. I observed children being subject to grouping by status within the same school buildings. The development of “specialized programs” like “magnet programs” and charter schools began a true separation of children from the same community. The elite got into the specialized portion of the same building we used to call “Public School,” where they entered and exited through different doors at different times. Good old-fashioned birthday parties in Riverside Park transitioned to themed club parties where boys and girls of color, when invited, tried to fit in but never felt quite welcomed! We were no longer commingling, sharing, and interacting but merely co-existing in parallel spaces.

I joined the Broadway Democrats years ago, attending a few meetings and never being active on any issues until, last year, Paula, my friend who happens to be Jewish, came knocking and asked me to be a part of the Steering Committee, as well as a Racial Justice Initiative. It was one of the best decisions I made. Here I met and got to know individuals from many walks of life who represented the “Old Upper West Side,” where we fight for the rights of people in hopes of making a difference in our neighborhood and, more broadly, an ever-changing world! When the topic of why we don't seem to attract many people of color to the Broadway Democratic Club was posed recently, I initially sat quietly. I listened until realizing, as a Black woman, it was my duty to respond.

Fast forward to the new normal after the election of #45, Donald J. Trump! It was officially okay to hate again because of “skin color.” After calling my 80-year-old aunt, who lives in North Carolina, to check on her, she stated “I'm locked, loaded, and ready for whatever.” It was then I had a lightbulb moment, and all the old issues of trust and fear were revisited. I knew the issues that had separated many of us for years were back with a vengeance, and patience, along with understanding, would quickly become a thing of the past for a Black woman dealing with a White woman in a White man's world.

A primary reason people of color don't join predominantly White organizations is that we don't feel welcome! The content of what is offered rarely is appealing or of interest; there seems to be a disconnect; your issues are not our issues, your struggles are not the same as ours, and your understanding of what it's like being Black, while sympathetic, is perceived as not genuine. We do not expect or want handouts but deserve the same opportunities for success and quality living in the neighborhoods we all call home!

I would suggest that we engage in conversations that respect our differences, actively listen to our stories, and learn to appreciate that we heal our legacy of pain through cultural self-expression. It's time to meaningfully address issues that divide us and return the Upper West Side to its true roots, where we all live as neighbors committed to helping one another. The “color” is just skin complexion and doesn't need to be a barrier to living as one community!



### Join the Broadway Democrats!

Dues: Seniors \$10/Yr, All Others \$25/Yr

Join on the website at

<http://www.broadwaydemocrats.org/sign-up-to-join-the-club.html>

or

Send checks to: **Broadway Democrats**  
P.O. Box 1099 Cathedral Station  
New York, New York 10025

*contact Barbara Trelstad,  
btrelstad@gmail.com  
for more information*



# Ballot Proposals in November: What You Need to Know

Meika A. Mustrangi

There will be one state-wide proposal and three city-wide proposals on the ballot in the November General Election. Learn more about them so you'll be ready to vote come November.

Proposal 1 (the state-wide proposal) would be the first environmental bond act enacted in New York in 26 years. EarthJustice believes it's a good start and together with the federal Inflation Reduction Act will boost spending on environment-related projects.

Proposals 2, 3 and 4 are changes to the New York City Charter (our city's constitution). They were submitted by the Racial Justice Commission, convened by Mayor Bill de Blasio after the widespread protests against systemic racism and police violence in 2020.

The following are the official descriptions from the NYS Board of Elections and the NYC Racial Justice Commission:

## **Proposal 1 (state-wide): Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act, 2022**

To address and combat the impact of climate change and damage to the environment, the "Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act of 2022" authorizes the sale of state bonds up to four billion two hundred million dollars to fund environmental protection, natural restoration, resiliency, and clean energy projects.

The purpose of this proposal is to authorize the creation of state debt and the sale of state bonds in the amount of up to four billion two hundred million dollars (\$4,200,000,000) for certain capital projects for the purpose of making environmental improvements that preserve, enhance, and restore New York's natural resources and reduce the impact of climate change. If approved, the proposal would allow the State to borrow up to \$4,200,000,000 to provide funding for capital projects for the following: restoration and flood risk reduction (at least \$1,100,000,000), open space land conservation and recreation (up to \$650,000,000), climate change mitigation (up to \$1,500,000,000), and water quality improvement and resilient infrastructure (at least \$650,000,000).

The proposal would also allow the State to refund the debt to take advantage of lower interest rates if the opportunity arises. To accomplish this, the proposal authorizes the State Comptroller to issue additional state bonds in sums up to or

exceeding the amount of the bonds initially issued to refund, to advance refund, or otherwise to repay part or all of such bonds prior to the scheduled dates of their maturity.

## **Proposal 2 (city-wide): Amend the Charter to add a Statement of Values**

The New York City Charter does not currently have a preamble. Adding a preamble would allow New Yorkers to adopt a vision and statement of foundational values intended to guide City government in fulfilling its duties. This proposal would amend the New York City Charter to:

(1) add a preamble, which would be an introductory statement of values and vision aspiring toward "a just and equitable city for all" New Yorkers; and

(2) include in the preamble a statement that the City must strive to remedy "past and continuing harms. and to reconstruct, revise, and reimagine our foundations, structures, institutions, and laws to promote justice and equity for all New Yorkers."

## **Proposal 3 (city-wide): Establish a Racial Equity Office, Plan, and Commission**

The Commission's second proposal is to create an Office of Racial Equity, require Racial Equity Plans, and form a Commission on Racial Equity. This proposal would amend the City Charter to:

(1) Require citywide and agency-specific Racial Equity Plans every two years. The plans would include intended strategies and goals to improve racial equity and to reduce or eliminate racial disparities;

(2) Establish an Office of Racial Equity and appoint a Chief Equity Officer to advance racial equity and coordinate the City's racial equity planning process. The Office would support City agencies in improving access to City services and programs for those people and communities who have been negatively affected by previous policies or actions, and collect and report data related to equity; and

(3) Establish a Commission on Racial Equity, appointed by City elected officials. In making appointments to this Commission, elected officials would be required to consider appointees who are representative of or have experience advocating for a diverse range of communities. The Commission would identify and propose priorities to inform the racial equity planning process and review agency and citywide Racial Equity Plans.

*continued ...*

## Proposal 4 (city-wide): Measure the True Cost of Living

This proposal would amend the City Charter to require the City to create a True Cost of Living measure to track the actual cost in New York City of meeting essential needs. This proposal would amend the City Charter to:

- (1) Require the City to create a “true cost of living” measure to track the actual cost in New York City of meeting essential needs, including housing, food, childcare, transportation, and other necessary costs, and without considering public, private, or informal assistance, in order to inform programmatic and policy decisions; and
- (2) Require the City government to report annually on the “true cost of living” measure.

More information on all four proposals can be found on the BOE and the RJC websites: [www.elections.ny.gov/2022BallotProposal.html](http://www.elections.ny.gov/2022BallotProposal.html) and <https://racialjustice.cityofnewyork.us/ballot/>.

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**Disclaimer:** unless otherwise indicated, items herein reflect the views of their authors only. They are published as a part of our club’s commitment to the free and open exchange of ideas on topics of interest, but their publication should not be construed as an endorsement by the editor, the Steering Committee, or the Broadway Democrats club.

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## School Meals and Ideology

Richard Seigel

The American Rescue Plan and other initiatives enabled every school to provide breakfast and lunch to all students. Student meals were *a universal right*. The free school meals program began in March 2020 when Congress authorized the Department of Agriculture to issue child nutrition waivers, including some that expanded summer food programs, to provide a lifeline during the pandemic. Ten million more children got free meals.

That program ended before this school year (fall 2022) started, and now the country has returned to a *means-tested* program, based on family income. There is a sliding scale, so many parents are now going to have to pay for all or part of the food provided in school. At worst, it means that some children will come to school hungry and leave school hungry. We all know that school performance may suffer when kids don’t eat during the school day.

In social policy, we call means-tested programs “residual.” That means (as one Republican politician has said) the program needs to be *targeted* and *limited*. Senate Republicans blocked the extension of this program.

Unfortunately, most policies that are “residual” have a negative stigma attached. As a country, we can be very judgmental. This conservative ideology sees lack of success as an individual moral or personal failure. Their children feel that judgement if they qualify for the free meal program.

The myth of this country—mostly espoused by conservatives—is that all have equal opportunity. It follows that those who are successful simply work harder and behave better (more moral), and those in need must have some deficiency in motivation or behavior. Sadly, this ideology will keep children from getting the meals they need in school.

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## Thoughts on 9/11

Peter Flom

*Author’s note: this was written during the Obama administration. It seemed even more relevant during the Trump administration. I believe it’s still relevant now.*

There’s no image. You all have your own images of this event.

It’s 9/11 again. I was there. Now I’m here.

I’m a victim of 9/11. I was in the building when the plane hit.

Compared to so many people, I was lucky: I wasn’t injured. I kept my job. I got home easily. But compared to the vast majority of Americans, I am a victim. I had glass in my hair. I lost a year’s work, and some irreplaceable items. My family went crazy for a while. My kid had nightmares. *You* try explaining to a five year old why (in his words) “They crashed into the building on purpose?” or replying to “I thought pilots were good people.”

But I am a victim in another way as well.

I share part of this other victimhood with all Americans. I am a victim, not of terror, but of the so-called “war on terror.” I am a victim of a government that was out-of-control, and is still not fully in control. I am a victim of crushing national debt. I am a victim because I live in a country that went from having the sympathy of the world to one that was a pariah, an outcast among nations, a rogue state. I am a victim because I have had to “watch what I say.” I am a victim because my rights



were violated, and are still being violated, not by some nebulous and inimical group of terrorists, but by my own government.

They do not speak for me.

But in another way, I do not share this other victimhood. My victimhood has been abused; this has lessened, but it has not stopped. Not yet.

I have watched for years as my government—our government—has whittled away my rights, stolen my freedoms, and wrecked the constitution in the name of a false security. I have watched and watched and watched, as they have used my name—my victimhood—to make me a victim once again.

They do not speak for me.

So, I will post this article, and I will take action. I will volunteer. I will give money. I will make a difference. This is *my* country, this is *my* victimhood, and I will not have it abused. I am no martyr; I have no death wish; I hope that no terrorist ever strikes anywhere again. But the founders of this country knew what they were doing. They wanted freedom. They *demand*ed freedom. They put their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honors on the line to win freedom. And now it is reduced to this.

But it is worse even than this; it would be one thing to pay too heavy a price to increase our safety. But we have paid the price for nothing. We have arrested thousands of people, and let them go. We have spied on our own citizens, and found out nothing. We have allied ourselves with torturers, and yet, we are not safe. Indeed, by making our enemies unite, we have made ourselves weaker, and our enemies stronger.

This victim demands an end to the “war on terror” that is really a war on America.

That’s why I voted for Obama for President, and that’s why I am a progressive. Because this is America.



## Elect a Democrat for NY-19

Richard Seigel

With control of the House of Representatives up for grabs, one very important district is NY-19. Pat Ryan won the special election for Antonio Delgado’s seat and, after re-districting, Ryan lives in the new NY 18 and will run there.

We have a chance to elect another Democrat in this once-again open seat in the 19<sup>th</sup>. Josh Riley

is running against the same Republican Pat Ryan defeated. The new district remains purple, so passion and turnout will determine who wins.

I met Josh this weekend. He is a true progressive who will support policies that lessen inequality and actively address climate change. His website is [joshrileyforcongress.com/](http://joshrileyforcongress.com/).

Please be active in supporting Josh. Contributions, postcards and phone calls (many residents have landlines) are effective in this area. Stay tuned for additional information about ways to support Riley!



## Democrats and the Disabled

**We’re here, we’re weird, get used to it!**

On September 22, Broadway Democrats will host a forum about disabilities. The disabled are a huge and underrepresented minority. There are legal and political issues that merit our attention, both for reasons of justice and for winning elections.

Speakers will include:

- Jared Stein of the law office of Michelle Siegel will speak on the Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) standard, Connors and Carter funding, and how delays by the DOE deprive families of their rights.

- Kathryn Capella, of the New York State Learning Disabilities Association and the New York State Disabilities Advocacy Association and Network will speak on the learning disabilities you haven't heard of, and how the law and politics can/should handle these.
- Peter Flom, Steering Committee member and author of *Screwed Up Somehow but not Stupid: Life with a Learning Disability* will speak on being learning disabled and twice exceptional, how that influences his politics, and why the disabled are a natural constituency for Democrats,

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## Updates from Class Size Matters

September 9, 2022

**First:** Tremendous news yesterday as Gov. Hochul announced that she was signing the class size bill. The only change from the original bill is that this year will be a planning year, and the gradual phase-in of smaller classes will begin the fall of 2023, to achieve caps over five years of no more than 20 students in grades K-3, 23 students in grades 4-8, and 25 students in high school academic classes.

This is a huge victory for NYC children, and for all of you who have helped us advocate for class size reduction over many years. In our press release, along with AQE, CPAC and the Ed Law Center, we thanked the Governor for listening to the research and to the pleas of parents and teachers that it's time to provide true equity to our students, who have long suffered from the largest class sizes in the state.

Our work is far from done, of course. We will be advocating for parents and community members to have significant input into the planning process, and to ensure that that the resulting plan is effective, fair and correctly implemented. We will continue to need all your help to make sure this happens. Stay tuned for more.

**Second:** We will also continue our battle against the devastating cuts to school budgets this year, which will move our schools in the exact wrong direction. At this point, it doesn't look like the Council

will manage to negotiate a deal with the mayor to restore the cuts, so the only hope we have to block them is if we win the lawsuit against them at the Appellate Court level, where oral arguments aren't scheduled until Sept. 29. We've heard from many parents and teachers about awfully large classes on the first day of school. Next week, after things settle down a bit, we'll be surveying all of you to find out just how large they have grown. Please ask your children or their teachers what size their classes are, so you can let us know.

**Third:** I'll be interviewing Michael Mulgrew on my WBAI radio show, **Talk out of School**, about all these issues. The show will air Saturday Sept. 10, and I'll ask him about the new class size bill, the impact of the budget cuts to schools, what parents can do if their child's class is too large, and more (note: available as a podcast).

*Thanks again – the class size bill would never have happened without your support!*

Leonie Haimson  
Executive Director, Class Size Matters  
[www.classsizematters.org](http://www.classsizematters.org)

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### We Want to Hear What You Have to Say!

Email submissions to the editor (in MS Word, please) at [palmonrode@gmail.com](mailto:palmonrode@gmail.com)

We will consider all submissions, but we reserve the exclusive and final right to determine what to publish.

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Send to: The Broadway Democrats, P.O. Box 1099, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025

Special Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (title, honorifics, and pronouns optional)

To join the Broadway Democrats, please fill out the form below and mail with your check (made out to "Broadway Democrats") to the address at the bottom. Welcome!

In order to vote in club elections (endorsements, elections of officers, judicial convention, amendments), you must be an eligible, voting member of the Broadway Democrats. You must have attended at least one of the previous nine monthly public meetings and you must pay your dues. Dues partially defray the costs of presenting forums and putting out this newsletter. Dues are \$25; senior dues are \$10.

Membership

# The Broadway Democrats Newsletter

## September 2022

FIRST  
CLASS

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