

Democratic Rural Conference of New York State

DRAFT
2022 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE
DEMOCRATIC RURAL CONFERENCE

CANDIDATE'S NAME and ADDRESS:

Tom DiNapoli

Position for which you are a candidate: **Comptroller of the State of New York**

Candidate's Address for All DRC Correspondence: **DiNapoli 2022, PO Box 1776, Mineola, NY 11501**

Telephone:

Cell Phone: **813-957-8309 (Ilana Maier)**

Fax: n/a

E-mail: **info@dinapoli2022.com**

THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS WILL BE POSTED ON THE DRC WEB SITE.

Name, cell phone number and e-mail address for the person on your staff who will be your liaison with the DRC.

Ilana Maier, Campaign Manager
813-957-8309, ilana@dinapoli2022.com

List your qualifications for this office including but not limited to other offices you have held, educational background, etc.

As a lifelong New Yorker deeply committed to public service I am honored to have held elected office beginning in 1972. The qualification for office that I'm most proud of is my record of service on behalf of the betterment of the State.

The offices I've held include:

- Comptroller of the State of New York, 2007-Present
- New York State Assembly Member, 1987-2007
- Trustee, Mineola Board of Education, 1972-1982

I also went to college and grad school in New York, I graduated from the following:

- Hofstra University, BA, 1976
- The New School University, MA, 1988

Democratic Rural Conference of New York State

Please address these questions, but make your answers brief so the entire questionnaire does not exceed 4 pages.

1. ABILITY TO LEAD THE ENTIRE STATE – What contact and experiences have you had with parts of the State, other than where you currently reside, which demonstrate your recognition of the geographic, demographic and economic diversity of the State and your ability to provide leadership on behalf of all New Yorkers?

One of the best parts of representing the entire State of New York is the chance to serve not only the communities I grew up in, but every single County. New York is diverse in almost every aspect – geographically, economically, demographically – and as State Comptroller for the past 15 years I have prioritized recognizing, celebrating and representing each region well.

Under my leadership, the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) has issued hundreds of audits on rural municipalities, helping to uncover waste, fraud, and misuse of taxpayer money. OSC also launched the Fiscal Stress Monitoring System, which tracks the fiscal condition of all local governments and school districts. This is an early warning system for communities across New York State. Additionally, in 2016 OSC began to publish economic profiles of every region in New York State. Economic profiles provide each region with in-depth analysis of the region's economic conditions, identifying strengths and potential vulnerabilities.

You can't represent rural communities well if you aren't willing to show up, listen and learn. Which is why, as Comptroller, I have made sure to build relationships with local elected officials, labor unions and advocates all over the State. Even during the pandemic, I have virtually "visited" with nearly every County.

2. KNOWLEDGE OF THE ISSUES – What issues do you believe are of most concern to voters in rural counties, and what will be your message in addressing those issues?

I believe rural voters share similar concerns to other voters across the State: access to quality, affordable housing, health care and services; good schools; and a level playing field for economic opportunities. But access to these things can be more difficult for people living in rural areas. I have issued many audits and reports that have shown that upstate New York regions often do not receive the support and resources needed to address these issues and called on State policy makers to make improvements.

Last year I released a report that showed the State is falling short in meeting its commitment to provide universal access to high speed internet – a significant problem for many rural communities. I've also issued a series of reports on local infrastructure which revealed billions of dollars in unmet needs. I will continue to highlight issues such as

Democratic Rural Conference of New York State

these and call on policy makers to do a better job. Federal Infrastructure Investment Act funding could help address some of these challenges, and I will do all I can to make sure Upstate New York gets its fair share.

I have reported on the critical importance of the agriculture industry to New York's State and rural economies. The pandemic has made the challenges farmers face that much harder – with pressures from worker shortages, significant inflation, and supply chain issues, just to name a few. I will continue to highlight the need for the State to help New York's family farms with supportive policies, to ensure that our farms are able to thrive for generations to come.

My economic reports have shown that much of upstate New York has lagged economically behind the rest of the State. I will continue to highlight these issues and call on the State to improve its efforts to help fuel much-needed growth in these areas. My audits have shown major problems with the State's billions of dollars in economic development spending. I will continue to call on the State to better target these funds to where they are needed.

Climate change is a concern many of us share. I created a Climate Action Plan that engages corporations to encourage and support climate risk management, strategic planning and reporting, commits the Common Retirement Fund to billions of dollars in sustainable investments, and divests funds where appropriate. I will continue to identify opportunities to address this crisis.

The pandemic created many new challenges for communities across Upstate New York. I called on the federal government to provide direct aid to keep the State and its municipalities solvent, and New York secured a significant allocation of funds. I advanced legislation to give municipalities more financial flexibility and provided training to municipal officials to help them manage through this crisis. I will continue to monitor and report on the distribution of federal pandemic relief aid and will continue to call for these funds to be used to help level the playing field for those New Yorkers who need it most.

3. PARTY BUILDING – How have you expressed and demonstrated a commitment toward building our party statewide and what are your ideas for future party building, specific to rural counties?

I am a proud Democrat and look forward to continuing to build our party across the entire State and especially in rural counties. Throughout my tenure, I have traveled the State and promoted Democratic candidates up and down the ballot. I have endorsed, headlined fundraisers, participated in GOTV rallies for countless Democratic candidates over the years. I have also continued to support the DRC at annual meetings and events every chance I could.

Democratic Rural Conference of New York State

One of the single best ways to build our Party statewide is to govern effectively, and make sure that our rural constituents are well served. Throughout this year's campaign, we will continue to support DRC county committees both by attending public events and providing support.

4. In the event of a primary for the office you are seeking, will you support the winner of the Democratic primary? (This calls for a YES or NO answer ONLY.)

Yes

5. FAIRNESS IN SHARING POLITICAL POWER - How have you and how will you defend and further the rights of small counties to be represented in the decision-making process and in governmental and political positions?

It's imperative that in both political and governmental offices, we make sure that small counties have their voices heard. In my current role, I've made sure to have dedicated staff for more rural regions of the State. Additionally, I have committed myself to always recognizing the needs of small communities and supporting the DRC. I believe the DRC is a great organization to advocate for fair political representation in the Democratic Party and I will continue to support the DRC as a statewide elected official.

6. INCLUSION – If elected, how would your administration include the people from DRC counties and address the issues of concern in those counties?

I have hired staff from DRC counties like former Senator Darrel Aubertine and others and have always sought input from political and government officials from rural counties.

7. VOTER APPEAL – What qualities or experiences do you have that would attract support from voters in DRC counties, not just from Democrats but also from non-enrolled voters and cross-over Republicans?

The position of State Comptroller is arguably one of the least partisan roles in New York government. My job is to protect the pensions, State finances and economic future of every resident in New York, not just the Democrats. I'm originally from one of the most politically moderate Counties in the State and learned from an early age that while I am a true-blue Democratic candidate, the moment I was elected, I am a Comptroller for every political party.

In 2014 and 2018, I was proud to receive the most votes on the statewide ticket. We were only able to achieve that by winning votes in counties all throughout Upstate New York.

Democratic Rural Conference of New York State

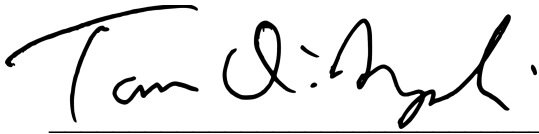
This year, I'm running on my record of success.

8. CAMPAIGN IN DRC COUNTIES – How would you campaign in DRC counties?
Will you personally appear with local candidates?

I know I speak for myself and my campaign team when I say we're excited to campaign in DRC counties. I will coordinate with the DRC and appear with local candidates. Additionally, my team is already building out a grassroots volunteer program in every county and we'll make sure that our volunteers in DRC counties support local candidates.

9. OTHER CRITERIA – Please set forth anything else you want us to consider.

January 21, 2022
Date


Signature of the Candidate

Please return THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE at your earliest convenience but no later than **January 24, 2022** to Judith Hunter, DRC Chair via e-mail at **judith.hunter@gmail.com**. Ms. Hunter can also be contacted at (585) 615-2986.