

2022 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE
DEMOCRATIC RURAL CONFERENCE

CANDIDATE'S NAME and ADDRESS: Jumaane D. Williams

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

Candidate's Address for All DRC Correspondence: PO Box 100323, Brooklyn, NY 11210

Telephone: 732-771-3718 (Trip Yang)

Cell Phone:

Fax:

E-mail: general@jumaanewilliams.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.

Trip Yang, 732-771-3718, trip@tripyangstrategies.com

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

I was elected New York City Public Advocate in 2019 on a platform of truly affordable, income targeted housing, anti-gun violence measures, fair policing, equity, and social justice issues. In the City Council, I passed nearly 70 bills to help build a more equitable, sustainable, and livable New York. I passed landmark legislation to curb the NYPD's abuse of stop-and-frisk, championed strategies to reduce gun violence, advanced housing justice, and helped protect women's reproductive rights. We have quickly made a mark on the office of Public Advocate, restructuring the office to empower staff to prioritize community engagement, outreach, and service. We have also passed more legislation in his first 2 years in office than any Public Advocate has during their entire term, including key bills that protect New Yorkers in the workplace and those looking for work, shield struggling homeowners from undue tax burdens, promote public safety, and fight discrimination in our housing systems. I am running for Governor to bring transformational change to Albany.

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

- **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?

Prior to becoming an elected official, I was the executive director of Tenants & Neighbors, a statewide advocacy organization for affordable housing and tenant

empowerment. Then, and now in my travels for the campaign, I've seen how many of the problems that affect New York City impact people across New York State. The way these issues impact people looks different, but affordable housing, quality and equitable education for their children, a living wage to work a good job, safe streets, and a system that operates justly for all communities are needs we all share. I look forward to working with local leadership across New York State to make sure the way these solutions are implemented work for rural communities. One size does NOT fit all in New York.

- **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?

There are some issues that cut across the entire state, including education quality and funding, healthcare, employment and access to affordable and quality housing, but there are also issues that rural voters face. For example, we must focus on access to services, including closing a longstanding broadband Internet access gap. This gap prevents rural entrepreneurs from starting and running businesses, from accessing educational opportunities, and overall hurts families. Also, many rural areas across the state have experienced a drop in tax bases, which fund essential services. Job security, subsidies for hiring seasonal agricultural workers, telemedicine are all additional issues that uniquely impact rural New Yorkers, and I look forward to hearing more from rural leaders in the democratic party on how best to serve their constituencies. As Governor, I will ensure that these areas are not ignored by the state, including many relevant agencies such as those related to economic development.

- **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 continue to believe the largest and fastest way to grow our party is to turn non-voters into voters. But to do this work, we must be a party that stands for growth, progress, and what New Yorkers ask of us as leaders. We need to give voters a vision to vote for, not just someone to vote against. In part, we can accomplish this by committing to being a party that engages every voice, that guarantees those voices will be heard throughout Albany. We also must give these voters a vision for transformational change and a commitment that the state government's focus is on the entire state. I will commit to working with rural and urban communities to make sure in my first term, every New Yorker has access to healthcare. I will also ensure that we prioritize other issues, including ensuring that the state awards it's fair share of economic development projects to these communities.

- 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

- **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?

The Governor of New York in practice, as an elected Democrat, is the de facto head of the Democratic party. I would work, in that capacity, to make sure the party platform is shaped and influenced by members of the conference across the state, and work with outside voices, including county chairs who have not always been included in the process, young democrat chapters, the DRC, and others. I've often operated outside the support of the state party. I truly see the value in those whose voices haven't traditionally been given space, to bring to light issues that improve us, as a state, and as a party.

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

New Yorkers all need safe, adequate, affordable housing, access to healthy food, and excellent medical care. I am aware that the roadblocks to accessing those things, and the way those look must take into account different communities, and be culturally competent. I would seek voices of leadership and organizers in communities across New York State in my administration, as what that looks like in Brooklyn will not be the same as the needs of Mohawk County, vs Dutchess County... Whether it's telemedicine, support for tenants taking landlords to court... diverse voices from across our state make for better governing.

- **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 policies I listed above are important, and impact all New Yorkers regardless of ideology. I also have spent my entire career focused on public safety. I'm proud to have help secure millions of dollars over several years on programs to ensure the public is safe, including violence interruption. I would also look at schools and property taxes as impacting the education and services our schools receive. We should not lean so heavily on property tax to fund our schools. A more equitable system would prepare all our students, especially in communities with lower property values. Students should not lose out on basic services because the taxed value of property is higher in cities.

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

I have supported local candidates across NYS, in both primaries and general elections, and view that as part of my responsibility. From India Walton in Buffalo to Gwen

Wright in Rensselaer County, I have worked with Democrats across the state for a better New York.

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

For too long, New Yorkers have not had an adequate voice at the highest level of State Government. I will be a Governor for the People. I won't sway with whichever way the political winds blow. I will be that leader. As Governor, I will hold the State Legislature accountable to the people of New York. The status quo in the Governor's Mansion of the last 10+ years has been to promise change, rarely deliver, and trust that no one paid attention. Forcing accountability, refusing to let an issue drop without resolution, is the first step to making the transformative change New York desperately needs.

Date: Feb 1, 2022

Signature of the Candidate:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. P. L.' with a stylized flourish at the end.

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.