

Q1: What is your name?

Debra Cooper

Q2: What office are you running for?

Council District 6

PAGE 2: HOUSING

Q3: What is your plan for preserving and adding additional units of affordable housing in New York City?

We need to create carrots and sticks for developers to build more permanent affordable housing units. We need to recalculate the median subsidies to apply to NY City rather the larger metro region as this would more truly reflect housing costs in NYC. We should consider changes in zoning to make sure all new buildings, including present "as of right: buildings" must go through a community review process, Through that process we could get more permanent affordable housing. It could also be part of that process that living wages are included as part of the building process.

Politically the City is facing a 'stormy" future , with rising seas, where old and new buildings must meet new demands. This necessarily would put into play, major rezoning throughout the city. Affordable housing would definitely be part of that process.

Foreclosure and mortgage fraud have affected many neighborhoods in NY City, most particularly minority neighborhoods. I have already worked with both national groups on this issue as well as local grassroots groups as well. For instance I have worked with Home Defenders League and NYCC, New York Communities for Change on these issues.

There are many REO, bank owned foreclosed properties in NYC. Some could go back to homeowners. Some may not be able to return to owners. These locations are potential sites for larger affordable housing units. These properties could be obtained either through a strengthened housing trust or through the traditional process of

eminent domain. Preserving and increasing affordable housing is the very definition of a "public use" that eminent domain was designed for. The foreclosure disaster is the result of malfeasance by the big banks that service the mortgages. The City has funds in these banks. Those funds could be used to make sure the banks honor their commitments. For one they could be pressured to make more affordable housing loans so that developers can build affordable housing at a profit.

I do not support any programs that are like Mitchell Lama programs where the affordability is time limited. These were programs that seemed to induce people to develop affordable housing back then, but now they are vanishing. The citizenry gets very little back. Actually they are placed in difficult positions which impinge on their access to light, air, peace quiet and even dignity. It is just an outrageous proposal.

Q: What is your position on the leasing of open space that is currently occupied by public schools to private developers?

I am against leasing/selling public schools (or public libraries) to developers for luxury housing. No matter what sweeteners are thrown in to supposedly make it palatable. Inadequate school space or minimal affordable housing units are not enough. I wrote the very first resolution against the sale of PS 199 and 191 to such developers. At the minimum the community must be part of the process/ And it must be stopped until after a new Mayor and Council are elected.

PAGE 3: EDUCATION

Q9: Do you support the continuation of mayoral control of schools?

No

Q10: Do you support or oppose the Mayor appointing a majority of the members on the Public Education Panel?

Oppose

Q11: Do you support or oppose the reappointment of Dennis Walcott as Chancellor?

Oppose

Q12: Do you support ending tenure protection for teachers?

No

Q13: Do you support or oppose a moratorium on school closings?

Support

Q14: Do you support or oppose the co-location of charter schools in public school buildings?

Oppose

Q15: Do you support or oppose a moratorium on new charter schools?

Support

Q16: Do you support or oppose giving local Community Education Councils greater power in determining use of school space?

Support

PAGE 4: ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

Q17: How can you use your office to encourage the use of renewable energy?

The City has many housing and zoning rules that inadvertently limit the use and building of renewable energy. For instance rules what can be done on rooftops limit the building of solar collectors. If

Germany, with less sunshine than NY City, can get so much of its energy from solar, we in NY City can. For instance, solar energy is not storable. It must be used at the time or put back into the electrical grid. We need to create legal and technical ways to allow individual owners, buildings, coops and condos as well as commercial buildings, a way to sell their excess solar capacity back to the electric grid. We need to figure out and encourage ways to turn our

waste into energy without polluting our environment. There are such plants in Europe.. Not only if done right, they create energy but they reduce the need for landfill and reduce CO2 emissions. We should have them too. Certainly if Indian Point is shut down we need to have other energy sources to replace them. Here is a link to a NY Times article

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/13/science/earth/13trash.html?page_wanted=all&_r=0 Of course, recycling and conservation play a significant role in reducing the need for more dirty sources of energy.

PAGE 5

Q18: Are you in favor of closing the Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant? If so, how will you use your office to support IP's closing?

YES and Yes . It is too close to the biggest urban center in the country. One that of course could not really be evacuated. While I have had disagreements with the Governor, he wants to close Indian Point. Any and all pressure points from licensing issues to direct legislative action should be considered. I would work with all those who want to close this potential disaster.

Q19: Under what conditions, if any, would you support hydraulic fracturing in New York State?

NO CONDITIONS Years ago I was the co sponsor of the NY Democratic State Committee on the Resolution to BAN hydraulic fracturing. I do not think there is a safe way to do so. The damage done would be irrevocable. Fracking uses huge quantities of water that would be lost to either chemical contamination or just plain lost.

Secondly and crucially, if we want this planet to survive, we should not be on a path to use ALL the hydrocarbon we have in the ground. The future of our planet depends upon leaving those hydrocarbons in the ground. This week we passed 400 PPMs of CO2 in the atmosphere. 2 degrees Celsius has been considered by the Climate community an increase which could be managed. However if we use all the hydrocarbon in the ground, we will shoot over 4 degrees and civilization as we know it would not be sustainable. This is a dire

situation. Shale gas and oil is one of the last stands of the big old energy behemoths. Easy to get oil is diminishing and to maintain their monopoly on the provision of energy they want to make communities reliant on THEIR CENTRALLY provided energy rather than individual and community controlled new and renewable sources. Their greed is endangering life on this planet.

PAGE 6: LAND USE AND ZONING

Q20: Do you favor or oppose commercial rent control?

Favor

Q21: Do you support zoning regulations that discourage owners of commercial properties from renting to large banks and chain stores?

Yes

Q22: Do you support or oppose the leasing of public parks to raise revenue, such as private tennis courts in Central Park or private development of the Hudson River Park?

Oppose

Q23: Do you think the power of eminent domain has been abused within the city? If so, what examples would you cite?

Eminent domain for the purpose of giving that land to rich and connected PRIVATE DEVELOPERS has been abused. As I have said earlier I am adamantly opposed to the privatization of public goods, The Kelo decision from New London Connecticut is to me an example of abuse. New London condemned private homes and gave it to a private company. Eminent domain is part of the Fifth Amendment and does have a useful purpose. "nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation." If done for a truly public purpose like to build a public building it of course would be suitable. Communities throughout the country are moving forward to use it in the epidemic of mortgage and foreclosures throughout the country in order to KEEP homeowners in their homes and preserve those communities AND their tax base. Eminent

domain can be used for a good purpose. Preserving homeowners staying in their homes is one such good purpose.

PAGE 7: LABOR

Q24: Do you support a bill mandating a living wage for anyone who works under a contract with New York City?

Yes

Q25: How do you define a living wage in dollars?

The present definition of living wage is about \$10.75 an hour. I think a living wage should be sufficient to be able to pay reasonable rent and other living costs. In NY that would mean something closer to the \$15 an hour that the various fast food strikers around the city have asked for. Can we get there? Well not if you don't demand it. Frederick Douglass "Power concedes nothing without a demand"

Q26: Should the living wage be applied only to NYC contracts or should there be a City minimum wage tied to the cost of living in New York city?

City Minimum Wage tied to Cost of Living

Q27: Would you support the establishment of a City Department of Labor for complaints of violation of fair labor standards?

Yes

Q28: Do you believe there should be mandatory paid sick leave in New York City for all workers regardless of establishment size?

Yes

PAGE 8: POLICE - CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Q29: Under what circumstances, short of probable cause, should a police officer be able to stop and frisk someone?

The Fourth Amendment demands probable cause. That should be the standard. Of course imminent threat of real harm would meet that standard. I not only support the creation of an Inspector General for the police, but would create one which DOES NOT report to the Mayor. Democracy flourishes when there are responsive institutions which exist independent of personalities. We are a government of laws, not men. As I said at the forum one of the other dangers of Stop and Frisk, to all of us, is sense of overweening power that it engenders in the police toward us all. This arrogance toward the populace and abuse of the Fourth Amendment has an impact on the First Amendment rights of all of us. From how protests have been handled, like the ones against the Iraq War to the Republican convention to the Occupy Wall Street movement. The police are supposed to protect us. Not to control us.

Q30: Would you continue, change or end the stop and frisk policy of the police department?

Change stop and Frisk

Other (please specify) Only under the limited standards of the Fourth Amendment . Stops and searches should be permitted but they should not be the apotheosis of the City's crime strategy.

Q31: Is there something you can do to keep people from getting arrested when, while being searched, they are found to have small amounts of marijuana that would not have been a crime if the marijuana was not in public view?

Yes

Comment People should not be arrested for small amounts of marijuana.

Q32: Who would you appoint or support as police commissioner?

Someone who understands the job is to protect us, not control us. Someone who has truly absorbed the meaning of Constitutional protections.

PAGE 9: HEALTH

Q33: What would you do to improve city mental health services?

We need more residential centers. We need to train police to handle the severely disturbed with more sensitivity. We need walk in mental health centers. We need to make sure that professionals are available to schools.

PAGE 10: TRANSPORTATION

Q34: Would you continue (support) Bloomberg's policy of increasing the number of bike lanes?

Respondent skipped this question

Q35: How would you protect transit fares?

We could increase the categories of people who could reduced fares. We should increase the discount again as the increase in ridership would make up for the discount. We need to reexamine the theory that fares should continually go up. Wages and income for subway riders have not continually gone up in the last 30 years. Doing so will decrease ridership and a downward cycle would ensue.

Q36: Do you support congestion pricing?

Respondent skipped this question

PAGE 11: CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Q37: What, if anything, do you think should be done to New York City's campaign finance law?

I think public funding of campaign is crucial. It gives power to people. Of course there is a limit to its effectiveness when we still have Supreme Court decisions like Citizens United and Buckley vs Valeo. The first gives corporation unlimited power and the second enable billionaires to spend anything they want on their own elections. Buckley gave Michael Bloomberg the ability to spend 100 million dollars on getting himself elected.

Corporations are NOT people and Money is NOT Speech.

PAGE 12: TAXES AND REVENUE

Q38: Do you favor an increase in City income taxes for residents making more than \$250,000 per year?

Yes

Q39: Do you favor or oppose an increase in the city sales tax?

Oppose

Q40: Would you support a transaction tax on Wall Street trades?

Support

Q41: Do you think non-profits, including religious institutions, should be taxed when such institutions sell their property or air rights?

Other (please specify) I think it would depend on what the funds are being used for. Is it for a public good or a private one.

Q42: What kind of a commuter tax, if any, would you support?

I would at least support the reinstatement of the one that was repealed about decade ago. Of course that can only be done by the State of NY , not the City as the Urstadt law denies us that right.