

Profiles of Assembly Member Candidates

Michah Lasher

Dear Friends at Three Parks
Independent Democrats,

At the time of this writing, I am still working in my capacity as Director of Policy for Governor Hochul, expecting to make a decision on whether to run for State Assembly shortly after the Governor's State of the State address on January 9. I did not want to miss, however, the opportunity to share with you some information about my background, my involvement in our community, and my connection to this wonderful club.

I'm a lifelong Upper West Sider, raised on the progressivism, activism, intellectualism, and diversity of our community. I feel incredibly fortunate, together with my wife Elizabeth, to be raising three children here: Nate, 13, attends Bank Street School for Children on 112th Street; Ben, 11, goes to M.S. 54, Booker T. Washington Middle School, on 107th Street; and Phoebe, 7, is at P.S. 166 on 89th Street. We are on Riverside at 92nd

Street, and my mother still lives on West End at 103rd.

We get so much from living on the West Side, and I have long felt an obligation to give back. I have served on the Board of the Riverside Park Conservancy for nine years, and as Chair for the last four and half. During that time, we have tripled the capacity of the Conservancy to make park improvements, expanded the North Park Initiative to better address longstanding inequity in funding and services for a park that runs north to the George Washington Bridge, and successfully advocated for more than \$400 million in City support to fund infrastructure projects, including the first restoration of the Soldiers & Sailors Monument in sixty years.

I also served on the board of Everytown, the national gun safety organization, and for fifteen years on the board — ultimately as Vice Chair — of the Community Service Society (CSS), New York's leading anti-poverty organization. I am particularly proud of CSS's leadership role in creating the "Fair Fares" program, to provide half-price subway and bus fares to low-income New Yorkers.

Professionally, I have spent the better part of my career in government, reflecting my deeply felt belief that government action is by far the most effective way to advance the goals of justice, fairness, and equity in society. My first job in government was as an aide to Congressman Jerry Nadler, focused on issues here on the West Side. I went on to work for the New York City Department of Education, and then as Director of State Legislative Affairs for the City of New York, developing a legislative agenda for more than fifty City agencies and advocating for the five boroughs' fair share from Albany.

From 2013 to 2016, I served as Chief of Staff in the New York State Attorney General's office and helped lead that office through a period of significant, progressive accomplishment. In what I believe was the first major law enforcement action against the then-future (now former, and hopefully never again) president, we took on Donald Trump and his "Trump University" for fraud. We sued some of the nation's largest fossil fuel producers for fraud related to their disclosures of climate change-related risk. We established a City/State Tenant Harassment Prevention Task Force and forced 128 landlords to return 1,800 apartments to

the rent stabilization program after they had been fraudulently removed. And in the wake of Eric Garner's murder, we established the nation's first Special Prosecutor for police-involved killings.

I was honored to be asked to serve as Governor Hochul's Director of Policy shortly after she took office. I played a leading role in writing sweeping gun safety laws immediately after the mass shootings in Buffalo and Uvalde, and helped enact comprehensive legislation to protect abortion providers and patients in the wake of the Supreme Court's horrendous *Dobbs* decision. I was part of the effort to make New York one of the first states in the nation to index the minimum wage to rapidly rising inflation, and I was one of the architects of a \$1 billion plan to reverse decades of State disinvestment in mental health care. And although we were unsuccessful in our first attempt to pass it, I was proud to help craft a bill that *The New York Times* called the "first serious attempt by a New York governor since the 1960s" to tackle racist, exclusionary zoning and build hundreds of thousands of units of housing.

As you may recall, I ran for State Senate in 2016. I was incredibly honored to earn the support of Three

Parks in that effort; it is not an overstatement to say that the night of the club's endorsement vote was one of the high points of the campaign. And I loved every minute that I spent campaigning with Three Parks members. Unfortunately, we fell 1% short, losing to a candidate affiliated with — and funded by — the so-called “Independent Democratic Conference” (IDC), which partnered with Senate Republicans. Following the campaign, I immediately encouraged Robert Jackson, who had placed third in 2016, to run again in 2018. I worked incredibly hard, together with you, to help him win — and, in doing so, to help dismantle the IDC.

Now, with Assemblymember O'Donnell's announcement that he will not seek re-election, I once again am considering stepping out from behind the scenes to seek public office. Assemblymember O'Donnell has been more than a strong, progressive voice in Albany — he has been an important one. To properly follow in his footsteps, whoever represents our community next must have the experience, understanding, and independence necessary not just to deliver for the West Side, but to help shape the discourse in Albany and make progress for the entire state. If I run, I will work

incredibly hard to earn your support, and equally hard in partnership with you to make lasting progressive change.

Eli Northrup

[Eli Northrup](#) is a public defender and policy advocate who has spent his career fighting for equity and social justice in New York. For over a decade, he has worked as a public defender in criminal court. As Policy Director for the Criminal Defense Practice at the Bronx Defenders, Eli leads a team of advocates advancing policies to bring fairness and dignity to our criminal legal system.

Eli has played a central role in legislative campaigns to protect due process, guarantee transparency, ensure that people with criminal records can find jobs and housing, and reduce the population of Rikers Island. After working on the campaign for marijuana justice in New York State, he helped launch the Bronx Cannabis Hub, a resource aiding those impacted by the War on Drugs in securing cannabis licenses.

Prior to the Bronx Defenders, Eli was a clinical fellow at Georgetown Law and

worked as a law clerk for federal judges on the Third Circuit and SDNY. In law school, he worked with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem and the Legal Aid Society. He received his J.D. from NYU Law and a B.A. in Psychology from Cornell University.

Eli cares deeply about the environment, values impressed upon him by his late father, who was a conservationist. His mother, a poet and teacher, encouraged his lifelong love of the arts. In his spare time, Eli enjoys attending concerts, playing flag football and pickleball, and taking advantage of the neighborhood's beautiful parks.

Link to full bio
at <https://www.eli4ny.com/about>

Melissa Rosenberg

Melissa Rosenberg is an accomplished advocate for ensuring livability and affordability for all residents on the Upper West Side.

Melissa has served on Manhattan Community Board 7 for the last seven years. During this time she has proven herself to be a committed leader on

issues related to housing, especially affordable housing, NYCHA, and homelessness.

Melissa has dedicated her career to public service and solving problems - from combatting the gun crisis with Everytown for Gun Safety to working as a policy analyst with the Supportive Housing Network of New York. She's worked to advance thoughtful policy solutions around ending homelessness, gun violence prevention, and enhancing Jewish culture access. She currently works as a consultant where she assists nonprofit and for-profit developers in creating more housing in New York City during this historic housing affordability crisis.

Melissa also served in the Office of Management and Budget to shape city budgets that ensure all New Yorkers get the services they need and deserve.

Melissa holds a Master of Public Administration Policy Analyst degree from New York University's Graduate School of Public Service and a degree in economics from McGill University.

Barry Weinberg

Barry is a longtime community servant in Morningside Heights and Manhattan Valley. Over the past 15 years, he has fought hard to defend affordable HDFC co-operatives from foreclosure and onerous regulation, helping the most indebted HDFC in the city get out of foreclosure and back on the track to financial stability. While he served as Chair of Manhattan Community Board 9, he led the fight to rezone Morningside Heights to prevent super-tall luxury towers and instead incentivize affordable housing and transit improvements. During the pandemic, he secured 3 COVID vaccine sites for the neighborhood when Mayor De Blasio's initial rollout left the neighborhood with no vaccination sites for the elderly and immunocompromised. He worked with local small businesses to make sure they knew about the Restaurant Relief Fund and other SBA programs, providing technical assistance in both English and Spanish. In Albany, Barry would be a progressive voice to fight for our neighborhood's values and to make our neighborhood more affordable while increasing our quality of life and ensuring our schools have the resources they need to continue to provide the highest quality education to our kids. Barry is running to make sure that Morningside Heights, Manhattan

Valley, and the Upper West Side continue to have a strong progressive voice representing us in Albany who can also serve as a leader in improving the resources and services in our neighborhood. If elected, Barry will make sure those with the most need-- from NYCHA residents to vulnerable HDFC co-ops to seniors and schoolkids-- have a direct line to elected leadership in our community.