

NY Caring Majority Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to complete this candidate questionnaire. The NY Caring Majority requests your response by October 15, 2018.

The New York Caring Majority is a movement of seniors, people with disabilities, family caregivers, and domestic and home care workers from all across the state. We are organizing to make direct care affordable and accessible to all who need it, and for investment in the workforce so that direct care jobs are dignified, qualified jobs that allow workers to meet their own needs.

Please note that information in a completed questionnaire may be used on our website to share candidate positions with our members and interested parties.

If you have questions about the content of this questionnaire, please email ilana@domesticemployers.org

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The New York Health Act would create a single-payer program that provides universal, comprehensive health care to all New Yorkers, putting an end to co-pays, deductibles, and limited provider networks. In a study released this past summer, the RAND corporation indicated that the addition of long term care to New York Health would still allow savings to be realized in the health care system. The Caring Majority believes that any new health care system that fails to incorporate a robust and comprehensive approach to long-term care will ultimately leave families behind. Contrary to popular belief, Medicare does not cover most long-term care, and Medicaid, which covers significant long-term care expenses, requires families to “spend down” their assets to achieve eligibility. In addition to those challenges, only 8% of the population has private long term care insurance. Whether examined from the perspective of our state’s aging demographics, or from the viewpoint of the changing nature of work and the workforce, or through the lens of the ever-evolving demands and constraints on families, the case for a new long-term care system is clear. A universal health care option that includes long-term care would ensure that all New Yorkers are able to access the services they need, in their homes and communities when they need them

1. Do you support the inclusion of a universal long-term care program in the New York Health Act from day one of its enactment? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

☒ Other:

Every New Yorker deserves access to quality health care services. There is no definitive answer on cost vs savings to the State for a single payer system. Many people are resistant to give up Medicare for a new state program and obtaining federal waivers to apply Medicaid and Medicare funding to pay for a New York State only program. It is critical that we do not follow in the footsteps of Vermont, who tried and failed to enact a workable single payer system. These concerns are real. Nothing is off the table and I will continue to investigate options as we pursue a common goal of the best health care coverage at the best price for all New Yorkers.

Homecare workers spend long hours working hard to care for those we love. But direct care jobs—nearly 90% of which are performed by women—often pay just above the minimum wage. The average pay for a home care worker in New York is just above \$11 an hour - not enough to afford the cost of living. The people who care for our families should earn enough to care for their own. Workers often have unreliable schedules and are not always paid for all of the time they work. Because of this low pay, there is a shortage of direct care workers in New York State, and this shortage will only grow as the need increases - according to Mercer Health Provider Advisory, by 2025 New York will face a shortage of 23,000 direct care workers.

2.a Will you fight to raise the wages of home care workers, ensure they are paid for all hours worked, and create policies that promote fair, reliable scheduling? *

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other:

2.b Through the Community First Choice Option, states receive a 6 percentage point increase in Federal matching payments to provide home and community-based attendant services and supports to eligible Medicaid enrollees. Will you commit to ensuring that these increased resources are directed to home care worker and personal assistant wages in order to help ensure a high quality and respected caregiving workforce? *

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other:

2.c Economic development strategies often include financial incentives for the creation of jobs and investments in workforce development, but they are not typically used to build up low-wage sectors. If elected, will you commit to investing economic development dollars in home care and consumer directed personal assistance to raise pay for workers and invest in others supports such as transportation, in order to build up the workforce needed to meet the rapidly growing demand for these services? *

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other:

Over 85% of long-term care is provided by family members. In New York, AARP estimates that family caregivers provide more than \$31 billion in unpaid care each year. The financial and emotional stress on caregivers is significant.

3. Will you commit to finding solutions to alleviate the challenges faced by family caregivers, including financial incentives, enhanced respite care options, and investing in the direct care workforce? *

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other:

3.a If yes, what other measures would you take to support family caregivers in New York? *

I will support measures that provide the proper resources, support and tools to ensure that New York State is a leader in respite care options for family caregivers. During the budget process, I will work to insure that the State Office of the Aging receives the funding it needs to invest in programs that support family care giving.

4. How will you ensure that people with disabilities, seniors, direct care workers and family caregivers are represented in your policy priorities? *

The best way to advocate for anyone is to hear directly from that person. My door is always open to hear the needs of every person from the 5th Senate District and across New York State. It is people's stories and experiences that drive good policy and I stand ready to proudly represent people with disabilities, seniors, direct care workers and family caregivers.

This form was created inside of Jews For Racial & Economic Justice (JFREJ).

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