

Candidate for: NYC Council District 24

Borough: Queens

Name: James F. Gennaro

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Political Party Affiliation: Democrat

Occupation: NYC Councilmember

Current Employment: NYC Councilmember District 24

Are you an incumbent: Yes, number of years in office: 8

Under current term limits law, how many more terms, after this one, will you be able to serve? NONE

Education:

High School: Chaminade

College: BA in Geology from SUNY Stonybrook 1979

Graduate/Professional: MS in Policy Analyst and Public Management from SUNY Stonybrook 1982

Question 1: I paid for college and graduate school with loans.

Question 2: All of the above

Question 3: Public investment in CUNY needs to come from both the state and city government. Every year, our mayor bemoans the state's taking more than 12 billion more in tax revenue from NYC than it gives back in state aid. This fiscal imbalance needs to be corrected in a way that provides CUNY with additional funding every year instead of using tuition increases. On the city-level, aid needs to become a priority on both sides of the budget negotiation teams. Our council has made CUNY funding an important part of our priority list. I have made CUNY funding an important part of my capital allotments and have given millions of dollars to Queens College and CUNY Law School that reside in my district for necessary improvements.

Question 4:

- a) I oppose current tuition increases.
- b) I oppose the CUNY compact's call for annual tuition increases.
- c) CUNY students face many challenges. Many are working full-time and are attending CUNY schools to better their lives. Burdensome tuition increases only drive these students away from their desire to better themselves. I would support adding additional funding to the Vallone scholarship as a way of helping CUNY students. Additionally, I would support a freeze on tuition increases and lobby the state government to support CUNY. As a former adjunct professor at Queens College and member of this union, I know the challenges that CUNY students face and understand that tuition increases cannot be part of our long-term strategy to raise funds for the universities.
- d) Loans are a part of the landscape to help students reach their goal of graduating college. While loans are very useful, using the availability of loans as a

justification for increasing tuition is not a responsible argument. CUNY was created to give students opportunities and options they did not have previously. CUNY tuition has already been raised to a point where it challenges students to come up with creative ways to pay for school through scholarships, loans and grants. We cannot encourage students to take on burdensome loans that would diminish their future fiscal viability when we can find ways within the system to limit tuition increases.

Question 5: a) Part of the additional funding from Albany and the city needs to allow CUNY to fund the hiring of full-time faculty. Full-time faculty is an important resource for students and the university. It is very important for universities to have new programs but I would advocate that CUNY schools use any large increases in funding for faculty first.

b) As a former adjunct professor at Queens College and member of this union, I understand the conditions that adjunct faculty and staff face. It would be important to have CUNY put in basic guidelines for adjunct staff that would define their contribution to the university, allow for pay increases and greater integrate them into the university's culture.

Question 6: I have advocated that we look to generate new tax revenues in NYC by growing a green economy. NYC has the opportunity to grow new businesses in the green sector such as bioheat, wind, solar and green auditors. This green economy will put New Yorkers to work, raise tax revenue and reduce our city's dependence on Wall Street. Until it was cut, I was the sponsor of the green job initiative in the council to aid in this creation. I also believe that making all New Yorkers pay their fair share of the tax burden is important as we make tough decisions going forward.

Question 7: I attended many of the rallies in support of the public service unions in NYC. During this budget cycle, I advocated on behalf of restorations and stopping budget cuts to key public services. Our city should not be making choices between firing teachers and closing firehouses. We came up with a short-term solution to deal with these potential cuts, but we need to begin looking for long-term solutions much like I discussed in question 6.

Question 8: As we grow new jobs in NYC, CUNY is where our workforce is going to come from. Many of my staff members are CUNY educated. I believe in CUNY's role in the future of NYC to train many of the new workers in these growing green industries and CUNY playing a large role in NY's economic development.

Question 9: As a former professor, I understand how important it is to have a free flowing conversation of many points of view that should not be hindered. This conversation should include points of view that may not be popular. I would continue to advocate to uphold academic freedom at CUNY and other colleges.

Question 9b: I believe that the professor and the university should together develop the curriculum in a way that is free from interference from outside forces. The learning

process should not be vetted to include only popular points of view or to reflect a public official's ideals or private business interest. CUNY professors should be free to make strictly academic decisions about what is taught in their classrooms.

Question 10: I do believe that public employees should have the same rights to strike as private employees. All employers should negotiate in good faith with unions. When there is no good faith, all options should be available to unions to bring the employers to the table to negotiate.

Question 11: I have worked in the public sector for over 25 years. It was always an option to go into the private sector, but my belief in public service has inspired me to stay the course in the public sector. The generous health and pension benefits are a large factor in keeping qualified individuals in the public sector. I will continue to advocate on behalf of the hardworking public sector workers who sacrifice for the common good and I firmly believe in the enhancement of public benefits.

Question 12: Environmental Protection (Chair); Civil Service & Labor; Consumer Affairs; Finance; Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Alcoholism, Drug Abuse & Disability Services; Public Safety; Sanitation & Solid Waste Management

Question 13: I was a sponsor of Resolution **843-2003** asking Governor Pataki to withdraw his proposal to cut CUNY funding in the 2003-2004 fiscal year and a sponsor of Resolution **703-2002** which supported Medgar Evers. Additionally, I stood with the council on Resolution **131-2002** as a co-sponsor against Governor Pataki's plan to change TAP. Additionally for fiscal year 2010, I was able to give **\$200,000** to Queens College generally for capital improvements, **\$75,000** to Hillel for electronic security, **\$3,000** for the Kuptenberg center, **\$7,500** for the Queensborough Community College Performing Arts Center and **\$25,000** to the CUNY Law School Community Legal Resource Program. I have always considered my relationship with CUNY an important one and will continue to support CUNY in my next term.

Question 14: As chair of the Environmental Protection committee, I have been able to pass many important pieces of legislation. In the 2009 legislative session, I introduced bills that would effect over half the land area of NYC making buildings more green; Intro 967 as part of the council's comprehensive green buildings package. Additionally, we have passed landmark brownfields legislation (Introduction 21-A), wetlands preservation legislation (Introduction 506-A) and changed the way asbestos cleanup will be done in NYC to protect firefighters and be more environmentally safe. In 2008, I was able to pass legislation that created a stormwater management plan for NYC and institutionalized the office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability. In the NYC Council for 2008, I was ranked 2nd in the number of bills that I sponsored that were passed.

Question 15: I have attended rallies at City Hall in defense of union related initiatives. My office has written letters on behalf of NYC's public unions and I have always worked with union officials to improve my legislation.