



Andrea Hall Stachniewicz

Judicial Delegate, Assembly District 36

Statement from Andrea Hall Stachniewicz, Judicial Delegate for Assembly District 36 in New York State.

On August 9, 2022, I attended the Democratic Judicial Convention of the 11th Judicial District of New York State in order to carry out my elected duties as Judicial Delegate for Assembly District 36. Transparency has always been and will continue to be a core value of my platform as an elected official representing my community. As such, I am sharing my experience in attending this year's Judicial Convention in Queens Village, NY. Following the June 28th primary, I first received correspondence from The New York State Democratic Committee on July 30th. The letter I received detailed the date, time, and location of the judicial convention, which was scheduled only ten days out from when I received the letter. I received no additional correspondence from the New York State Democratic Committee, nor from the Democratic Organization of Queens County regarding the nomination process, judicial candidates, or agenda for the convention. On Saturday August 6th, I was contacted by a fellow judicial delegate and provided with the names and resumes of the 17 candidates running for supreme court judge. This information was never provided by the Queens County Democratic Party ahead of the convention. Had I not received this information from my interpersonal political network, I would have attended the convention with zero knowledge of the judicial candidates, their background, ruling history, or any of the information needed to make an informed nomination and voting decision.

I was able to research all 17 candidates for supreme court judge prior to the convention. I created a four-tier system to sort each candidate based on their community involvement and apparent adherence to progressive values. Candidates with experience in equality, prisoner rights, alternatives to incarceration, community advocacy, women's rights, AAPI safety were categorized as "tier 1", the best candidates for nomination and a "yes" vote. Candidates who showed a marked history of private sector work at major financial institutions, conservative leaning history, or legal work that actively challenged disability and immigrant rights were categorized as "tier 4", candidates who I would not nominate and would vote "no" on. Similarly, candidates whose resumes were underdeveloped, and who did not have direct quotes in news articles or video platforms were categorized as "tier 4" as I simply could not find enough information to make an informed nomination or vote. In total, it took me about two and a half to three hours to complete this vetting process.



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I arrived at the judicial convention at 5:30 PM on Tuesday August 9th, about thirty minutes prior to the scheduled start of the convention. The convention began at 6:30 PM with a roll call, pledge of allegiance, and a temporary chairman nomination. No preface or context was given to the chairman nominating process, which seemed to have been predetermined. Around 7:00 PM we began the nomination and voting process for the four open supreme court judge seats. This process was conducted as follows: a delegate was called upon by name from the chairman to read the name of the judicial candidate off a piece of paper. This was the nomination. The chairman then called for a vote by voice to elect the nominated candidate. The chairman asked all who are in favor of the candidate to announce “aye”, and all in opposition to announce “no”. It was then decided by the chairman, based on perceived auditory volume, who won the vote. There was no quantitative count of votes. There was no formal documentation of individual delegate votes. As it currently stands, there is simply no tangible data to verify a democratic vote count representing the votes of each individual delegate.

As a licensed clinical professional who holds a Masters of Education in Counseling Psychology, a Masters of Arts in Psychology, and has significant research experience, it is of my professional opinion that utilizing auditory determination in lieu of physical individual written votes is a flawed process that disallows for the use of quantitative data and is heavily subject to rater bias. This is a methodology that would absolutely fail to hold up in a clinical research setting and as such should be unanimously rejected for use in our democracy. Therefore, I believe the four supreme court judicial candidates for Queens County were voted-in based on an electoral process that was not conducted democratically.

The four judicial candidates voted-in include Nestor Diaz, Leigh Cheng, Lee A. Mayersohn, and Denise N. Johnson. I voted “no” for each candidate. In fact, three out of the four candidates elected were categorized as “tier 4” on my rating system; none of the nominated candidates were in my “tier 1” category. I did not have the chance to nominate any of the candidates whom I considered to be “tier 1”, nor did I have the chance to seek recourse for my opposition of the voting process. It should be noted that no other delegates were able to nominate any additional judicial candidates. It should also be noted that delegates were not informed of the nomination process, and there is significant evidence to believe that county establishment had pre-determined who would be nominated and win the election. Following a deeply ironic speech from Gregory Meeks on democracy, the convention quickly adjourned at 7:35 PM.



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I am not only deeply disappointed with the Queens County Democratic party, but moreover, I am deeply sorry to the people of my assembly district. To the people of Assembly District 36- I am sorry that I was unable to deliver on my promise to vote for and elect progressive representation in the Queens County Supreme Court. When I was recruited by New Reformers to run for Judicial Delegate, it was made clear to me that I would be voting, in the truest sense of the word, at the judicial convention. Had I been accurately advised of what to reasonably expect during the convention from the democratic club that recruited me to run, I would have never made a promise to my constituents knowing that follow-through at the convention would very unlikely. While I can't speak for anyone but myself, I ran a campaign truly believing the judicial convention would be a democratic process in which I would have an equal role and a vote that was appropriately counted. I truly believed that I would be able to represent the hardworking people of my assembly district fully and accurately. The archaic, undemocratic, and oft egotistic systems in place prevented me from being fully able to follow through on this.

The entire process surrounding this year's convention has highlighted and reinforced for me the importance of standing up for what's right and standing up for your values and what you believe to be true and just- even if you are standing alone. Institutions, even the ones that we believe to be equitable, can be fallible too when image and persona are prioritized above governing and representation. This type of corruption is something that I absolutely will never stand for. I will never put the interests of a political party, democratic club, or any one individual above the best interest of my community. I will always stand for what is best for my community.

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