

Democratic Rural Conference of New York State

2022 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE DEMOCRATIC RURAL CONFERENCE

CANDIDATE'S NAME and ADDRESS:

Tom Suozzi

Position for which you are a candidate: **Governor of the State of New York**

Candidate's Address for All DRC Correspondence:

3 School Street

Glen Cove, NY 11542

Telephone: (516) 320-9213

THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS WILL BE POSTED ON THE DRC WEB SITE.

Name, cell phone number and e-mail address for the person on your staff who will be your liaison with the DRC.

Mike Florio (Campaign Manager), (516) 320-9213, michael.florio@gmail.com

List your qualifications for this office including but not limited to other offices you have held, educational background, etc.

Professional Experience:

- 2017-Present: Member of Congress (NY-03)
- 2010-2016: Attorney, Harris Beach
- 2010-2016: Senior Advisor, Lazard
- 2002-2009: Nassau County Executive
- 1994-2002: Mayor of Glen Cove
- 1990-1993: Attorney, Shearman & Sterling
- 1989-1990: Clerk, Chief Judge of the Eastern District of New York
- 1984-1986: Auditor, Arthur Andersen & Company

Education:

- Bachelor's: Boston College
- JD: Fordham University School of Law
- Trained as an Attorney and CPA

Please address these questions, but make your answers brief so the entire questionnaire does not exceed 4 pages.

ABILITY TO LEAD THE ENTIRE STATE – What contact and experiences have you had with parts of the state, other than where you currently reside, which demonstrate your recognition of the geographic, demographic and economic diversity of the state and your ability to provide leadership on behalf of all New Yorkers?

My proven executive experience includes my former roles as Mayor of Glen Cove and Nassau County Executive as well as my current role as a Member of Congress. As Mayor, I was actively

Democratic Rural Conference of New York State

involved in the New York Conference of Mayors. As County Executive, I was active in and served as President of the New York State County Executives Association. As a Member of Congress, I engage with all of my colleagues in the New York delegation on both sides of the aisle. In all of these roles, as well as my campaign for Governor in 2006 and my visits to family members, personal travel, and private sector experience with Harris Beach and Arthur Andersen, I have traveled the state, learned about its diversity and issues, and seen firsthand the opportunity for a great future.

When looking at who should run the state of New York, I think New Yorkers will consider three factors:

- **Experience:** My proven executive experience includes my eight years as County Executive of one of the largest counties in the country, larger than eight states, which I transformed from “the worst run county in America” to one of the best.
- **Approach to Governing:** My common sense approach to governing has led me to work with Democrats and Republicans and to serve as Vice Chair of the Problem Solvers Caucus, which is made up of 29 Democrats and 29 Republicans who represent urban, suburban, and rural districts.
- **Vision:** My vision for the future of our state, which includes lowering taxes, tackling crime, preserving and protecting our environment, and helping our troubled schools, will appeal to the voters that the DRC represents.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE ISSUES – What issues do you believe are of most concern to voters in rural counties, and what will be your message in addressing those issues?

Reduce Taxes:

My number one policy priority is one that will benefit all New Yorkers, rural and otherwise: lowering taxes. We have some of the highest taxes in the nation and it has made our state uncompetitive. That is why we lost 300,000 residents from July 2020 to July 2021. If we don't lower taxes, we risk losing even more people and losing the ability to fund progressive priorities like health care and environmental protection. Property taxes particularly are a killer for low income New Yorkers because they drastically increase the cost of living for people who are already struggling to get by.

Reduce Regulation:

In addition to lowering taxes, we must reduce regulations (which often arise from New York City-centric legislators) that make it unattractive for businesses to locate in our rural counties.

Broadband:

As the Vice Chair of the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus, I helped negotiate and pass the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill, which included \$65 billion for broadband. We need to install new fiber optic lines, improve poorly installed lines, and ensure that rural New York has state-of-the-art broadband.

Agriculture:

New York's agricultural sector must remain robust for decades to come. We need to start by building a pipeline of highly skilled agricultural workers. We should expand Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education (CASE) options in our middle and high schools so that students interested in agribusiness careers can get a head start. We should also fund loan forgiveness to college graduates in agricultural specialties who live in New York. Doing so would ensure that our agricultural industry remains competitive and does not fall victim to the exodus we're currently seeing from our state.

Democratic Rural Conference of New York State

PARTY BUILDING – How have you expressed and demonstrated a commitment toward building our party statewide and what are your ideas for future party building, specific to rural counties?

Since entering the race for Governor, I have already held five of my seven planned tele-town halls that will touch every corner of the state. In December, I spoke to Democratic voters from Western New York and the Southern Tier. Earlier tonight, I spoke to Democrats from the Hudson Valley and Capital Region. Next week, I will hold another town hall with voters from the North Country, the Mohawk Valley, Central New York, and the Finger Lakes. To further demonstrate my commitment to building the party statewide, as Governor, I will raise funds for every county Democratic organization in the state.

Furthermore, we need to put the New York State Democratic Party back in the hands of New York State Democrats. For too long, the party has been controlled by a few powerful actors from the state's most densely populated counties. In almost the past half century, the party has had only three chairs or co-chairs from DRC counties. When I am Governor, I want to see a co-chair from a DRC county, and will work to make that happen.

In the event of a primary for the office you are seeking, will you support the winner of the Democratic primary? (This calls for a YES or NO answer ONLY.)

YES

FAIRNESS IN SHARING POLITICAL POWER - How have you and how will you defend and further the rights of small counties to be represented in the decision making process and in governmental and political positions?

When I was born, New York had 45 members of Congress. We now have 27, and we are going down to 26 because of the 2020 Census. We need to stop our exodus of residents by making it more attractive to live in our state than to move to somewhere like Florida or Texas. I believe that the biggest population growth opportunities in New York are in our rural counties. Therefore, our policy decisions to be driven by state legislators from DRC counties. As Governor, I will hold a monthly meeting with small county Democratic legislators so that they can share their viewpoints on current issues and pending legislation.

INCLUSION – If elected, how would your administration include the people from DRC counties and address the issues of concern in those counties?

I have demonstrated throughout my career a commitment to hiring staff members who reflect the diversity of those they serve. When I make senior level appointments to my gubernatorial administration, I will ensure there is representation from DRC counties that exceeds their proportion of New York's population. That will be a contrast to the current Governor who, despite her Erie County roots, has loaded her Administration with people from the New York City area.

VOTER APPEAL – What qualities or experiences do you have that would attract support from voters in DRC counties, not just from Democrats but also from non-enrolled voters and cross-over Republicans?

Democratic Rural Conference of New York State

I am a common sense Democrat who will work with anyone to get things done. My north star is not the desire to always say what any one group wants to hear, it is the duty to make life better for the people of New York. That message, along with my policy platform of lower taxes, fighting crime, protecting the environment, and helping our troubled schools, will resonate with a diverse set of voters across the state who are sick of politicians pandering. It will particularly resonate with those who see Democrats as being too focused on political correctness and not focused enough on issues that acutely impact people's lives.

CAMPAIGN IN DRC COUNTIES – How would you campaign in DRC counties? Will you personally appear with local candidates?

I plan to have a busy campaign schedule that will include many appearances with local candidates in DRC counties. As I said in an earlier answer, I have already held multiple tele-town halls where I have had the opportunity to engage with DRC county Democrats. I look forward to having many more opportunities in person throughout the campaign.

OTHER CRITERIA – Please set forth anything else you want us to consider.

As I said earlier, there are three primary factors that voters will consider when they decide who will be their next Governor. When judged against my opponents on these three factors, I clearly stand out:

1. Experience: I am the only candidate in the field with years of experience and a long track record of accomplishment as a chief executive. I served as Mayor of my hometown of Glen Cove for eight years and as Nassau County Executive for eight years. When I took over as Nassau County Executive in 2002, we were on the brink of bankruptcy, our social services were a mess, and our physical infrastructure had deteriorated. During my eight years in office, I restored the fiscal health of a County with a budget larger than 11 states, I brought a revolutionary “No Wrong Door” human services delivery system to those most in need, I championed a \$150 million environmental restoration program, and I dramatically upgraded the County’s physical infrastructure and technology.

2. Approach to Governing: While I am a lifelong Democrat who will always advocate for my progressive values, I have learned throughout my career that in order to get things done that will make peoples’ lives better, you need to be willing to work with people who you disagree with.

3. Vision: I am the only candidate in the field who has laid out a comprehensive vision for New York: Tackling COVID and improving the economy while reducing taxes, fighting crime, protecting the environment, and helping our troubled schools.

I have the proven executive experience, the common sense approach, and the vision for the future to make New York successful again. I hope to have your support.



Signature of the Candidate

1/24/2022

Date