

# FAITH *over* FEAR

## CANDIDATES

## GUIDE *for*

## District 13

Allerton, City Island, Country Club, Edgewater Park, Ferry Point, Locust Point, Morris Park, Pelham Bay, Pelham Gardens, Pelham Parkway, Schuylerville, Silver Beach, Spencer Estates, Throggs Neck, Van Nest, Waterbury LaSalle, Westchester Square, Zerega

New York City Primary Election Day is  
**Tuesday September 12, 2017**

New York City General Election Day is  
**Tuesday November 7, 2017**

**POLLS OPEN 6 AM - 9 PM**

### The Candidates



**JOHN C. DOYLE**

*Democrat; will also appear as  
Liberal Party  
Associate Director of Public  
Affairs, NYC Health + Hospitals/  
Jacobi Medical Center*



**ALEX A. GOMEZ**

*Democrat  
Program Director*



**JOHN CERINI**

*Did not respond to requests to  
complete candidate survey*



**EGIDIO SEMENTILLI**

*Did not respond to requests to  
complete candidate survey*



**MARK GJONAJ**

*Democrat  
NYS Assembly Member,  
District 80*



**MARJORIE VELÁZQUEZ**

*Democratic Party  
and Working Families Party  
Accountant*



**VICTOR R. ORTIZ**

*Did not respond to requests to  
complete candidate survey*

**FAITH *over* FEAR**



**#FaithOverFear #FaithinNewYork #NYCcouncil**

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**Would you defend NYC's status as a sanctuary city?**

**DOYLE:** For nearly 30 years, under Mayor's of both parties, our City has recognized the benefit of being a sanctuary city for all New Yorkers. I would fight to continue this practice by publically supporting this status and pressuring the Mayor to continue support.

**GJONAJ:** Yes. The best way to ensure law and order in our city is to make sure that everyone feels safe in reporting crime to the police and taking advantage of our justice system. Making immigrants, documented or not, too afraid to report crimes to the police hurt all of us. Beyond which, this is a human rights issue. As the son of immigrants myself, I guarantee I would never be part of making this great city hostile to newer arrivals.

**VELÁZQUEZ:** New York City has been a sanctuary city for years, under both previous Mayors because ensures everyone feels safe reporting crimes to the police department. This is vital part of keeping our streets safe – that everyone feels safe reporting crimes, so I would defend New York City's status as a sanctuary city. We cannot allow hate and prejudices to break up families, and make our City less safe.

**GOMEZ:** Yes. I believe we need to protect the lives of our most vulnerable and including those who are immigrants in our country. I would advocate for services and stronger laws that would protect legal and illegal immigrants.

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**Would you support ending criminal penalties for minor infractions to limit arrests and potential threats to immigrants' status?**

**DOYLE:** I would need to know what is considered minor infractions before I can answer this question. Obviously, if someone is not a threat to themselves or others, I do not believe deportation would be a just punishment for a minor infraction.

**GJONAJ:** It entirely depends on the criminal infraction. I do not support allowing our city streets to become even more covered in urine and graffiti. I do not support drug offenses, even minor ones, in proximity to schools and houses of worship. I would be interested in discussing other issues like turnstile hopping.

**VELÁZQUEZ:** I believe we need to continue to improve our criminal justice system. I would need to know exactly what minor infractions are being considered here, and worry about some of the quality of life issues like graffiti, litter, and noise complaints not being addressed properly. For truly minor, non-violent infractions, I don't not believe the risk of deportation is a fair.

**GOMEZ:** Yes. I would advocate and support laws that would protect immigrants and support the end of misdemeanors that target immigrants.

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**Describe your greatest accomplishment in advocating for constituents of the district.**

**DOYLE:** There's never just one accomplishment that defines a public service career. I helped get the first bank in Van Nest in 30 years, jumpstarted the Stand-Up-to-Violence program which has reduced gun violence by 60%, secured temporary air monitors for Throggs Neck, and helped preserve vital services on City Island.

**GJONAJ:** There are honestly too many to try to single any one out. As a first-time candidate, I stood up for residents of Tracey Towers facing a sharp and unexpected rent increase, took the landlord to court and won a long term deferment and reduction in the rent increase. As an Assembly Member, I have created events like International Family Day, an International Music Festival, an International Food Festival and Bronx Day in Albany, all of which are intended to promote diversity and inclusion and highlight the wonderful people of his district and borough. He has supported veterans' organizations, and tenants, homeowners and seniors, and our first responders. I could write 1000 words on the accomplishments in the district and in the Assembly, but for brevity's sake, those are the ones folks should know.

**VELÁZQUEZ:** As the Community Board 10 Treasurer, and the Democratic District Leader for AD82 Part B, I have had a long history of working with local residents to create local jobs, combat overdevelopment, and ensure our seniors are properly supported. My greatest accomplishment would be in working with Council Members Ritchie Torres and James Vacca on elevator safety legislation in NYCHA, to establish a group within NYCHA dedicated to addressing elevator issues.

**GOMEZ:** Over the last 2 1/2 years I have worked on behalf of the Latino & African American communities to encourage voter registration and participation in local, state and federal elections. I have also fought against the overdevelopment in CD# 13 and the misuse & allocation of our taxpayer City funded parks in CD# 13.

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**Describe the 3 biggest priorities for the district.**

**DOYLE:** 1.) Increase transportation options and reduce commute times, and renovate Pelham Bay Station; 2.) Push City Hall to make more resiliency improvements to protect our coastal communities and address climate change here at home; 3.) Continue efforts to expand our police force and civilianize jobs within the precincts so our police can be out in the streets protecting our neighborhoods.

**GJONAJ:** I am committed to improving public safety, improving transportation options and supporting our public schools.

**VELÁZQUEZ:** 1) Quality of Life: I will use my skills as an accountant in the private sector to ensure families are not overburdened by property taxes, water bills, and long delays and cost overruns on major infrastructure construction projects. I am uniquely qualified to use those same skills to root out waste and corruption and protect families' hard-earned tax dollars while protecting services for our most vulnerable residents. 2) Education: I will fight to increase funding for public schools and meet the needs of students, parents, and educators. I believe in addressing the issue of struggling schools, but doing so in ways that get at the root causes without sending the message that we're turning our backs on our schools. 3) Expanding Transit: It's no secret that we live in a transit desert in the East Bronx. I will fight to increase capital funding and expand transit options. The MTA needs to expedite the construction of the new Metro-North stations in Morris Park and Parkchester/Van Nest and will fight to expand select bus service and bring Ferry service to the Bronx.

**GOMEZ:** Education Reform, Real Affordable Housing, Equality

**Would you support continued funding to support detained immigrants?**

**DOYLE:** I would need to review the program, however as a matter of principle, I believe that deportation should only be a tool for the most serious offenses.

**GJONAJ:** I believe the Mayor was right to limit funding for detained immigrants to those not facing violent criminal charges. I do not believe it is appropriate for taxpayers to support immigration defense for accused rapists and murderers.

**VELÁZQUEZ:** While I would like to discuss the specific violations and crimes that fall into each category in more depth, I believe broadly that we should only continue funding support for detained immigrants for non-violent charges, and not more serious, violent criminal charges.

**GOMEZ:** Yes. I believe immigrants deserve to be protected under the law and should have access to equal and fair representation.

**What is your position on tracking US residents and/or citizens based on their religious identity? Would you expunge wrongly collected surveillance data on Muslim New Yorkers?**

**DOYLE:** I am against any such tracking. Tracking Americans by creed, culture or origin is against the very principles this national was founded on.

**GJONAJ:** Your question is somewhat confusingly worded. I believe any governmental effort to track residents and citizens' religious affiliations is both wrong and unconstitutional.

**VELÁZQUEZ:** I do not believe we should allow any body of government the ability to track any US resident and or citizen based on their religious identity.

**GOMEZ:** I am against any type of tracking or surveillance that would target individuals based on national origin and or religious affiliation.

**What is your position on strengthening the reinstated Handschu Committee?**

**DOYLE:** Citizens should be represented on this committee to ensure that citizen concerns are being noted, and to reassure the general population that there is unbiased representation.

**GJONAJ:** It's my understanding that the Handschu Committee has an independent non-NYPD representative. Do you mean making that appointee permanent or permanently altering the makeup of the committee? I am certainly interested in discussing reforming the Handschu Committee.

**VELÁZQUEZ:** I would need to have further information on this, but as an active Community Board member, believe additional community engagement is a good step.

**GOMEZ:** I agree with including a permanent (empowered) non-NYPD representative.

**Would you bring to justice the perpetrators of all types of hate crimes, including those based on religion, sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity?**

**DOYLE:** Yes. A crime is a crime, no matter who it is committed against.

**GJONAJ:** Absolutely. As the son of immigrants and a lifelong Bronxite and New Yorker, I am committed to safe streets and communities, especially for vulnerable populations. I have supported LGBTQ senior housing and worked closely with the 49th Precinct to ensure that residents are not targeted for hate crimes.

**VELÁZQUEZ:** Yes, hate crimes are some of our worst offenses that shock members of the community involved. Because of this, we need to pay special attention to their resolution, and I would commit to be actively involved on addressing hate crimes in my district and through legislation.

**GOMEZ:** Yes I would support bringing to justice victims of hate crimes but only based on real evidence.

**What is your position on law enforcement tracking members of civil rights movements?**

**DOYLE:** Again, I am against any such tracking. Tracking Americans of civil rights movements is ironic in a horrible fashion.

**GJONAJ:** It is wrong and unconstitutional to interfere with citizens' rights of free speech and assembly.

**VELÁZQUEZ:** I do not think we should be interfering with citizens' rights to express their free speech in public.

**GOMEZ:** I disagree with law enforcement tracking members of civil rights movements but I do understand that we live in a world where law enforcement needs to (under certain circumstances) collect information to protect our country.

**Would you support legislation to allow non-citizen residents to vote in NYC elections? Allowing parolees to vote in local elections?**

**DOYLE:** I support current federal law in regards to voting rights of non-citizens, but am open to parolees being able to vote. Once a citizen has served their time, they should be able to reintegrate into society.

**GJONAJ:** I would not. As the son of immigrants, I know the struggles that come with acquiring citizenship and the right to vote. We value what we work for. I believe that immigrants who do not demonstrate their commitment to this country by seeking citizenship should never have political power over those who have.

**VELÁZQUEZ:** Before exploring other options, we need to find ways to increase voter turnout throughout our City and State, and I believe that can be through same-day registration, early voting, and possibly considering online-voting if the cyber security protocols can be guaranteed.

**GOMEZ:** No. But I would advocate for parolees to be able to vote once they have successfully completed their parole.

**Do you support passing Intro. 1482 to increase oversight and comprehensive reporting of NYPD surveillance technology?**

**DOYLE:** I understand some information on these surveillance policies is sensitive. It should be reviewed by the Council and I'm open for civilian oversight through existing committees.

**GJONAJ:** I would be interested in discussing Intro. 1482 with homeland security and NYPD specialists before declaring support.

**VELÁZQUEZ:** NYPD surveillance equipment may contain a variety of sensitive information, and I would need to better understand what times of information would be shared under this bill.

**GOMEZ:** Yes.

**What is your position on proposed legislation Intro. 152-A, the Certificate of No Harassment, that aims to protect tenants from landlord harassment?**

**DOYLE:** I am in favor of such legislation.

**GJONAJ:** I believe the bill would have to be improved before supporting.

**VELÁZQUEZ:** I strongly support our tenants and any legislation that seeks to protect them from greedy landlords attempting to harass or evict tenants. For this reason, Tenants PAC has endorsed my candidacy.

**GOMEZ:** Yes, I agree with the protection of tenants from landlord harassment, and I would advocate for and on behalf of tenants.

**What is your position on the Dept. of Housing Preservation & Development revising their requirements for developers who request subsidies to include a significant increase in the amount of deeply affordable housing?**

**DOYLE:** I support increasing the mandates for affordable housing. Too often new developments force our residents of our neighborhoods, and such revisions will ensure New York remains affordable to all.

**GJONAJ:** I support affordable housing and will be interested in discussing any plan to expand it. I would need to see this proposal spelled out more specifically before supporting it.

**VELÁZQUEZ:** I support the ability to increase affordable housing for local residents, and especially seniors, in new developments so we can protect long-time residents from being priced out of our community. As the specifics, I would need to look at the specifics of this proposal.

**GOMEZ:** I disagree with HPD revising their term sheets to accommodate developers; the developers are not creating true and real affordable housing.

**What is your position on the proposed Housing Not Warehousing legislation, including Intro.'s 1034, 1036 & 1039, to assure that land is used for affordable housing and not held vacant for profit?**

**DOYLE:** In favor.

**GJONAJ:** As a package of bills, I would want to discuss each bill specifically before declaring support. I support the concept of conducting citywide audits to determine vacant properties and support dealing with the homelessness crisis by moving families very quickly into permanent housing.

**VELÁZQUEZ:** I strongly support all parts of the Housing Not Warehousing legislation because too many of our families slip through the cracks and are displaced because of affordable housing being left vacant.

**GOMEZ:** I agree and would advocate for New Yorkers who need affordable housing to always have the priority.

**Do you support passage of the Right To Know Act (Intro.'s 182 & 541) to increase police accountability?**

**DOYLE:**

**GJONAJ:** No.

**VELÁZQUEZ:**

**GOMEZ:** Yes

**Would you support ending the NYPD's current "broken windows" policing practices that over criminalize minor crimes and quality of life infractions in low-income communities of color?**

**DOYLE:** I'm for fairly applying the law to all areas. My constituency wants more enforcement of our laws, particularly quality of life offenses. I would push to make sure its being equally enforced to all people in all neighborhoods.

**GJONAJ:** I reject the premise of your question. The NYPD's policy is not to over criminalize minor crimes in low income communities of color. "Broken windows" is a theoretical concept that does ensure enforcement of what some people consider "minor crimes" but that have a disproportionate impact on quality of life, especially in low-income communities. I am not interested in having a philosophical argument. I believe it is government's responsibility to ensure public safety and quality of life.

**VELÁZQUEZ:** In our neighborhoods in the East Bronx, many local residents care deeply about quality of life issues, and want our local police precincts to actively enforce these laws. I understand many communities throughout the city have these concerns about the enforcement of these crimes, but in this district that generally has not been the dialogue.

**GOMEZ:** Yes, I support and would advocate for the ending of the NYPD current "broken windows" policing. It doesn't work effectively and we need to have policing that involves the community and not one that targets communities.

**What is your position regarding transparency and accountability of the NYPD when officers have engaged in misconduct or abuse?**

**DOYLE:** The general public needs to have trust in their law officers. I am proud to sit in the 45th Pct. Community Council, and believe in fostering this trust. That said, this trust is easiest with transparency and accountability and I support this push.

**GJONAJ:** I support transparency and accountability for the NYPD.

**VELÁZQUEZ:** I believe that transparency and accountability is key to establishing real, effective community policing that will make our neighborhoods even safer.

**GOMEZ:** I believe there should be transparency and accountability of the NYPD and officers that engage in misconduct and or abuse should face stiff penalties including up to termination of employment and/or imprisonment.

**How would you propose to cut greenhouse gas emissions from those buildings that are the biggest & dirtiest in the city?**

**DOYLE:** We should offer incentives for buildings to modernize, but for those who are stubborn we need to monitor polluting buildings and make sure the public is aware of their danger.

**GJONAJ:** I support sustainable building and zoning laws. In addition, I support city and state subsidies to make upgrading dirty buildings to make them more environmentally sustainable.

**VELÁZQUEZ:** I believe we cut greenhouse gases by not only upgrading the infrastructure in our buildings and requiring building codes that are environmentally efficient but also educating our families about how they can cut costs and be environmentally conscience.

**GOMEZ:** I would propose tax breaks for landlords who can make the necessary upgrades to their properties to reduce or eliminate GHGs (green house gases).

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**Do you support installing solar panels on public buildings in NYC? Would you include local job creation & hire and the reinvestment of energy savings into communities most impacted by climate & economic challenges?**

**DOYLE:** I support both public solar transition, especially in communities that will be affected by climate change and areas in need of job creation.

**GJONAJ:** Absolutely.

**VELÁZQUEZ:** Yes, we must invest in our communities in order to have a thriving and strong district. Putting people first and environmental issues that affect them is what I promise to do in the City Council.

**GOMEZ:** Yes, I support every effective and proven idea that would save our planet and make us more energy efficient.



## GUIDE INFORMATION

This candidates guide is based on the platform of the Faith Over Fear coalition, a group of more than 27 faith-based justice organizations in New York City, convened by Faith in New York. The content for this guide was created through a candidates survey. All answers were written directly by the candidates or their campaigns, except in some cases where answers were shortened to meet a 50 word limit due to design limitations. All candidates listed by the New York City Campaign Finance Board (NYCCFB) and the Board of Elections were invited to fill out the survey. Only candidates who completed the survey have their information included. This guide was paid for by Faith in New York Action. To view the platform and learn more about the coalition, please visit <https://faithinnewyork.org/faithoverfear>.

## VOTING INFORMATION

The NYC primary election is Tuesday, September 12th, 2017. You must have been registered to vote in NYC by August 18th, 2017 to vote in the primary election. The NYC general election is Tuesday November 7th, 2017. You must register to vote by October 13th, 2017 to vote in the general election. On voting day, bring your voter registration card if you have it, and another form of identification just in case. Be aware that you CANNOT be barred from voting as long as you are on the voter rolls, even if you do not have a photo ID or voter registration card. You are guaranteed assistance by a poll worker or interpreter if needed. For other questions on voting, please visit <https://faithinnewyork.org/faq>, or go to the New York City Board of Elections site at <http://vote.nyc.ny.us>.

## POLLING LOCATION

Polls are open from 6am until 9pm. Your polling site is listed on your voter registration card and can also be found online at <https://nyc.pollsitelocator.com/search> or by calling 1-866-VOTE-NYC.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION ON THE CAMPAIGNS

With more and more money being poured into elections in our country and city, is it more important than ever to understand who funds the campaigns of our elected officials. As you consider making a decision, please visit the New York City Campaign Finance Board (NYCCFB) website at <https://www.nyccfb.info/> which provides detailed information on candidates' campaign financial information.

## CONNECT WITH US

To pledge to vote, to attend a forum, or to simply learn more, please visit <https://faithinnewyork.org/faithoverfear>. We encourage you to follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @FaithinNewYork and use the hashtags #FaithOverFear, #FaithinNewYork, and #NYCcouncil when you post your voter selfie!



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