

2023 New York Working Families Party Local Candidate (Non-NYC) Questionnaire

Response ID:286 Data

2. Candidate Information and Employment Information

1. Candidate Information

First Name

Damon

Middle Name or Initial

Last Name

Maher

Preferred Name

What are your pronouns?

He/Him

Home Street Address

10 LeCount Place

Apt/Suite/Office

#21G

City

New Rochelle

Zip

10801

County

Westchester

Personal Email Address

dmaher@levydavis.com

Personal Cell Phone Number

917-685-1001

Home Phone Number

Do you have a personal PO Box?

No

PO Box Address

PO Box City

PO Box State

PO Box Zip

2. Employment Information

Profession

Lawyer

Title

Partner

Company Name

Levy Davis & Maher LLP

Street Address

39 Broadway, Ste 1920

Apt/Suite/Office

City

New York

State

New York

Zip

10006

3. Campaign Information

3. With which political party are you currently registered to vote?

Democrat

4. What other ballot lines are you seeking?

Democrat

5. Campaign Committee

Do you have a campaign committee?

Yes

What is the name of your Campaign Committee?

Friends of Damon Maher

Street Address

10 LeCount Place

Apt/Suite/Office

#21G

City

New Rochelle

State

New York

Zip

10801

6. Campaign Manager Contact Information

Do you have a campaign manager or other point of contact?

No

First Name

Last Name

Email Address

Cell Phone Number

7. Campaign Website and Social Media Links

Campaign Website

electdamonmaher.com

Campaign Facebook

@FriendsofDamonMaher

Campaign Twitter Name

@DamonLegislator

Campaign Instagram Name

Do you have any other social media accounts? If so, list them here.

4. Election Information

8. Office Title and District Number

Your office title will be broken up into separate questions. The first will provide space for you to specify the name of the town, city, village, or county that your office will govern such as Onondaga or the City of Poughkeepsie; the second contains a list of office titles such as Town Council Member and County Legislator for you to choose from; the third is for candidates with district or ward numbers; the final is for candidates who need to specify on their petitions and Certificates of Authorizations whether they're running for terms of a number of years or unexpired terms.

Town, city, village, or county name

City of New Rochelle

What is the title of the office you are seeking?

Mayor

Comments:

Are you running in a specific district or ward?

No

District or Ward?

District or Ward #

What School Board District are you running for?

Are there any term limit specifications for your office that should be included on paperwork for your office that will be submitted to the Board of Elections?

Yes

Please specify what term limit your office is for.

4-year term

9. Incumbency

Are you an incumbent?

No

Are you challenging an incumbent?

No

What is the name of the incumbent you are challenging?

Have you previously run for office?

Yes

Were you previously endorsed by the Working Families Party?

Yes

How many times have you run for office?

4

10. List any primary opponents that you know of:

Yadira Ramos-Herbert

11. List any general election opponents that you know of:

N/K

12. Tell us about your last campaign experience:

Year

2021

State

New York

City

Westchester County

Office

County Legislator

Outcome

Elected

13. Fundraising**How many in-district donations have you received to date?**

3

What is your average donation amount?

\$56

14. Have you received any endorsements from elected officials, PACs, unions, community-based organizations, or other known endorsing bodies? Please list.

Not yet this year. Previously, many see home page of
<https://electdamonmaher.com/>

15. Please note: Endorsed candidates will be responsible for filing their own petitioning paperwork with their local Board of Elections.**Do you understand that you are responsible for filing your own petitioning paperwork with your local Board of Elections if you are endorsed?**

Yes, I will gather and submit my own petitions to my local Board of Elections

16. Please note: To participate in the endorsement process, you must agree that if you do not receive the Working Families Party (WFP) endorsement, you will not seek the WFP line through an Opportunity to Ballot (OTB) or any other means.**Do you agree to not seek the WFP line through an OTB or any other means?**

Yes, I agree to not seek the WFP line through an OTB or any other means

5. General**17. Tell us about who you are, why you are running, your core values, and vision.**

I call myself a fiscally prudent progressive. I love New Rochelle and want to apply the knowledge and skills, from 6 years' experience in County government, to the benefit of the people of this beautifully diverse city. My core values are about helping my neighbor and hard toward running an efficient government that furthers fairness and equity in our processes and

institutions.

18. Within your community, what organizations, labor unions, community and neighborhood groups, and nonprofits are you a member of, or leader of, and for how long?

Eastchester Community Action Plan (Board member, 2019 - Present)

- New Rochelle Cares/Aging in Place (Board member, 2019 - Present)
- New Rochelle Public Library (Elected trustee, 2014-17): Facilitated resolution of sensitive Personnel Committee matters including new Collective Bargaining Agreement as Chair of Personnel Committee; revised numerous Library policies and procedures as Policy Committee Chair; researched and contacted various counsel for potential representation re: possible RXR project)
- New Rochelle Bar Association (past Board member; Chair of Nominating Committee; volunteer arbitrator in New Rochelle City Court; increased scholarship award pool)
- NewRo Runners (past Vice-President; 2012 Founders Award Winner; 2014 Most Improved Award; 2016 Runner of the Year; Paine to Paine Trail Half Marathon and North Avenue Mile volunteer committees benefitting Hope Community Services, NR Campership Fund and My Sisters Place)
- New Rochelle Democratic Committee (CD 6 Council District Leader)
- NewRo Against Racism (original NewRoAR member; collaborated in successful effort to have New Rochelle City Council adopt Youth/Police Initiative and My Brother's Keeper)
- Yale Alumni Fund (current class agent and former board member; Chairman's Award winner)
- Adoptive Parents Committee, Legislative group (lobbied for positive adoption language and adoptive rights for non-traditional families)
- Bicyclist Alliance of Northern New Rochelle ("BANNeR")
- Coalition for Mutual Respect/Inter-Religious Council of New Rochelle
- Commercial Law League of America
- Giving Circle of Lower Westchester (Grant Committee member for local soup kitchens & food pantries)
- Holy Family Church (parishioner)
- John Adams Owners, Inc. (former Finance sub-committee member)
- NAACP/New Rochelle
- New York Democratic Lawyers Council (protecting voters' rights)
- New York State Bar Association, General practice section member
- New York Road Runners
- New Rochelle Snow Angels (shoveling volunteer)
- Temple Israel of New Rochelle Community Garden (volunteer benefitting Hope Soup Kitchen)
- Transportation Alternatives (bicycle advocate)
- Westchester Foster Families (former board member)
- Westchester Jewish Basketball League (former coach)
- Yale Big Brothers/Big Sisters (former mentor and Exec. Director)
- Yale Class of '77 Library Fund
- Youth Baseball of New Rochelle (former coach)
- Youth Basketball of New Rochelle (former coach)
- Youth Soccer of New Rochelle/New Rochelle F.C. (Former head coach and Vice Pres. of travel team board; worked with public officials on development of new fields and facilities)

19. A NY WFP champion has a comprehensive field, communications, political, and fundraising strategy to win. What is your strategy to win the race? Who is on your team and how will they execute this strategy?

Same as the earlier campaigns: Knocking on ever Dem/WFP door in the City, as well as "nons" within certain demographic parameters, phone-banking, postcarding, train station and summer festival appearances, and traditional mail campaign. As an incumbent, I send an eblast to over 20,000 constituent mailing addresses at least once a week, a separate eblast to approximately 4,000 once or twice a month from my personal political account, and a printed flyer to all households twice per year. I expect to be working again with local and surrounding Dem committees and Indivisible groups.

20. A NY WFP champion unites a broad coalition with a strategy to activate everyone, and helps bring new constituencies into our bloc. Who is your base in the district? Who is your campaign coalition? How will your campaign appeal to working

class voters, voters of color, and those disaffected with the political process?

As always, my support will run the gamut of individuals from people of color in rent-assisted apartments to middle- and high-income liberal Democrats, who live in larger homes in the more suburban parts of New Rochelle. I have a record of supporting marginalized groups, and will continue spending much time at churches, food pantries, public housing and other institutions serving this cohort.

21. The NY WFP is committed to building a progressive, multiracial, working class coalition. How does your campaign, in its hiring, staffing (whether hired or volunteer), and outreach, reflect this vision? How will you ensure your campaign and legislative office is free of sexual harassment, bullying, exploitation, ableism, or other forms of abuse and misconduct? Do you commit to abiding by good labor practices with campaign and contract staff, including paying appropriate and timely wages and reimbursements, and offering healthcare and time off?

We do not tolerate any such behavior. We have an all volunteer campaign.

22. A NY WFP champion proudly identifies with the Party and works with us on a proactive plan to onboard and organize people activated by the campaign into the Party. How will you help bring your volunteers and base into the NY WFP during and after the campaign? How will your campaign brand and narrative identify with the NY WFP?

Yes. My hand-out literature features equal billing for my WFP designation.

23. A NY WFP champion demonstrates a commitment to co-governance and accountability, and has a history of standing up against powerful interests. How do you picture running your office if you are elected? How will you involve community members and grassroots organizations in the decision-making process? Who do you consider yourself most accountable to and what is your understanding of co-governance?

I have had two terrific legislative assistances doing policy, community outreach and individual constituent service. I have a vision of regular hybrid community town hall meetings to explain what's going on in the City and answering questions.

24. A NY WFP champion helps us organize on the outside and on the inside. We know that a legislator's vote record is only a small snapshot of their actions. Which policies will you commit to supporting, how will you show up in conference, at actions, in press, in meetings with constituents and advocacy organizations, and more? How will you organize your colleagues to support our issues?

I have walked picket lines and spoken at press conferences regularly for 32BJ and NYSNA.

25. Are there any sources of legal contributions you will be refusing?

Yes

Comments: Companies doing business with the City, Police unions and any other unions whose contracts I would be voting on.

26. We expect NY WFP-endorsed candidates to have done a full vetting of their social media and public profiles before campaigning. Do you have a plan to mitigate and respond to material that could reflect negatively on your campaign, and commit to sharing any relevant concerns with the WFP?

Yes

Comments: I am always careful about what I have on social media. I have my own monitor of social media to inform me of, and help me to determine whether to respond to, negative material.

27. What are your top three issues, unique to your community and the office you are seeking, that you intend to prioritize if elected? What is your plan to approach these issues? What barriers do you expect, and how will you overcome them?

1. More incentives for developers to build fair and affordable housing near mass transit nodes. 2. Universal Access to Counsel in Landlord/Tenant disputes. 3. Continuing police reform.

28. Please share what you have done, either as an elected official or in another capacity, to improve the lives of working families and advance progressive policy change.

As part the Dem super-majority that took over County Government in 2018, I was instrumental in passing our Immigrant

Protection Act, the Earned Sick Leave law, Wage Theft protection act, Clinic Access; investing more money in quality daycare for working families, restoration of community health care facilities. I show up union rallies in simmering heat and bone-chilling cold and write letters and make calls to management in support of workers.

29. Local Progress is a movement of local elected officials advancing a racial and economic justice agenda through all levels of local government. A core pillar of this network is collaborative governing to build, shift, and maintain the balance of power to benefit those historically marginalized by our laws, our institutions, and our culture. Should you win your local race, would you commit to joining Local Progress?

Yes

Comments:

30. Please let us know in which of the following ways you are willing to help build the Working Families Party. Check all that apply.

I will personally meet with Working Families Party members, leaders and affiliated organizations when requested.

I will participate in meetings and other events organized by my local WFP chapter.

I will encourage my supporters to join WFP's local chapter.

I will support WFP's fundraising efforts, including sharing donor relationships

I will list the WFP endorsement (and logo when appropriate) in campaign communications

I will publicly describe myself as a Working Families Democrat, Working Families Party-endorsed candidate and/or Working Families Party member

I will organize WFP voters in their districts to counter misinformation and manipulation of the ballot line by Republican political operatives who are trying to undermine our party?

I will consult with my local WFP chapter before making politically sensitive endorsements that affect the WFP or in WFP races.

Comments:

6. Policy

31. Communities across New York are still suffering from the damaging effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, physically, emotionally, and financially. What public health steps and/or economic policies would you prioritize in your locality to address the ongoing impacts of the pandemic on working families and vulnerable communities?

Follow the science on testing, vaxxing and masking,

32. The climate crisis has arrived in New York State, and threatens the very existence of life on our planet. While many climate initiatives will need to be conducted at the state, national, and international level, local and county governments also have a key role to play in reducing emissions, such as building code updates, all-electric public buildings, promoting green transportation (like electric vehicles and mass transit), and opposing fossil fuel projects proposed for your community. How would you use the office you are seeking to help avert climate catastrophe?

Bike and pedestrian friendly roadways, especially near mass transit, and food scrap composting, all of which has been promised for years, the last four of which with my primary opponent in office. Explore more solar, wind and thermal on City-owned property.

33. Communities of color and low-income communities have disproportionately borne the negative effects of climate change. How have you seen this play out in your community? How does your climate platform prioritize these communities and ensure that those who have suffered most from fossil fuel facilities, and other projects with negative environmental and health impacts, will be lifted up by climate action and a transition to a renewable energy economy?

Prevent more drive-thru food service with idling engines abutting transitional apartments for formerly homeless families and other low-income buildings. No more removing supermarkets for businesses selling and servicing high-end automobiles in the downtown "walkable" area. My primary opponent is directly responsible for these two problems.

34. Gentrification has driven people of color, long-term and elder residents, and working class people from their homes

and their communities across New York state. How has your community been affected by gentrification? How do you plan to ensure that growth and economic development in your community does not displace those who have called it home for generations?

New residential buildings in New Rochelle are being built on former parking lots and commercial sites. See my comments on County affordable housing, which we can bring to our City.

35. Housing costs in New York are out of control. Many parts of the state have become completely unaffordable for working people.

Cities across New York have passed [local good cause legislation](#), which grants tenants protections against unjust eviction and unreasonable rent increases. Do you support good cause legislation in your locality?

Yes

Comments: As an emergency measure.

How do you plan to create more quality housing in your community, both rental and owner-occupied, and ensure that new housing is truly affordable for working families?

As Housing Chair for County Board, we funded over \$20M for affordable housing at greater percentage of units per building than the City required, at lower wage rates and for longer time periods of affordability.

Do you support social housing (non-profit, community controlled, or public-owned housing) on public land owned by the locality you are running to serve?

Yes

Comments: Yes, along with revival of Mitchel-Lama-type programs to give low-income families the opportunity to accumulate home equity.

Do you support stricter short-term rental regulations to prevent housing stock from being bought up by investors to use exclusively as vacation rentals?

Yes

Comments: Yes, in this housing emergency.

Do you support [opting into the the Emergency Tenant Protection Act \(ETPA\)](#) to provide rent stabilization for eligible buildings?

Yes

Comments: Another tool in the toolkit.

36. Public safety is of paramount concern to every family and community in our state. Yet, rather than investing deeply in the resources needed to keep us safe (housing, mental healthcare, education, jobs), our cities and state rely almost exclusively on systems of policing, jails, and prisons to address harm and social challenges. This has resulted in a criminal system that is ineffective, unjust, racially biased, and overly punitive.

What is your vision for achieving public safety in your community? What steps have you taken and will you take in office to address the deep racial inequities and [white supremacy in systems of policing and incarceration](#) and to transition to a [decarceral model](#) that prioritizes community investment and [public health over punishment](#)?

While others in our 15-2 Dem supermajority give the police and jail everything they ask for, I have been on the short end of many 15-2 and 16-1 votes, earning the uncontrolled wrath of police and corrections unions and their strong funding of my Republican opponents. Fortunately, City Court of New Rochelle has a strong diversion program for defendants age 18-24, but the judge has told me he needs more funding and other support from City government.

Leaders and the right-wing media have also continued to misled the public about the impact of New York's bail reform laws, but the data on bail reform is crystal clear: bail reform has decreased jail populations, kept

communities intact, reduced racial injustice, and **has had no impact on crime**. Will you publicly reject and speak out against continued efforts to smear and further roll back bail reform?

Yes

Comments: And I have done so loudly and consistently.

37. Overdose Prevention Centers (OPCs), also known as safer injecting facilities, are centers that offer sterile supplies and controlled settings for people to use pre-obtained drugs under the supervision of trained professionals who can intervene in case of an overdose or other medical event, and link people to services and treatment. Last year, the **first sanctioned OPCs in the nation opened in New York City**, and the two sites have saved over 140 lives in the first three months of opening. Do you support the implementation of OPCs in high need areas across New York State?

Yes

Comments: It's just common sense.

38. The state **Elder Parole (SA15A/A8855) and Fair & Timely Parole Bills (2022-S7514/A4231A)** would expand eligibility for parole and make the process more fair, effectively ending the death-by-incarceration sentences. These parole justice bills will help to end mass incarceration, reunite families, and save the state an estimated \$522 million that can be spent on improving community health and safety. Would you vote for a local resolution calling on the state legislature and Governor to enact both of these bills if one exists, or if it does not, would you introduce one and ask your colleagues to support it?

Yes

Comments: I have gone to local demonstrations supporting same.

39. Despite the progress made over the last decade in expanding access to healthcare, one million New Yorkers are uninsured and many more have insurance that they cannot easily access due to cost, lack of providers or other reasons. Recognizing that significant changes to our healthcare system must be done at the state and federal levels, how can you use the office you seek to provide quality healthcare to those who lack it, as well as long-term care?

Strengthen Obamacare until we have political will for one-payor system. Bring in community health centers.

40. What policies will you work to pass that will protect and support immigrants in your community?

Proud to say we passed an Immigrant Protection act as soon as I took office at the County Board. Will monitor to assure compliance.

41. Do you support non-citizens being able to vote in local elections?

Yes

Comments: Definitely worth contemplating, especially for School Board in our City which has a very large Hispanic/Latinx population in our schools.

42. In 2019, NYS passed the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA) to explicitly add gender identity or expression as a protected category. In the years since, the right wing has redoubled its coordinated efforts to target transgender adults and children through hateful media crusades and legislative campaigns to erode their social and medical rights. How will you support or advocate for trans rights in your district's schools and defend LGBTQ+ people from right wing attacks in your community?

One of my grown children is gay. I would do everything I could to support and defend the entire community.

43. New York State is finally fulfilling the commitment it made fifteen years ago, by providing full funding for basic classroom operating aid, known as Foundation Aid. Yet, inequities persist. Many of the school systems that need funding the most are our most underfunded. It is no coincidence that many of these primarily serve Black and Hispanic students, and are often in rural districts. How will you ensure that the districts who need funding the most are able to receive it? What role, if any, do you believe that charter schools, whose funding takes money from the public school system that supports 90% of our students, should play in our public education system?

Limited.

44. The labor movement plays a crucial role in providing security for working people. Unfortunately, unions have been under attack by right wing activists for decades now.

What will you do to help strengthen protections for working people and help increase the strength of unions and the labor movement in your community?

Repeal Taft-Hartley. Push for living wage and local youth hire in major construction projects still in the pipeline in New Rochelle.

Will you commit to supporting local efforts to organize by joining picket lines, sending letters to employers, etc, and have you done so in the past?

Yes

Comments: I've been with 32BJ and NYSNA at demonstrations through thick and thin and hot and cold.

How would you propose to also strengthen protections for gig workers?

Broaden definition of employee; tighten definition of independent contractors. Advance notice in scheduling law.

45. Wages for working people have been stagnant for decades, while the wealth of the ultra-rich and their share of the wealth have increased dramatically, including during the pandemic.

How will you use the office you seek to address this wealth gap?

Lobby for raising minimum wage over time and increasing taxes on wealth and top income levels; e.g., additional transfer tax on home selling for over \$2M.

Will you advocate for a [higher state minimum wage for all New York workers that is permanently indexed for cost of living](#)?

Yes

Comments: It's only fair to do so.

46. The statewide Invest in Our New York (IONY) coalition is a campaign to advance a vision for a progressive New York State budget, where the ultra-rich pay what they owe and working-class New Yorkers have access to the resources they need. In 2021, IONY led the campaign to win a historic tax increase on New York's wealthiest and biggest corporations that resulted in over \$10 billion in state coffers. Will you support IONY's 2023 platform, including by attending local actions, signing letters, etc?

Yes

Comments:

8. Thank You!

Survey Respondent

Jan 14, 2023 18:15:09 Success: Email Sent to: dmaher@levydavis.com

Matt's Tracking

Jan 14, 2023 18:15:09 Success: Email Sent to: mcordeiro@workingfamilies.org