

Public Advocate Candidate:

Below is the Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club's Public Advocate Candidate

Questionnaire. Please fill it out and return to jimowles@gmail.com

**Candidate Name: Dawn Smalls**

**Campaign Address: 175 Varick St**

**Campaign Website: [www.dawnfornewyork.com](http://www.dawnfornewyork.com)**

**Campaign Telephone: 646-716-1747**

**Campaign Social Media Handles (Facebook/Twitter):**

<https://www.facebook.com/DawnForNewYork/>

[@DawnforNewYork](https://twitter.com/DawnforNewYork)

**Campaign Contact (name/phone/email): Jordan Jayson, [jordan@dawnfornewyork.com](mailto:jordan@dawnfornewyork.com), 646-716-1747**

- 1. Do you now support or have you ever supported an openly LGBTQ candidate for public office? If so, please identify any and all candidates.**
  - a. Brad Hoylman (for State Senate) and Sean Maloney (for Congress)
- 2. If applicable, what legislation directly affecting the LGBT community have you introduced or co-sponsored? (indicate accordingly)**
  - a. Not applicable, as I have not yet held elected office. I support the LGBT community and have always been in support of legislation advancing LGBT rights.
- 3. What LGBT organizations have you been involved with, either on a volunteer basis or professionally?**
  - a. None
- 4. If applicable, what LGBT organizations have you allocated funds to?**
  - a. N/A
- 5. Do you consider yourself a member of the LGBT community?**
  - a. No.
- 6. Have you marched in Pride? Which marches and for approximately how many years?**
  - a. I have never marched in Pride, but have lived in the Village and now in Flatiron and generally bring my kids out to watch and participate (with rainbow flags) in the parade.
- 7. Have you employed openly LGBT individuals previously? Do you employ any currently?**
  - a. One member of our campaign team is an LGBT individual. I also employed openly LGBT individuals at my office at HHS. I have been and always will be open to employing any individual regardless of sexual orientation or identity.
- 8. If you receive the endorsement, do you agree to identify the club using its FULL name on all literature and electronic materials where you list endorsements?**
  - a. Yes.
- 9. What press conferences, demonstrations, rallies and protests in support of LGBT issues, pro choice legislation, criminal justice issues and the Resist Trump Movement have you attended?**
  - a. I have attended the Women's March every year. I attended the rally in support of Jazmine Headley and a Black Lives Matter rally in support of Andrew Kearsse.
- 10. Have you ever been arrested? If so please explain why and outcome of arrest.**
  - a. No.
- 11. Will you advocate in Albany for legislation to mandate the review of sentences of incarcerated individuals over the age of 55 who have served in excess of 15 years to determine if they warrant release?**

- a. Yes. There is strong evidence that, for example, individuals over the age of 55 who have served in excess of 15 years are very unlikely to reoffend. Further, once people have served their time for non-violent crimes they deserve to have their full civil rights restored and go on to earn a living without facing further punitive measures upon re-entering society.
- 12. Do you commit to visit constituents who are incarcerated in state prisons such as Bedford Correctional Facility?**
  - a. I would visit any New Yorker who needed services from the Public Advocate's office.
- 13. Do you believe sincere remorse, risk of reoffending and actions taken while incarcerated should be considered over the original crime in determinations of parole?**
  - a. I believe it should be considered in the context of the original crime.
- 14. Do you consent to having your name added to a letter of elected officials to the New York State Parole Board advocating for the release of Judith Clark?**
  - a. No. But I do not oppose her release. As an attorney, I won clemency for a man serving a disproportionate sentence for the non-violent drug crime he had committed over a decade ago - and I will continue to fight for second chances for people who have served their time and deserve to be reunited with their families.
- 15. Have you participated in any demonstrations or protests in relation to the issues of clemency and parole?**
  - a. One of my proudest accomplishments as an attorney was when I was able to secure clemency for a man who was serving over a decade for a non-violent drug offense. There is no way for me to describe the moment when I could tell him that he was able to return to his family.
- 16. Will you affirmatively seek to hire formerly incarcerated individuals?**
  - a. I believe that people who have served their time have just as much right as anyone else to employment. The struggle to find work after incarceration is a leading cause of re-incarceration.
- 17. Do you believe in the legalization of sex work?**
  - a. Yes. However, we should be vigilant to protect those who are being sex trafficked. Furthermore, we should create an economy and circumstances where nobody who doesn't want to is forced to use sex work because they have no other choice.
- 18. What proposals will you advocate for the protect immigrants and the further New York as a Sanctuary City?**
  - a. I think it is critically important that NYC serve as a sanctuary city and embrace the hardworking immigrants that have been the bedrock of this city and have made the city what it is today. We also need to aggressively push back on policies that separate families, which disproportionately put the burden on women and children. Throughout my career I have represented immigrants (undocumented and documented) in actions to vindicate their rights under U.S. law for fair pay and redress for sexual harassment. I also co-led efforts from lawyer moms to organize other lawyer moms to sign petitions and take public stands against family separations.
- 19. Will you advocate, including introducing legislation, to remove public funding from religious schools?**
  - a. I do not yet know enough about this issue to take a firm stance.
- 20. What is your position on Amazon opening their headquarters in Queens?**
  - a. My main issue with the Amazon deal was that it was done behind closed doors without community input. The community must be able to weigh in on decisions of this magnitude that will have a huge impact on daily lives of people day in and day out. The site was also originally slated for 1500 affordable housing units and should not move forward until an alternative site for those units has been located. Additionally, as part of Amazon's commitment to New York City, Jeff Bezos should allocate 10% or \$200 million of the city's overall incentives from the Bezos Day One Fund to solve the homelessness crisis in New York City which disproportionately affects families with young children. Bezos announced this philanthropy in September of 2018 to support the homeless epidemic facing young families and operate a network of high-quality, full scholarship preschools.
- 21. Do you support removing the loitering statute from the state criminal code?**
  - a. I definitely want to look more into this issue. Criminalizing loitering has often been used to police people of color and other marginalized communities such as the LGBT community or homeless

individuals. There are more effective ways to address any actual issues that the loitering statute may be trying to get at.

**22. Do you support the legalization of marijuana?**

- a. Yes. Enforcement of marijuana laws has fallen disproportionately on communities of color and low-income communities and is a direct contributor to our large prison populations and the breakdown of communities.

**23. Do you support the establishment of supervised drug consumption spaces?**

- a. We need new and innovative strategies to address drug addiction, specifically the Opioid crisis. I'm open to learning more about the benefits and efficacy of these facilities as an effective tool to serve those suffering from addiction. I do not support or oppose this policy proposal at this time.

**24. Have you ever endorsed any member of the IDC or any candidates who challenged IDC members?**

**Please identify all candidates**

- a. For the last three and a half years I served as a Commissioner on JCOPE - having been appointed to that position by Andrea Stewart Cousins - which precluded any political activity for any state electeds. However, several members of my staff supported/volunteered for IDC challengers, including Alessandra Biaggi, Jessica Ramos, Jasi Robnson, and Robert Jackson.

**25. Do you support reform of the CCRB? If yes, please explain.**

- a. Yes. The CCRB was a good step forward. However, the CCRB needs prosecutorial authority that is codified in the Charter. Civilian oversight of our police force has been instrumental in cases such as the complaints against Daniel Pantaleo, the NYPD officer who held Eric Garner in a banned chokehold that led to his death.

**26. Please identify 3 boards on which the PA serves and 3 appointments the PA makes that are of the utmost importance to you.**

- a. Boards/Commissions on which PA serves: NYCERS Board (NYC should be divesting from any gun manufacturers); COPIC (Commission of Public Information and Communication, which is key to changing the nature of government to be transparent and accountable to the people); and the Voter Assistance Advisory Commission to CFB (critical for my priority of democracy reform).
- b. Appointments: The PA appoints one member of the New York City Planning Commission and, with the Comptroller, members of the Independent Budget Office Advisory Board (both of these appointments are key to my priority of more affordable housing in the city); appointments to the NYC Transit Riders Council are tied to my priority of improving transit for all New Yorkers.

**27. What reforms to the powers and duties of the office would you advocate for?**

- a. I believe the PA should have subpoena power and be able to bring litigation. As an attorney, I would be well-placed to utilize those powers effectively to help all New Yorkers.

**28. Will you commit to hiring a member of the LGBT community to serve as a liaison to the community?**

- a. Unfortunately the Public Advocate's budget is very small and I do not believe I can commit to hiring a specific liaison. However, please see my next answer regarding diverse staff.

**29. Will you commit to ensuring diverse LGBT representation among your staff?**

- a. I am committed to hiring a staff that is diverse in many different ways, just as my campaign staff is now. We have an LGBT individual, several people of color, working moms, and even a token straight white man!

**30. Who did you support for office in the following races A) Mayor and Public Advocate in 2013 B) President in 2016 C) Governor and Attorney General in 2018**

- a. A) I did not publicly support a candidate for Mayor or Public Advocate in 2013. B) I was a strong supporter of Hillary in 2016, having worked on her staff in her 2008 campaign and having started my career in the Clinton Administration. C) As a Commissioner on JCOPE I did not publicly support a candidate for Governor or AG in the 2018 election.

**31. Do you support Habitat for Humanity's proposal for gay-friendly low income housing on Elizabeth Street?**

- a. Housing is one of my platform issues and I'm in support of building gay-friendly low income housing. However, we must balance development with the real human need for green space, especially in a neighborhood with so little of it already. I believe we should build on vacant lots or under-utilized lots, rather than on existing green space.

**32. Would you speak in favor of an establishment applying for a liquor license when the opposition is based on Nimby and or unreasonable concerns?**

- a. In New York City, we all need to be good neighbors. Establishments with liquor licenses should show that they are willing to work with the neighborhood to address quality of life concerns. However, in New York City there is no room for Nimbyism, with respect to liquor licenses or jails or homeless shelters. We all live here together and we all must share this precious space.