



Opening remarks for NYCD16 Indivisible's first virtual General Meeting
March 15, 2020
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Hi Everyone, thanks for joining us today! As you know, this is a critical moment for ourselves, our families, our communities, our state and our country! The COVID-19 pandemic is the most critical challenge to us personally and as a society that any of us have ever faced. It is as life threatening as the flu pandemic of 1917-18 and the polio epidemic of 1953. This is a moment that feels scary, chaotic and so very uncertain. As a health care provider, I have never felt more anxious about my own health, and also that of my family and community. And I've been on the front lines of the AIDS epidemic years before we understood how transmission occurred! This is on a vastly larger scale and more immediately menacing than that.

As Caroline Stern said yesterday, this moment feels similar to after the 2016 election: that reeling feeling of not knowing where to turn, what to do, or how to begin to organize.

What makes me feel grounded and optimistic about getting through this intact is knowing that we have been here before, in a manner of speaking. In 2017, NYCD16-Indivisible got together, used the Indivisible Guide to help create a path forward, and then figured things out as we went. Look what we have accomplished as a group and by joining forces with others!

We are beginning to understand what we need to do here. Based on science; not fear. Based on what trusted leaders are advising. Based on our own collective expertise and experience. We will play our part in over time.

We will get through this because we are smart, strong, stubborn and know how to listen to one another and work well together.

We don't have a choice! Our lives and our democracy depend very much on how and what we do moving forward. We must figure this out collectively! We will map out how best to advocate for what is needed right here and right now, as well as what is needed to safeguard our government from "Disaster Capitalism." (Those forces who would take advantage of this crisis for their own gains).

Conducting this virtual meeting is a way to stay on schedule! Consistency and structure are important! We are here for each other! We decided to do this virtual meeting 2 weeks ago b/c we wanted to be good, responsible citizens, playing our part in implementing social distancing by 75% in order to reduce the new number of infections caused by this virus.

But we also know how important it is to stay connected with one another; to continue to build on the amazing work we have done. We will use all of our creative powers to remain engaged in the educational and outreach work that our membership group has laid out for us; we will figure out ways to help the states and regions we have chosen, so we will win in November. We will be agile enough to be ready to do the person to person electoral work necessary when it is safe to do that. Our workgroups will continue to meet - virtually, for the time being.

The meeting today will focus on ways to move forward in this new landscape.

We will have Andrea Stewart-Cousins speak with us for a few minutes to help us understand where we are and what our New York State Government is doing to meet the challenge of our time.

Here is our agenda; our slides will be displayed as we proceed with the meeting; Ground Rules will be posted; you will be able to interact by chatting, thanks to Tara Herman, who is in charge of that. Thanks to our support crew of Liz de Bethune, Micah Sifry, Andrew Mutnick and Caroline Stern who will help make this happen. Be patient! This is our first run!

Here we go!