



(Photograph from <https://www.surajpatel.nyc/team/>)

Suraj Patel, Democratic Party

EDUCATION

Q: What is your position on diversity initiatives in historically racially and socioeconomically segregated schools, and if elected, what steps will you take to influence federally funded programs and/or policies?

A: I'm glad we're having a citywide discussion about how to fix and desegregate our public schools. I don't believe the Assembly or the Mayor have taken enough time on the latest proposal, or given educators, parents, students, and communities adequate insight into what the final outcome will look like. More importantly, this proposal will only affect 5% of public high school students in the city, and do nothing to improve our middle and elementary schools. I support a nationwide, federally-funded community schools initiative that improves resources and outcomes at every single school in New York City, for families in every single ZIP code, and I'd like to see the Mayor and the Assembly embrace a similar proposal.

GUN CONTROL

Q: What is your position on gun control and if elected, what specific policies will you advocate for?

A: I am strongly supportive of much more comprehensive gun violence prevention measures at the federal level, including universal background checks that close the gun show loophole while preventing the sale of guns to convicted felons, broad restrictions on guns in public places, as well as bans on dangerous equipment including bump stocks and suppressors. I also believe that we need publicly available state of origin databases in order to ascertain where the guns that are used to commit crimes in New York originate from. In a state like ours where we have strong gun violence prevention laws, we need to be able to target and act on the sources of gun violence in our communities, even if they are out of state.

HEALTHCARE

Q: What steps will you take to ensure that immigrants continue to have access to health care in New York in light of recent discussions concerning public charge policies?

A: I support replacing the current for-profit health insurance industry that profits off of sickness with a Medicare For All system where everything from emergency surgery and prescription drugs to mental healthcare and dental would be covered with no out-of-pocket expenses, co-pays, or deductibles. This system would be open to all US residents, and so could not be included in public charge determinations. I oppose any change in public charge policy that discourages or punishes immigrants from seeking necessary and lifesaving healthcare or treatment.

IMMIGRATION

Q: Given the recent changes and proposed changes to immigration policy, which existing immigration policies would you advocate to protect?

A: We need to fight mass deportation and create more pathways to citizenship. That's why I'm calling to defund ICE, and take away a weapon that this administration is using to target New Yorkers and terrorize immigrants across this country every day. I also believe that we must reform and expand avenues to legal immigration, including high-skill visas such as the H1-B visa program, as well as refugees and asylum seekers. Clearing visa backlogs and protecting family reunification programs, in addition to citizenship for all 11 million undocumented immigrants living in America, must be part of comprehensive immigration reform.

CENSUS

Q: What steps have you taken or will you take to ensure accurate representation of underrepresented and vulnerable communities for Census 2020?

A: We cannot allow a citizenship question on the census. It is a clearly calculated move to dilute the voting power and political strength of cities like New York and immigrant populations. A citizenship question will have a chilling effect on census response rates, even among citizens, in places and communities where people have non-citizen friends and family members, especially in light of ICE's 50-state deportation efforts targeting undocumented people.