



*Suraj has spent this crisis delivering for our community.
Read more [here](#).*

Hello, my name is Suraj Patel. I'm an attorney, small business leader, and lecturer at NYU Stern who previously worked for President Barack Obama. I hold degrees from Stanford, NYU School of Law, and Cambridge, and I've lived and taught in the East Village for the past 12 years. I am grateful for the opportunity to share my priorities with New York Moms for Safer Streets via video forum and here today!

I am running to represent our NYC families in the United States Congress because over the past thirty years our infrastructure has deteriorated, rents have skyrocketed, quality education has become inaccessible, and public housing has crumbled. Quality child care, which is a child's right, has become more expensive in New York City than college itself. Small businesses and families feel squeezed, store fronts remain empty, homelessness has been at its highest levels since the Great Depression, and our politicians don't seem accountable to us -- or equipped with the tools needed to fix these problems.

This situation is unsustainable, and has resulted in New York families being forced to reckon with the heart wrenching decision between staying and accepting the unacceptable, or leaving the City they love. Coronavirus has taken an incredible toll on our city, making the existing situation worse.

What I call the Promise of New York - education, economic opportunity, and social mobility - is broken for far too many families in New York's 12th District, where we have had the same Representative in Congress since 1992. As the proud son of immigrants whose family achieved our American Dream through education and hard work, I am running to restore the Promise of New York, for all of us.

My priorities in proudly serving our community will be:

- Delivering New York's Fair Share;
- Guaranteeing Opportunity for Families; and
- Fixing our Broken Systems

Additionally, I wanted to include my full [COVID-19 Relief Plan here](#), and my plan for [Universal COVID-19 testing](#).

Delivering New York's Fair Share

For too long, New Yorkers have paid some of the highest taxes in the country, only to have our tax dollars fund infrastructure projects in other states. In regards to the current crisis, New York State has experienced roughly 40% of COVID-19 cases and deaths in the United States; why then did we only receive about 5% of the relief fund allocated from the CARES Act? Where were our Representatives speaking out, using leverage, and fighting for our City?

This is an unacceptable response from Washington. I believe we could have done far better.

The pandemic has resulted in the largest economic downturn since the Great Depression. Unless state and local governments get relief from the Federal Government, Governor Cuomo is saying our state and our City will be forced to make 20% (!) cuts to education, public safety, sanitation, and more. This will exacerbate the economic crisis and harm our families' well being and quality of life. I will fight tooth and nail to ensure the federal government provides enough funding to cover state and local budget shortfalls so we can have a strong economic recovery.

As the son of small business owners, I have spent much of this campaign focused on advocating for small business relief. The \$350 billion dollar Paycheck Protection Program quickly ran out of money. Congress authorized \$310 billion more on April 21st, but that will likely quickly dry up again. We must replenish the program enough to cover all salaries up to \$150k. Additionally, The Department of Treasury should establish a temporary office to carry out the program. This will make the program more efficient and take the pressure off of the flooded Small Business Administration. We must make a concerted effort to get employees back onto payrolls to have a strong recovery and to ensure economic stability to our nation's workers. The CARES Act requires employers to rehire workers by June 30th, this deadline must be waived in order to provide small businesses with the flexibility they need in times of extreme uncertainty. Congress should appoint four public health experts to work with the Chairman of the Federal Reserve and the Secretary of Treasury to determine a deadline as well as when and how to reopen the economy.

We must replenish all funding for life-sustaining Small Business Administration programs and establish automatic renewal if the programs run out of money again until public health and economic triggers are no longer met.

Regarding rent for our Small Businesses, Congress must authorize Federal Reserve backed Small Business Administration loans to landlords with forgiveness in exchange for rent cancellation until the crisis is over. This would allow individuals and small businesses to stay where they are and allow landlords to maintain mortgage and maintenance payments throughout the crisis.

Furthermore, tax cuts in recent years have resulted in the repeal of the SALT deduction. This was aimed at punishing blue states and liberal cities that choose to provide high-level services to their citizens. The repeal of SALT is preventing New York from being able to fund the services that make New York so exceptional. It is also a massive tax increase that punishes New Yorkers simply for where they choose to live. I will fight to restore the SALT deduction, something that the congressional delegation has failed to do despite having multiple opportunities and a majority in the house for the last two years.

Guaranteeing Opportunity for Families

Currently, only 10% of our federal budget is spent on children. This is despite more than 12,000,000 children living in poverty in America and 800,000 children living in poverty in New York - a moral crisis it is incumbent upon our leaders to address with fight and urgency.

Child care and Pre-K often cost more than in-state tuition at public colleges and universities. This is a moral disgrace and an economic drag. For every dollar we invest in our children - our nation's future - \$7 is returned to our economy in the future! But for far too long, the voices of families have been shut out from our politics, replaced with the priorities of big corporations.

I launched our campaign with a [Family Opportunity Guarantee](#) policy, which has remained a cornerstone priority today. Click here to read the full policy and click here to read about it in [CNBC!](#)

The policy I would fight for you to pass includes:

- 12 weeks of Paid Family and Medical Leave
 - We are the only advanced economy to not provide paid family and medical leave.
- Medicare for Kids
 - Enrolling every child in Medicare would cover over 4 million children with health insurance, a meaningful step towards providing healthcare to all.
- Creating a "Public Option" for Child Care

- Child care is a child's right. The high cost and low availability of child care is holding back our families. Providing federal grants to states to establish child care options would lower costs while increasing the availability and quality of child care.
- Nationwide Pre-K
 - Inequalities in childhood often persist through adulthood. The first five years of a child's life are most crucial for brain development. Interacting with trained teachers at an early age helps reduce cycles of poverty and increase socioeconomic mobility.
- A Universal Child Dividend
 - I have proposed a Universal Child Dividend of \$500 to every family per child, per month ages 0–5; and \$350 per child, per month ages 6–17. This program would fund itself by replacing our current patchwork system of family support, and provides families with the flexibility needed to meet their unique needs. Canada uses this system and has decreased their child-poverty rates by half.

Fixing our Broken Systems

The United States ranks 39th in the world on civil liberties, 36th in the world on free and fair elections, 33rd in the world on functional government, and only 21st in the world on political participation. Money in our political system has corrupted our government. Representatives are beholden to their corporate donors. The revolving door of former DC staffers + representatives and corporate lobbyists exacerbates the problem.

We have a government that lacks accountability and no longer serves the needs and interests of its constituents. I am proud to be running a 100% people powered campaign and refuse all money from Corporate PACs.

I proudly join calls for a Constitutional Amendment repealing the *Citizens United* court decision that has allowed the voices of ordinary people to go ignored in our politics. I will fight for publicly financed elections, ending gerrymandering, and ensuring everyone has the proper access to vote.

I also believe there needs to be a need for accountability within our government and its entities. I will fight to fully fund the NYCHA and the MTA and provide federal oversight to prevent misuse and waste.

Cleaning up government is a cornerstone that would empower us to address the numerous other broken systems we are facing, including the Climate Crisis, Housing and Infrastructure, Education, Healthcare, Immigration, and Mass Incarceration.

Working people, small business owners, immigrants, activists, and educators on both sides of the East River deserve to be heard, and with your support I will represent each and every one of us. I humbly ask for your support on June 23rd.