



Public Advocate Special Election

FOLLOW THE MONEY

and Voting Record of the Candidates*

*We are fed up with unlimited money pouring into our elections
and corrupting our democracy.*

*Deep-pocketed donors don't just give money directly, they bundle
funds through Super-PACS, and have their lawyers,
spouses, secretaries, lobbyist firms, financiers, and public
relations firms donate too.*

*BIG real estate, lobbyists money like REBNY (Real Estate Board
of New York) and a laundry list of special interest groups have
amassed outsize influence over our elected representatives,
taking away our political power and drowning out our voices.*

*So here is our first look at which candidates take real estate or
"skyscraper industrial complex" money.*

**If candidates served in the City Council , we provided a snapshot
of how they voted on important land use issues over the past few
years. Candidates are listed alphabetically and qualified for the
first debate.*

Sources: NYC Campaign Finance Board's [website](#) for municipal
politicians, [Votesmart.org](#), [Followthemoney.org](#), [Littlesis.org](#), the
New York State's separate Campaign Finance [database](#) (for
holders of state office) and online newspaper articles. Send
corrections and commentary to coordinator@humanscale.nyc

Time to Vote Out Special Interest! Time to Vote in Public Interest!



BLAKE, MICHAEL 🗨️😞

STATE ASSEMBLYMAN FOR BRONX 79TH DISTRICT

- Blake has taken considerable real estate and lobbyist money during his time at the Assembly. A few examples of real estate industry donations include: \$2,000 from the Real Estate Board of New York's PAC, \$1000 from Related Companies, \$3,000 from developer Don Peebles, \$250 from the real estate driven Affordable Housing PAC, \$3550 from real estate finance attorney Geoffrey Raicht and \$1750 from developer Alan Bell of Hudson Properties. Also worth mentioning are donations of \$4500 from Fresh Direct (which operates real estate in his district) and \$2450 worth of contributions from real estate lobbyist firm Manatt Phelps and Phillips.
- In the current public advocates race, Campaign Finance Board data shows Blake remains open about taking real estate and lobbyist money. He took \$1000 from real estate investor and landlord Alan Abramson; \$1000 from David Brown of Paul Weiss, a big law practice that defends white collar crimes; \$1000 from Orsid Realty (a major landlord in NYC); \$1000 from billionaire real estate investor Jane Goldman, \$1000 from NYC Rooms for Rent; \$1000 from R.A. Cohen; \$1000 from Ogdencap Properties; \$500 from Mark Borman, a real estate investor based in LA; \$1000 from Sterling Equities Real Estate; \$500 from a senior staffer at big lobbyist firm of Manatt Phelps & Phillips; and \$500 from real estate deal advisor Jeffrey Lavine - among others.



ESPINAL, RAFAEL 🗳️😡😞💰

TERM-LIMITED OUT CITY COUNCIL MEMBER
BROOKLYN 37TH DISTRICT
BUSHWICK, EAST NY, CROWN HEIGHTS, CYPRESS HILL

- Votesmart.org reports that Council Member Espinal took \$32,500 from Real Estate and \$15,300 from Lawyers & Lobbyists.
- DNA-info reports he took \$7,000 from developers before voting to upzone his own district of East New York. See the DNA article [here](#).
- Daily News and New York Observer reported [here](#) he took \$5000 in campaign cash from slumlord Jay Wartski.
- The Campaign Finance Board's data shows that as of 2013, when Espinal was running for Council, the Real Estate Board of New York's PAC called "[Jobs for New York](#)" spent a whopping \$217,000 to support Espinal. 😡💰
- 9% of his re-election funds for the 2018 City Council race came from bar/nightlife owners supporting his Nightlife Bills that passed to make it easier for the industry to operate ie created a new Nightlife Office, appointed "Night Mayor" and Nightlife Advisory Board (dominated by industry lawyers, lobbyist & operators). See the NY Post article [here](#).

✓ City Council Votes

- Voted yes on Citywide up-zoning bill ZQA/MIH despite citywide opposition among nearly all community boards 😡
- Voted yes REBNY sponsored anti-landmarking bill 775 😞
- Voted yes on the controversial Inwood & East Harlem up-zoning 😡
- Sponsor of Small Business Job Survival Act (not passed) 😊
- Sponsor of Office of Nightlife/Nightlife Mayor Bill (passed) 😞😡



KIM, RON 🤔?

STATE ASSEMBLYMAN FOR QUEENS DISTRICT 40

- As an Assemblyman, Votesmart.org reports Kim taking money from the Real Estate Board of New York (\$1000) and New York State Association of Realtors (\$1000) + Big Pharma firms Pfizer and Merck (\$500 each); also several large contributions from the major construction unions and \$4,400 as well from those categorized as “lawyers and lobbyists.”
- In current public advocate race, he has taken \$250 donations (twenty or so) from real estate brokers and \$250 from Arthur Rubenstein of Skyline Steel Corp, but not from major developers and their lobbyists.
- In his early career he was [a lobbyist for the lobby firm “Parkside Group”](#), where he represented [Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant and SEIU](#).
- Owns multiple luxury condos in towers with tax abatement for himself and family members but did not report them to Joint Commission on Public Ethics (see the Real Deal [here](#)).



KONST, NOMIKI 🇺🇸 😊

JOURNALIST AND ACTIVIST

- We can find no data from the [Campaign Finance Board database](#) that suggests she takes real estate money or any other special interest or lobbying money. 😊
- Largest contribution was \$3000 from celebrity Susan Sarandon.
- Other donors in the CFB database self-report in as independent and creative industry professionals, with the odd person from her time testifying at the DNC



MARK-VIVERITO, MELISSA 🗳️😞😡💰

FORMER COUNCIL MEMBER & SPEAKER

- As a City Councilmember, took \$172,000 in campaign finance money from Big Real Estate, much of it during the debate over East Harlem rezoning. Nine of those donors were on the board of governors of REBNY, the real estate lobby. See article [here](#). 😡💰
- In current public advocate race has donations from Jonathan Rose (who is building in East Harlem), Toll Brothers, Time Equities, Delshah Capital LLL, Brodsky Real Estate, Khan Realty, Brian Steinwurtzel of GFP Real Estate, Two Trees Real Estate, and the Beacon Group, among others. Also takes money from lobbyists, like staff at the infamous Capalino firm. Has also taken PAC money from the Partnership for NY PAC (a PAC of big corporate CEOs such as the CEO of Goldman Sachs).
- Daily News reported that \$10,000 of the \$30,000 budget for her inauguration party as City Council Speaker was paid for by big real estate firm, Witkoff Group, with other big chunks of that budget coming from Marathon Properties and Lightstone Group. See Daily News [here](#). 😡

✓ City Council Votes

- Voted to upzone her own neighborhood of East Harlem over community opposition 😡
- Voted yes to citywide ZQA/MIH upzoning, despite community board opposition 😡
- Voted in favor of real estate sponsored anti-landmarking Bill 775 😞
- Withdrew her support from the Small Business Jobs Survival Act 😞



O'DONNELL, DANNY 🙄

**ASSEMBLY MEMBER FROM MANHATTAN VALLEY
(SINCE 2002)**

- As a State Assemblyman, he took considerable money not from real estate but other special interest lobbies: New York Alliance of Fine Wine Wholesalers (\$14,000), New York State Restaurant Association (\$13,500); pro-big real estate union SEIU (\$16,000), and \$2250 from Hotel Association of NYC. These lobbies trouble Neighborhoods United, a group fighting the over-saturation of bars and clubs in residential neighborhoods. Also took \$2250 from big real estate lobbying firm Manatt Phelps (followthemoney.org), \$2,000 from Durst Real Estate; \$2500 from Kasirer Consulting (a big law lobby firm with many real estate clients).
- In current public advocate race there is less special interest and real estate money compared to when he was running for the State Assembly. His single largest donor is Paul Buntin, a resident from Park West Village on the Upper West Side, founder of Upper West Siders for Public Participation. Most of his current donations are small, in the \$250 range, but the list does include \$250 from the Cozen O'Connor PAC (Cozen often lobbies for the real estate industry). His donor network appears to be people in the arts. Deborah Glick gave him \$250 as did Senator Liz Kruger. He did get \$250 from EXR real estate in Brooklyn and a donation from lobbyist firm Greenberg Traurig (who also represents real estate money).







RODRIQUEZ, YDANIS

TERM-LIMITED OUT CITY COUNCIL MEMBER
MANHATTAN 10TH DISTRICT
WASHINGTON HEIGHTS, INWOOD, MARBLE HILL

- As a council member, took money from real estate investor Edison Properties, F. Marco Real Estate Investor (\$2700); Enterprise Community Partners (an East Harlem based real estate development firm); \$2700 from Sterling Realty Group; \$2500 Lightstone Group (real estate); \$2200 from Riverside Brokerage; \$1500 New York Hotel Trades Council; pro-big real estate union SEIU (\$2200); \$2000 from District Council 37 PAC; NYSNA PAC and New York State Economic Growth PAC; CWA PAC; \$500 Nelson Management Group; \$1500 Netray consultants (all in real estate). **Also** took many large donations from the car-for-hire industry totalling over \$10,000 while he served on the City Council's Committee on For-Hire Vehicles. Also takes money from Joni Yoswein who represents the "hospitality" industry. That industry is targeting Inwood for bar over-saturation. Yoswein also does "land use consulting."
- In current public advocate race, took contributions from real estate firms such as RSJ Properties, Clipper Realty, Youngwoo and Associates (who is building an 18-story building in his district of Inwood), Jacob Schwimmer of Clipper Realty (a giant REIT), Sheldon Stein of Ranger Properties; Xiaodong Wange of Avolla Pacial Mgmt (real estate); and \$320 from Evan Stavisky of Parkside Group (a lobbying firm) 

City Council Votes

- Voted to upzone his own neighborhood of Inwood, against the community's clear and obvious wishes.
- Voted in favor of ZQA/MIH, against the community board's wishes. 
- Voted in favor of real estate supported anti-landmarking bill 775 
- Sponsor o Small Business Jobs Survival Act (not passed) 
- Supports Small Business Jobs Survival Act 



SMALLS, DAWN 🙄



PARTNER IN BIG-LAW FIRM OF BOIES SCHILLER FLEXNER (IN HUDSON YARDS), HAD A STAFF POSITION IN THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

- Smalls has raised large amounts of money from Democratic Party elites outside NYC, mostly in the metro DC area. Some 125 of her donations are large contributions from fellow attorneys at the law firm where she works (Hudson Yards-based litigation firm of Boies Schiller Flexner, the former firm of Senator Kirsten Gillibrand). Her fellow workers there have raised 26% of her funds so far. Another 24% of her funds are coming from out-of-state, mostly from the DC metro area. Nearly 300 of her donors are lawyers and 14 are CEOs, and more than a few hedge funds and private equity executives. Source: NYC Campaign Finance Board. Appears that the Democratic elite nationally (including folks at the Clinton Foundation) are backing her. Source: CFB website.
- At candidate forums, her take on affordable housing appear to us to be very close to De Blasio's, a position that needs clarification. 🙄



ULRICH, ERIC

**CITY COUNCIL MEMBER
QUEENS 32ND DISTRICT
BELLE HARBOR, BREEZY POINT, BROAD CHANNEL, HOWARD
BEACH, LINDENWOOD, NEPONSIT, OZONE PARK, RICHMOND HILL,
ROCKAWAY PARK, ROXBURY, SOUTH OZONE PARK, WEST
HAMILTON BEACH, WOODHAVEN**

- During the 2017 election cycle he received the maximum amount (\$2,750) from real estate firm of Cushman & Wakefield and two donations from Vornado Realty Trust
- Votesmart.org reports he took a whopping \$164,000 in campaign funds from Real Estate Industry over his political career. See votesmart.org's summary page on him [here](#).  

City Council Votes

- Voted for the Inwood Upzoning and the East Harlem up-zonings 






WILLIAMS, JUMAANE

**TERM-LIMITED OUT CITY COUNCIL MEMBER
MANHATTAN 45TH DISTRICT
FLATBUSH, FLATLANDS, MIDWOOD, CANARSIE**

- As City councilmember, his CFB donor list shows a pattern of taking many (more than 25) maximum donations from nearly all the pro-skyscraper construction trade unions as well as multiple large donations (above \$2000) from many of the public sector municipal unions.
- Times Union reported in 2018 that after making a videotaped pledge not to take money from big real estate during his failed campaign for Lieutenant Governor, he took large donations from several NY developers. See article [here](#).
- In current public advocate race, CBF data shows he accepted at least \$12,000 from real estate companies, including \$2750 in donation from REBNY's PAC called "Taxpayers for an Affordable NY". There are also donations from Silverstein Properties, and from Developer Don Peebles (who was buying and trying to modify a landmarked city building). Others include an executive from Durst Real Estate Exec, pro-real estate union SEIU, Rinaldi Buildings, Continuum Co., Gluck Real Estate and Sterling Town Equities. According to articles in [The Real Deal](#), [Sterling Town Equities](#) likes to tear down small buildings and put up luxury condos in Brooklyn. CFB donor list also shows he took at least \$4,250 from 16 different lobbyist groups, including real estate law/land-use lobbyists Manatt Phelps and Phillips, Cozen O'Connor, TLM Associates, and Constantinople and Vallone.
- The record shows that as a City Council member, Williams did not shy away from contributions from big real estate and the "skyscraper industrial complex".

City Council Votes

- Voted yes to Real Estate sponsored anti-landmark legislation, Bill 775 
- Voted in favor of city-wide upzoning known as ZQA, even though the vast majority of community boards voted it down 
- "Abstained" on the Inwood Upzoning and yes on the East Harlem upzoning 
- Sponsor of small business jobs survival act (not passed) 