

Richard A. Luthmann
700 Victory Boulevard, Apt. 7-L
Staten Island, NY 10301
Richard.Luthmann@gmail.com

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Democratic County Committee Members
(Undisclosed List)

RE: Exploratory Committee to Elect Richard A. Luthmann

Dear County Committee Member:

My name is Richard A. Luthmann. You are receiving this letter because I have formed an Exploratory Committee to ascertain whether I can have a viable candidacy for the Borough Presidency of Staten Island. I have been approached by friends and leaders in the local business and charitable community and from leaders in our party. I have secured several commitments and, though I have not as yet had the opportunity to consult with the leadership of our party and all of our Democratic elected officials (which I intend to do in the next few days), the outward signs are positive at this point. I write this letter so that you know who I am and where I stand prior to the County Convention scheduled for the evening of Monday, May 20 at the Crystal Room in South Beach. Since the Executive Committee has already met and has declined to take presentations from Borough Presidential Candidates, my name will be put to the floor of the Convention as the Democratic Party's nominee, and I would like to have your vote.

I am a native Staten Islander. I was born in Eltingville and I have lived in the North Shore, the South Shore and in the Mid-Island at some point in my life. I grew up in the New Springville / Bulls Head area and also in Eltingville and now I live in Silver Lake with my fiancée Tammara Moore. I am a graduate of Monsignor Farrell High School, Columbia University (B.A., Philosophy), New York Law School (J.D., *cum laude*) and the University of Miami (LL.M. in Estate Planning). I have lived in Staten Island for most of my life, except for my college years when I lived in Manhattan and for a few years when I was engaged in international banking and fiduciary services for several major global financial institutions. I live on Staten Island because it is a great place to live and work. My family has roots here too. My mother is a Realtor and is on the Board of the Staten Island Board of Realtors. My father and grandfather were born and bred on the Island in Annadale. My other grandfather, Anthony T. Bisignano ("Mr. B") taught auto repair at Tottenville High School for many years after a successful career as a small business owner. My aunts, uncles and cousins on this Island are all productive people, many accomplished educators or attorneys.

I am an attorney admitted to practice law in New York and New Jersey and I have been so since 2004. I maintain a law practice in Castleton Corners where I help families with their estate planning, elder law, tax, credit and residential foreclosure issues and business owners with the development and protection of their businesses. I am also active with several important local charitable organizations. I am pro-bono counsel to the NYC Arts Cypher, pro-bono counsel and founding member of the Staten Island Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and pro-bono counsel to the Giving Hope Network. I am also is the Vice President of the SIEDC 40 Under 40 Leadership Group and a newly-installed Board Member for the Community Agency for Senior Citizens (CASC) and a member of the Richmond County Kiwanis Club. I have also served as counsel and advisor for the NYC Anti-Violence Project, the Carl V. Bini Memorial Fund and ACT UP, and I am pro-bono counsel to the newly-formed New Dorp Beach Civic Association.

I am definitely an intense person. During my time at Monsignor Farrell, I was captain of the wrestling team where I was a CHSAA NYC Champion and placed second in the CHSAA State Wrestling Championships. I am also an avid fan of rugby and was a four-year starter for Columbia University RFC and then a player for Old Blue RFC and Miami Tridents RFC. Prior to my retirement in 2010, due to total hip replacement, I played high level rugby in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean. Currently, I serve as counsel to the USA Rugby League. I have hung up the contact sports at this point in my life, and I am now an avid golfer who loves to grab a quick nine at the Working Man's County Club – Silver Lake Golf Course.

I am a member of the Democratic Party. I am proud to be a member of the North Shore Democratic Club and to be counsel to the newly-formed Anthony R. Gaeta PAC. I am also a member of the Democratic Organization of Richmond County and I am an ardent supporter of the Young Democrats of Staten Island.

I attended Mr. Oddo's announcement for his campaign for Borough President at our shared *alma mater*. As I listened to him, I looked up at the sign behind him which said "It's a new day." I could not help but think that was the furthest thing from the truth. The situation felt more like the Bill Murray movie "Groundhog Day" where the character was trapped reliving the same dreary day over and over again. As Mr. Oddo laid out his vision for the go-forward, I wished the speech could have been drowned out by an alarm clock playing a Sonny and Cher song because the Oddo message was part and parcel of the same regurgitation that we have become accustomed to in City politics for the last 20 years and Island politics for the last 30. Even more alarming was the fact that Mr. Oddo had the police present to escort residents of Cedar Grove and Oakwood and New Dorp Beach – all Sandy victims - out of the auditorium.

Let's face it, Mr. Oddo wishes to take this Island down the same course it has been headed for the past generation. He is the Minority Leader of the City Council, has been the Mid-Island Councilman for past twelve (12) years, and was a political operative for twelve (12) years before that. He is a career politician with over a quarter-century of

having his hand in closed-door City Council deals, and what has really changed for the people of Staten Island?

I want to be Staten Island's CEO because I think Staten Island deserves better than "business as usual" politics and – to be clear - I owe no one any favors. Staten Island has four bridges, but "business as usual" politics will not build any of the new bridges that Staten Island needs – between people and communities and the resources that are desperately needed. Staten Island was socked with Super Storm Sandy and yet no clear remediation and recovery plan has been articulated, especially where common wisdom foretold of the potential of such tragedy and property damage at least as early as 1991. Innovative ideas, like dropping old and decommissioned subway cars into the ocean to create a barrier to a storm surge saved Delaware's coastline. And this was not also Staten Island's contingency plan to protect the beachline and the billions in property damage because the Councilman voted "no" ...citing the cost.

Staten Island is crippled with insane, exorbitant and what to my legal mind are unconstitutional bridge tolls, which have stifled the Island's economic development, and yet under his watch we see bridge tolls poised to hit \$20 for passenger cars and \$100 for commercial vehicles. This is fundamentally wrong and it has been so for too long. What large employer would relocate to Staten Island and bring with it untold new jobs under these conditions? As the foremost advocate of the people of Staten Island, the Office of the Borough President should be used to mount legal opposition to existing legislation and government action in order to bring real benefits to Staten Islanders – starting with bridge toll relief.

Moreover, the Staten Island infrastructure must be drastically improved. All innovative transportation alternatives must be explored. The North Shore light rail must be completed and a West Shore / South Avenue transit center must be developed so that straphangers will be able to travel more quickly and efficiently between the North Shore and the South Shore by a mass transit route along the West Shore corridor. The West Shore Expressway should be expanded to three lanes in each direction, with an express lane for Staten Island-only traffic during rush hour. Additionally, Father Capodanno Boulevard could be extended on a raised shore road through Miller Field and Cedar Grove through to Great Kills, thus alleviating the congestion on Hylan Boulevard and cutting down commute times to and from the South Shore.

The Bloomberg administration has created a legacy of new and inordinate fees, taxes, surcharges, penalties and fines. The result is that Staten Islanders pay more and receive far less than the residents of the other Boroughs. This must end immediately. The first tax that should be tackled is the real estate tax. No new taxes should be imposed on Island real estate – period.

The St. George Wheel and related development projects are welcomed with enthusiasm to redevelop our beautiful harbor-facing shoreline, however much more work must be done before anything is finalized. The developers must commit to invest in Staten Island if there is to be any groundbreaking. The plans call for hundreds upon hundreds of new retail and residential units to become part of St. George and our Island's urban tip. However, nowhere in the plans is there a solution for the new added police, fire department, and hospital demands, nor is there any talk about creating more school capacity for the area's new residents absent the great work done by our Councilwoman Debi Rose in finding more seats for North Shore students, specifically with the old St. Peter's Girls School site. Moreover, the potential traffic impact of the Wheel along with the new Courthouse has been barely considered. Where developers will benefit from a public expenditure, they should have to pay their own freight with respect to the community impact.

Additionally, we must reaffirm our commitment to the Middle Class and to the Labor Unions that sustain families, communities and Great Societies. If there is to be development in St. George, it must be done with union workers. Make no mistake, non-union shops like Wal-Mart will never be welcome on Staten Island, and those large employers that maintain non-union shops will be scrutinized.

The recent events in Boston reminded us all that we remain vigilant as against those enemies, foreign and domestic, who would seek to end our liberty and our American way of life. An important key to stifling foreign terror is energy independence from foreign oil. Since Fresh Kills Landfill closed nearly twelve (12) years ago, what has been done in the Mid-Island to advance the goal of energy independence? Have solar panels or windmills been installed? Have hydroelectric devices been installed to take advantage of the natural energy supplied by the tides? Has the ready supply of methane in the landfill been fully developed? All in, Staten Island could become a large supplier of energy, thus lowering energy costs and reducing our dependence on foreign oil.

We must also look to bring jobs to Staten Island. The area on the South Shore by the "tanks" and the old Arthur Kills Correctional Facility should never become a Wal-Mart. Rather, we should turn that area into world class back-lot and post-production studios – the greatest facility of its kind east of the Mississippi River. We have the film and television industry on Staten Island. Smash is filmed at the St. George Theater. Boardwalk Empire is filmed in Richmondtown. Shows like Law & Order and Blue Bloods and countless movie productions use Staten Island locales. Why send the back lot and post-production work – all strong and well-paying union jobs – across the river or out to Queens? We can do it here and bring the jobs to Staten Island.

The protection of women and women's rights must be central. As I write this letter, it is Mother's Day and the recent events involving Amanda Berry and the other kidnapped women in Cleveland make us all remember the great blessings that are our wives, mothers, grandmothers, sisters, daughters, granddaughters and all the important women in our lives. We must strengthen the criminal justice system's response to crimes against women in our community through transitional housing, legal assistance, law enforcement training and hotlines.

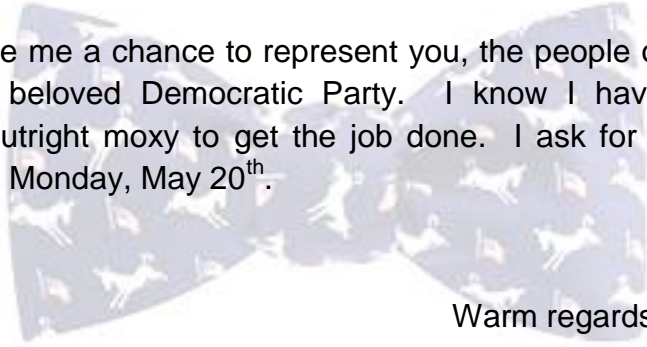
Additionally, it is time to attack Staten Island's prescription drug epidemic head-on. A crucial first step is to educate parents, youth, and patients about the dangers of abusing prescription drugs, while requiring prescribers to receive education on the appropriate and safe use, and proper storage and disposal of prescription drugs. But we must also implement prescription drug monitoring to reduce "doctor shopping" and provide law enforcement with the tools necessary to eliminate improper prescribing practices and stop pill mills. It is a steep downward slope. If we lose our children to pills, then they are at risk to being lost to opiates like heroin, from which there is no return. But together, we can stem this epidemic by taking the fight to the schools, the streets and the doctor's office.

We all owe so much to our veterans. We need the VA to do a better job ensuring that veterans and their returning localities are coordinated and able to get vets the benefits they deserve. Specifically, the VA Home Loan division should incorporate New York's universal property tax exemption form in discharge materials for vets, to raise awareness of this property tax benefit. Locally, we should create programs to help returning veterans enhance and/or rehabilitate their credit so that vets can get the best rates on new home and vehicle financing once they return to civilian life in our community.

It is my intention to seek the Richmond County Democratic Party's nomination for the Borough Presidency. Insofar as the County Executive Committee did not interview any candidates for Borough President, I intend to receive a nomination from the floor and put my case to you as a County Committee member. I believe I can do an excellent job as Borough President, and I will use my campaign to build inroads for the Democratic Party and for the Staten Island Community. I have a trained legal mind. I have strong connections in the business community. I have worked with the Hispanic Community, the population of which exceeds 35% of the total population on the North Shore. My candidacy will be a stabilizing influence in the election for the Mid-Island City Council seat for the Democratic Party – a seat which we can win and which will be hotly

contested. And most importantly, I have been involved with our party. I know many of you and many of you know me – “that lawyer with the bow-tie.”

I ask you to give me a chance to represent you, the people of Staten Island and the members of my beloved Democratic Party. I know I have the passion, the intelligence and the outright moxy to get the job done. I ask for your support at the County Convention on Monday, May 20th.



Warm regards,

Richard A. Luthmann



CC: File

