

2026 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE
DEMOCRATIC RURAL CONFERENCE

CANDIDATE'S NAME and ADDRESS: Tom DiNapoli, PO Box 1776, Mineola, NY 11501

Position for which you are a candidate: New York State Comptroller

YOUR ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS WILL BE POSTED ON THE DRC WEB SITE.

List your qualifications for this office including but not limited to other offices you have held, educational background, etc.

Please address these questions, but make your answers brief so the entire questionnaire does not exceed 4 pages.

1. ABILITY TO LEAD THE ENTIRE STATE – What contact and experiences have you had with parts of the state, other than where you currently reside, which demonstrate your recognition of the geographic, demographic and economic diversity of the state and your ability to provide leadership on behalf of all New Yorkers?
 - Going back to my time in the Assembly, showing up around the state has always been important to how I approach elected office. New York is a big and complex state, but meeting New Yorkers where they are and seeing their concerns personally is part of being a leader. To me, it's not just running into someone at a summer picnic or at a parade and hearing a concern they have for a quick ten seconds, either. I've hosted meaningful discussions, like roundtables in communities, that bring differing views into one room to work toward solutions. In the past few years, this approach to listening to New Yorkers has led directly to substantive audits and reports, including a groundbreaking series of reports titled New Yorkers In Need. These reports took a critical look at the data on housing, food insecurity, and poverty, including child poverty. These reports have given policy makers in our state the trusted data they need to fight for real improvement that goes beyond rhetoric, and I'm committed to continuing this approach.
2. KNOWLEDGE OF THE ISSUES – What issues do you believe are of most concern to voters in rural counties, and what will be your message in addressing those issues?
 - Immigration - The Trump administration's use of ICE to terrorize immigrant communities has a direct impact on rural counties. It's in places like DRC counties where immigrants find community and honest work, contributing to our economy and enriching our state. Since Trump was re-elected, immigrants have been forced to live in fear - far from the welcoming nation we are supposed to be. I have spoken out against Trump and ICE, and my office has been researching and publicizing data that shows the importance of immigrants and how their targeting by the federal government is harming our state.

- **Housing** - Affordable housing has a domino effect - it can improve economic conditions and general livability of communities if it's accessible, but if affordable housing is sparse, its negative impacts are felt by everyone. As Trustee of the state pension fund, I have invested billions of dollars in affordable and workforce housing, including housing units in New York through partnership with the Community Preservation Corporation, as well as other housing investments in New York and beyond. In 2023, I reported that rural counties in New York are indeed facing a lack of affordable housing. When New Yorkers can't access housing, they may be forced to abandon their communities to search for it elsewhere. That population loss has a negative impact on already fragile economies in small towns, and we know too that when population density decreases, access to other essentials like broadband, groceries, healthcare, and education all take a hit.
- **Healthcare** - Access to healthcare and EMS in rural New York is a crisis in need of immediate addressing. A report I released in March 2024 found EMS staff and funding shortages, and called for more state action to help localities provide dependable emergency services. That report helped drive additional state funding for recruitment, retention, and capital needs. A report in August 2025 examined a sample of 16 rural New York counties and found alarming shortfalls in primary care, pediatric, OBGYN doctors, dentists, and mental health practitioners, with some counties having no pediatricians or OBGYN doctors at all. And make no mistake, federal cuts to Medicaid only stand to make this worse. I will continue to sound the alarm to state and federal policymakers that rural New Yorkers should not be left with nowhere to go when their lives are at stake.
- **Affordability** - My audits and reports have detailed our state's affordability crisis, showing the difficulty everyday New Yorkers are having in accessing affordable health care, housing, childcare, utilities, and more, with many struggling with food insecurity, debt, child poverty, and homelessness. I have quantified the damage that cuts coming out of Washington will inflict on millions of people across New York, and how much of our safety net is at risk. This work gives policy makers, advocates, and the public information they need to make the case for effective policy solutions and ensure that people do not lose access to essential programs, services, and resources.
- **Tariffs** - In April 2026, I released a comprehensive report that detailed how Trump's illegal tariffs are impacting jobs and harming local economies. And where is that impact especially hard? In DRC counties that rely on our Canadian friends coming to New York and spending their money here. In 2025, New York saw a 21% decline of visitors to our state from Canada. That has led to job loss and has impacted sales tax collections. This trend is not sustainable for New York.

3. PARTY BUILDING – How have you expressed and demonstrated a commitment toward building our party statewide and what are your ideas for future party building, specific to rural counties?
- As many DRC members know personally, I try my best to attend as many Democratic party events - big and small - as I can. Before I was Comptroller, I served as my county's Democratic Chair. Being a party leader takes thick skin, long hours, and often goes thankless. It takes a team effort to raise money and support candidates, and lending my time to local Democrats to help them in this effort has always been a major principle of mine.

Similarly to how I approach my official role as Comptroller, I believe deeply that my role as a leader in the Democratic Party means showing up everywhere in our state, **especially** in communities where being a Democrat can be difficult. Building and sustaining Democratic organizations at the community level is good for our party and good for communities we serve. We know that Democratic policies are good for rural communities, and I'm always honored to be part of supporting local candidates and committees in recruitment and fundraising to get our message out.

4. In the event of a primary for the office you are seeking, will you support the winner of the Democratic primary?
- Yes.
5. FAIRNESS IN SHARING POLITICAL POWER - How have you and how will you defend and further the rights of small counties to be represented in the decision-making process and in governmental and political positions?
- This goes along with earlier answers and my fundamental approach to doing the job of Comptroller. New York State is not a one-size-fits-all state. We are diverse in our cultures, our ethnicities, our beliefs, and geographically. Rural New Yorkers have and will always have a seat at the table with me as Comptroller.
6. INCLUSION – If elected, how would your administration include the people from DRC counties and address the issues of concern in those counties?
- DRC members know that my door is always open, and I often rely on DRC members not just for their friendship, but for their input and guidance. When I first took office as Comptroller, I understood that, as a Long Islander working in Albany and in New York City, there was a great deal to learn about our state. I took the time to learn what issues communities everywhere face so that I could leverage my office's abilities to examine and address those issues. I'm proud that my record is one that shows I listen, I learn, and I work side by side with New Yorkers to face the issues they care about.

In the Comptroller's office, I'm proud to say that the team I've built has deep roots and relationships in communities across the state. It's the physical presence that the Comptroller's office maintains across the state that helps guide our work, and I hope you all know from personal experience that my team is always available for a conversation over a cup of coffee.

7. VOTER APPEAL – What qualities or experiences do you have that would attract support from voters in DRC counties, not just from Democrats but also from unaffiliated voters and cross-over Republicans?
- I am a proud Democrat and my views are the views of the Democratic Party. Even so, New Yorkers of different political backgrounds know that, as Comptroller, I have looked out for every New Yorker regardless of how they vote. New Yorkers know my record on rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse by public officials, they know that I will always keep the political winds of today away from impacting a retiree getting the monthly pension benefit, and they know that when my auditors show up in their town that the results will always be by the book and truthful. I’m a Democrat, but my office does not play politics. That is why I am one of the top statewide vote getters in my re-election campaigns, showing that independents and Republicans support this work, and that also invariably benefits my Democratic running mates across the ballot.
8. CAMPAIGN IN DRC COUNTIES – How would you campaign in DRC counties? Will you personally appear with local candidates?
- Yes, and as many of you know first-hand: I don’t just travel to and support DRC Democrats in an election year. DRC leaders can count on me to make my best effort to support their committees and candidates year in and year out, just as I have done throughout my time in office.
9. OTHER CRITERIA – Please set forth anything else you want us to consider
- I am proud to be Comptroller. More than 2,000 New Yorkers go to work every day with me to carry out the mission of the office. There are people who look at the “power” of the office and want it for themselves, especially the Comptroller’s role of being the sole trustee of the Common Retirement Fund. The Fund is meant to be a promise to public servants of a secure retirement, not a slush fund for pet projects and political moves that, frankly, run afoul of the Comptroller’s statutory responsibility as a fiduciary. Fiscal mismanagement of pension funds has been devastating elsewhere. It’s simple: I take this job seriously. My opponents will tell you I’m not flashy enough as if that’s a brutal flaw. But here’s the thing: I go to work each and every day to do the job that New Yorkers trust me to do. My promise to you and to all New Yorkers is simple: re-elect me to a new term, and I will continue doing the quality, no-nonsense job that I have been doing.

Dated and Signed by Candidate: April 12, 2026