

DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR DEBATE: WILLIAMS VS.
HOCHUL
8/30/18

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Ben: So thank you both very much for being here, Lieutenant Governor Hochul, Council Member Williams. We're going to start with you Council Member Williams, and we're going to alternate who gets to answer the questions first. Council Member Williams, you're applying for the job of Lieutenant Governor. How do you describe that role?

Williams: First thank you Ben for being the moderator for this debate. I want to thank M & M for opening this space for us to have this discussion, and I thank Mrs. Hochul for joining us for this discussion.

What I suspect is going to happen in the next 30 minutes is a fundamentally different vision and perception of what the Lieutenant Governor's office is, can, and should be. For most Lieutenant Governors, including the one I'm debating, the Lieutenant Governor's office has been one that simply does what the governor says to do, for lack of better terminology, is the ears and the voice and the eyes of the governor. I reject that. I believe that Lieutenant Governor's office should be the ears, the voice, and the eyes of the people of the state of New York first. I believe the job is to serve the people of the state of New York and not any governor. Now the Lieutenant Governor should work and partner with the governor, whether it's he or hopefully she, when they're doing the work of the people of the state of New York productively. But when they're not. When the governor says we have universal excelsior program but only 3% of students have it, or when the governor says that we're banning fracked gas but we have building plans to have fracked gas come into the state, someone has to step up, stand out, and have the courage to say the emperor has no clothes and that actually lip service is not matched up with its actions.

Ben: Thank you. And Lieutenant Governor Hochul, can you describe the role of the Lieutenant Governor as you see it?

Hochul: Be delighted to. And again, thank you Ben and to my challenger Jumaane Williams, a council member. Thank you for being here today. Very simply, the role of Lieutenant Governor officially is to be experienced and prepared to step in to serve as governor should the need arise. You also preside over the New York state senate as it's president. But four years ago, the people of the state of New York elected me to be a partner with

Governor Cuomo because, basically, they want us to get things done. And I'm proud of the record of accomplishment where I've been able to champion causes, as the only woman in statewide office, that are near and dear to my heart.

Hochul: Fighting for women's reproductive rights, insuring that we have workplaces and college

campuses where women can be free from sexual assault and harassment, increasing the

minimum wage because the majority of minimum wage earners are women, many single heads of household. Also fighting the heroine/opiod crisis, where I personally know the pain as someone who lost a nephew just a few years ago.

I have been launched into an opportunity to work in partnership with the governor, but to use my voice. And I assure the council member, as a strong woman I do not do what men to tell me to do. I am an independent, strong woman and always have been.

Ben: Thank you. So I'll actually continue with you. I want to follow up a little bit on how you

describe the role. You say you don't necessarily always listen to what the governor or any man tells you what to do. Can you describe an instance over the last four years working with Governor Cuomo where, perhaps, you've changed his mind or you've told him, privately or publicly, that you disagree with the path the state's heading on and got something done as a result of that?

I have worked in partnership with the governor because I believe the Democratic values that the two of us represent. So we are in sync on many issues. Fighting for working class families, having the most generous paid family leave program, in America today, something we're so proud of, and a program that allows affordability to middle class families.

So I've been a fighter, and I assure you if I have any disagreements with the governor, I share them with him. He is open to them. He respects me as a strong woman, but just as

Joe Biden were close with President Barack Obama, these are conversations that you can keep privately and still be very effective.

Ben: So no issue you'd say that you changed his mind on at this time? Okay. Council Member

Williams, you talk about using the Lieutenant Governor role as something like the city has and the public advocate about being the voice of the people and being more oppositional towards the governor. Isn't that not really how the position's designed?

If you're successful in the primary, you run as a ticket with the gubernatorial candidate from the Democratic party. As you indicated, you're supporting Cynthia Nixon in that primary. But isn't it that the position is designed to be a partner with the governor?

Williams: What I want to make clear is that partnership should not be equated as a rubber stamp.

And so I believe that when they designed the Democratic primary, they specifically decided that you should be able to run independently as governor and lieutenant governor for a reason, and I believe the vision that I have is different than the

perception that's been executed.

And you don't become oppositional for its own sake. You do want to partner with the governor. But when that partnership is not providing the productivity that we need when we have the corruption of Buffalo Billion, when we have the worst housing crisis that we've seen. We've seen Cuomo's MTA crisis. Someone has to sit as was mentioned

with the governor, whether it is he or she, and try to privately reconcile it. When that's not happening, someone has to publicly be the voice of the people of the state of New York.

Ben: And how do you execute that if your budget is largely dependent upon the governor?

The governor sets the agenda for the state. How do you possibly plan to execute that, as

lieutenant governor for the entire state of New York and its vastness, without much money in the bank?

Williams: Absolutely. Now, first thing to point out to that is if the budget is roughly \$600 to

\$700000, I believe it's largely been an expensive, ribbon-cutting role. It's been largely ceremonial. I am vastly outspent right now by my opponent, but I've been able to travel the state. And the position that I have the vision for is not relying on the government giving me money, and it's not relying on the governor saying what I can and can't do. I do believe if the governor believes in the things that he says he's saying now close to election time, I'm actually the type of lieutenant governor he would want. Because I have a vast history of getting difficult conversations through to productive legislation and policy.

Ben: Let's return to you.

Hochul: Can I respond to that?

Ben: Sure. Go ahead.

Hochul: I would be happy to. I really don't appreciate having the role that I have undertaken on

behalf of people of New York denigrated in such a way to say that it's simply a ribbon-cutting role. I mean, I'm sorry, when a ribbon is cut that means something good and new is happening. That's to the families of someone who's suffering from heroin addiction and trying to find a path to recovery.

Yes. I've cut open new facilities for them under this governor. I have been there to cut the ribbons on new factories that are bringing life to places like downtown Buffalo, which was given up for lost and hopeless for my entire life. So I think ... And I've actually the councilor at ribbon cuttings himself as well, but that just means there's a new beginning. There's a success behind it.

Ben: So let's transition into the next question, which for you is to talk a little bit more about the value you've added to the state over your first term, which is a little more than three and a half years old at this point. Can you identify a couple of areas where you've really pushed something to fruition, where you've really influenced the policy that you've gotten done for the people of New York?

Hochul: There are many issues. Let's talk about the minimum wage increase. I was the face of this movement all across the state. I stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the men and women of labor, fighting to make sure the people who work 40 hours a week no longer have to live in poverty, as was the case of what became the first state in the nation to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

Paid family Leave. I'm a mother. I was a working mom. I know how hard it is to be able take time off when your babies are born, or you're trying to get your child to a doctor appointment, or to hold your parents' hand as they take their last breath in life as I was able to do, without losing of your job.

So I've been for families, for women, all across the state of New York, and trying to elevate everyone. And the governor has given me free license to champion, whether it's eradicating sexual assault on college campuses. As a mother of a young woman, I understand these issues deeply. And I've used my passion fighting for reproductive health, and fighting to protect the LGBTQ community because it is part of my family as well.

Ben: Thank you. And Council Member Williams, you've been in the city council for multiple terms. What would you identify as a couple of accomplishments in that role that you want New York voters to hear about as you apply for the job of lieutenant governor as a Statewide position?

Williams: Well, I do want to say ribbon-cutting is important. I don't want to denigrate it. As was mentioned, I do it myself. The problem is there's nothing in addition to that. And it's kind of amusing to hear about minimum wage when establishment Democrats were telling us that this was a pipe-dream. I was actually leading boycotts in Wendy's on the ground, trying to work with activists to elevate this to the point where there would be some action. And that's the type of work that needs to be done.

And the truth of the matter is, the current perception of Lieutenant Governor's office does nothing that was accomplished that we can point to, for those who were just wondering what the Lieutenant Governor is, that we can say if it didn't exist, would not have happened. That needs to be changed. That needs to change.

Ben: We'll come back to Lieutenant Governor in a second. Are there a couple of accomplishments, quickly, that you want highlight?

Williams: Oh yes. I was told that I need to-

Ben: 15 seconds.

Williams: Take away my activism and choose between activism and elected official. I decided to embrace both. Two years ago, I was listed as the most productive council member after speaking to 50 [inaudible 00:09:41] body. I chose bills that were difficult to pass. Whether it was dealing with abuse of the stop, question, and frisk, whether it was making sure that victims of domestic violence are covered under the human rights law. I made sure that we can have safer policing I'm sorry, safer streets and better policing at the same time. We have a real policy-driven, funded way of dealing with gun violence, so that New York City gun violence has gone down with increase in the rest of the state. I've chosen the few-

Ben: So let me ask you this. The Lieutenant Governor mentioned in her opening that one of the key roles of the Lieutenant Governor is to be ready to step in and become governor if the need arises, and we've seen that in the not-too-distant past. Is that something you're ready to do? And as part of that, multiple times your name was sort of floated or talked about as a possible gubernatorial candidate, and you repeatedly said that was sort of flattering for a city council member to be talked about that way. Doesn't that indicate that you don't feel like you would be ready to step into that role?

Williams: No, it meant that I'm proud that the work I've done as a councilman of Brooklyn was outsized for someone to believe that I'm now ready to run for governor. I am definitely 100% prepared to jump in the role if that role occurs. But I want to make it clear that I didn't get elected to get reelected, and I didn't get elected to get another job. I got elected to do the job for the people I'm representing. My hope is someday that does get me reelected. My hope has always been that that may get me somewhere else. But that problem I have with establishment Democrats is that they made their decisions based on what happens next. I make my decisions based on what's-

Ben: I'm going to go back to the Lieutenant Governor. Do you want to respond to this idea that it was more the activists pushing the establishment Democrats to get to the 15 dollar minimum wage, and do you want to also talk a little bit about your preparation to become governor if the need arises?

Hochul: We got the job done. People talked about increasing minimum wage for years. And, yes, activism and putting a spotlight are important parts of it, but you also have to know how to work the legislative process, how to get buy-in from the Republican Senate, which is no easy task. People say, "Oh yeah. Of course if you want it happen, it'll just happen." There's a whole process you have to go through. When you have a deeper knowledge of

government, and I've served in every level of government, whether it's a council member myself, county official, a member of Congress, and now as Lieutenant Governor. So I think that it kind of sells short what is actually involved in getting something as significant as an increase in the minimum wage, or paid family leave, or college tuition affordability programs. So there's a lot more than just being out there, which is an important part of the process. I've been out there on the front lines of activism my entire life since college days, fighting for justice. And I don't want to put down the role that you can play, but also there's more involved in that as well.

Ben: And are you prepared to be Governor if the need arises? What experience right there next to the governor ... Have you been close enough to the governor, in budget negotiations and some of the other matters that he deals with? You're often traveling around the state. Have you been there in those negotiations? Have you seen that up close?

Hochul: More than any individual in the state of New York. I am prepared to step in if necessary. My whole life has been preparing to lead, and I've led in every capacity. Whether I was launching boycotts against ExxonMobil as a county board member, or challenging Donald Trump, challenging Republicans as a member of Congress, and standing up with Barack Obama when he needed my vote to make sure that we could keep the Affordable Care Act. I voted 46 times. So I've been tested. I've been battle tested and I have the scars to show for it as someone elected in the most Republican District in the state of New York. It's a lot easier to be a Democrat, a lot more fun to be a Democrat in a place like Brooklyn or New York City. I understand that, but I've been in the battles my entire life and I've been successful.

Ben: One other aspect of the job, and then move on to some other issues but we'll start with you Lieutenant Governor, is presiding over the state senate. Now you've done it in a very limited way in your term. Is that something you would do differently in the next term? Is there a reason that you haven't spent much time presiding over the state senate?

Hochul: Absolutely. In one sense, when the Republicans have the majority, it is ceremonial. And despite what people think, you do not have a tie-breaking vote on any matter of consequence. Only on procedural matters. So at the end of last session, when we were fighting very hard to have the Reproductive Health Act enacted and I worked with Senator Liz Krueger, I, by showing up, gave her the opportunity to push forward to have the debate on this for the first time in years. Republicans didn't even let us talk about it. I was at [inaudible 00:14:19] Stewart-Cousins two days ago. I said, "I cannot wait to

have

the gavel in my hand, when you are the full majority leader of the New York State Assembly, leading Democrats. And the first 100 days, I'm going to tell you, we're going to get so much done because the Republicans have been obstructionists."

I've gone to their districts. I've called them out for not supporting sensible gun legislation. I've been there pushing them and pushing them, but this election in November is so important to elect Democrats, to change the whole trajectory of our state.

Ben: Thank you. And Council Member Williams, as lieutenant governor, would you preside

over the state senate, and how would you fulfill that responsibility?

Williams: Well, before we get to November, I want to make sure that we understand that any blue

just won't do, and we have to elect the right Democrats for the job. The current Lieutenant Governor has presided probably the least over the state senate than any other lieutenant governor, and I think that's something that has to be taken seriously. That's why it was before, so that people will be prepared in the event that a procedural tie is needed, as is what happened during the last session. I take the job very seriously. I think that's an important part of the job, so you understand parliamentary procedure, so when the time arises, you are ready. That did not occur in the past four years. I think it's unfortunate-

Ben: Was there any tangible difference if Lieutenant Governor Hochul had been in the state

senate most of the time they were in session? Would that have changed anything?

Williams: There might have been. There might have been something that we would have learned

during that time that could have helped us codify Roe v Wade, that could have helped us get bail reform when the time arises. And that's something that I want to take very seriously.

Ben: Okay. So before we get to the cross-examination round, just so you know that's coming

up, you can ask each other one question. One more question and we'll start with you Council Member Williams on this one. One of the major roles that Lieutenant Governor Hochul has failed, and one of the key priorities for the state has been Economic Development, creating jobs. How would you approach economic development and job creation if elected lieutenant

governor? Is that something you'd seek to be part of your portfolio, if you're working collaboratively with the governor?

Williams: Well, too many of those have been actually massive failures. We've spent billions of

dollars to create new jobs, but none of come out of it. We have rightfully invested in places like Buffalo, but we have corruption around the Buffalo Billion. What's sad is the Lieutenant Governor's office hasn't been used to highlight that, to speak about it, and that's what we have to do. I would ask the viewers to go to my website, and there's something called Fairness Fees, where we can raise, right now, 20 billion dollars, that's with a B, just in restoring some fees we used to get before. I and the city council suggest that we have a new New Deal. I believe with some of that 20 billion dollars we can get true affordable housing, income taller housing. We can deal with the schools. We can deal with transportation. We can also begin to build out real infrastructure for renewable energy and fix our transportation. With that, you can instantaneously get thousands of jobs as we did in the past with the original New Deal. We have to have creative ways to fix problems that we have, while getting jobs for people. Also the number one way to cut violent crime arrest in young people is actually a job...

Ben: So let me just quickly follow up with you.

Williams: Sure.

Ben: 20 billion dollars in fees sounds like another way of saying raising taxes and charging businesses, commuters, residents of New York, more for different things that they're paying for now. Isn't that another way of saying raising 20 billion dollars in taxes?

Williams: What I'm saying, in the City Council we've gone from 25000 a slot for young people.

Now it's 75000. We'd love to help get investment from the state, but they haven't helped to do. The answer is no. We have a tendency to equate things that are not equatable. These Fairness Fees are only for people who have making \$5,000,000 or more per year and I'd love-

Ben: What's one example of something you'd put a fee on? What's-

Williams: Stock transfer tax, which people think is not achievable. But it is if we didn't have the

governor and lieutenant governor in power in the IDC with the Republicans. It's 14 billion dollars. We used to collect it until the 80s, and then we just stopped.

Ben: Okay. We'll have to take a look at some of those numbers after the debate. But Lieutenant Governor, on economic development, what exactly have you accomplished there? Are there shifts that you would seek in another term to the way the programs have been implemented?

Hochul: By any metric, Governor Cuomo and my economic development strategies

have been

successful. I'm from upstate New York. I know what it looks like when areas have been abandoned because of foreign trade or people finding better opportunities. And so, that was my entire life story. All my family left Buffalo. But just in the last 4 years that I've been there, I have seen over 230000 jobs created and retained. 6100 Brand New Economic Development projects with investment of 5.4 billion dollars. And what does that mean? That means that places like Jamestown in Elmira, and Batavia in Syracuse, Rochester, Albany, they're starting to come back and have new Life in them. And by any number, unemployment has dropped almost in half all across the state.

More people are working more than ever before. We have a strategy where we've have empowered, not just the people on the ground, but also making sure they're people in labor's represented, academia, business people, elected officials.

Unlike the old system where it was a bunch of bureaucrats in Albany deciding where the money went, now we've empowered the local people to chart their own vision, to come up with their own economic development strategies, and it is has been an overwhelming success. We need to keep that going.

Ben: I'm going to follow up on that. As the council member has eluded to, there have been two significant corruption trials with convictions related to the economic development programs in the last year. Since that's been a major part of your portfolio, your administration with Governor Cuomo, how do you explain that to New York voters that this significant corruption occurred under your watch in the economic development programs?

Hochul: As they also said, there was 6100 brand new projects. So yes, you've identified two

instances where individuals abused the trust that they were given and justice was served. They were arrested, convicted, and they're going to do time, and the governor and I said that is the right outcome. Because we have zero tolerance for anyone who abuses the trust that they've been given, but that does not tarnish the incredible success in my hometown of Buffalo, New York, which has been lauded by every newspaper from the London Times to the New York Times saying, this is a whole new place. And it did not happen without Governor Cuomo and a lieutenant governor who know how to get the job done.

Ben: Is there anything that needs to be done differently to prevent such abuses in the future?

Hochul: Yes. We need to continue finding ways to have more disclosure, more transparency. But those changes already been made under the system, under economic development, under Howard Zensky. He has had more disclosure, more information available to the public and to the media online, about every single project.

Hochul: The approvals come from the controller. There was a system setup in place before

Governor Cuomo took office where Elaine Kelly [inaudible 00:21:25] and other individuals had too much power over it. We have now changed that. It is where it needs to be, and people should be proud of the successes that we're seeing all across the state, but particularly in hard-hit areas. And the money that we're bringing to area's, whether it's in Jamaica, 1.4 billion dollars for Central Brooklyn. I was just there a couple days ago announcing this initiative to help people lead healthier, more productive lives. These are exciting times, and people are proud of what the governor and I have accomplished.

Ben: So on a couple of things you just mentioned, then we'll move into the cross-examination round, there's pending legislation in the state legislator to mandate that the deals in economic development are more transparent, and to allow the controller to have a little bit more pre-approval. Those bills have not moved through. Is that something you think should happen in the next term?

Hochul: Well again, these are Republicans who are trying to change the system because they want to get their hands and hand out the money themselves. That's why their not happy. They want to go back to the old way. Well, we believe in empowering the local community to make the decisions on where the money's spent.

Ben: Okay. Cool.

Hochul: But we also have disclosure. Decisions are proved by the controller. The information is available online. That's disclosure already working.

Ben: Okay thank you. We'll leave it there.

Williams: Can we do a fact check?

Ben: We're going to move on. You have a chance for a cross examination question, so use it how you will. But Lieutenant Governor, we'll let you ask Council Member Williams a question for the cross examination round.

Hochul: Sure. I just have a simple question. A yes or no answer is fine. Have you returned the illegal corporate campaign contributions that your campaign took that you said you'd return 6 weeks ago?

Williams: Thank you for that question. By the way, I just, two days ago, received the findings from the Board of Education. But we didn't wait for those findings.

Ben: The board of elections.

Williams: The board of elections, I'm sorry. We didn't wait for those findings. We began to return

the money immediately. We've made one of three payments. We were making the second this week. We'll be in full compliance at the end of this campaign.

What is interesting though, after my story came out, other stories of people running for state wide office, including the governor, Andrew Cuomo, made the same error I did. But lieutenant governor, as per the past four years, has been fully silent on Andrew Cuomo's illegal contributions acceptance. Also, if we want to look at things like finances, the Lieutenant Governor mentioned ExxonMobil. If we look at the finances, tens of thousands of investments in things like ExxonMobil, Philip Morris that's harming black and brown communities, you see their ads all over. JP Morgan Chase, that has fueled the foreclosure crisis, which is something Lieutenant Governor-

Ben: I'm going to stop you there. You've gotten well beyond answering-

Ben: ... Her question-

Williams: Sure.

Ben: ... Correctly, but that's okay. I'll give you a few seconds to respond.

Hochul: No, and I think the difference is that for someone who's been an elected official for 10

years, to claim not having knowledge of the proper way to file out a disclosure ...

Politicians for 10 years out to know better. They can't claim that they didn't understand the rules. And so I believe in transparency, full disclosure. Why I thought it should not have been

so difficult to have taxes released so we can know what deductions you're taking if people want to raise questions about whether not they're appropriate.

I believe when you run for office you are held at the highest of standards, and disclosure is something

I've called for, transparency. Even when I was running against Chris Collins, as a member

of Congress they said, "Show us your taxes. Tell us about your financial dealings."

Hochul: And look where he is today. So it's something I've always asked for, and I think that all of

us should be welcoming the opportunity. And, yes, people talk about my finances because I've disclosed them. I didn't have to be pulled to this kicking and screaming. I did it willingly. I've done it for 10 straight years. It should be part of the process without resistance.

Ben: Okay. And Council Member Williams, we're going to move to your question.

Williams: Yeah. Well there wasn't resistance. I just wanted to have a debate, one that was fused.

After the debate was set, I actually did release it. But all the things about transparency, for some reason you don't ask the same questions to Andrew Cuomo who made the same-

Ben: Please ask your question.

Williams: But I do want to say a thank you for joining. In 2012, the Congressional Black Caucus and

the Democratic Congress walked out, the Democratic Congressional Committee, walked

out of the Congressional Chambers. You instead stayed with the Republicans. And, at the be hence of the NRA, voted to hold in contempt the first black attorney general appointed by the first black president.

I'm wondering if you understand why that, combined with the recent undertones of race and class in recent ads, have civil rights leaders concerned about your campaign's understanding and sensitivities around race and class issues?

Hochul: I'm very happy to address this issue. I would say that there was a time when individuals

like myself running in the most Republican District in the state of New York, trying to stay there so I can continue to fight with our leadership and with President Barack Obama. I've said that we need full disclosure. And I'm sorry, I support our president. I support Eric Holder on everything he did. But in this one instance, he did not turn over information that was requested by a co-equal branch of government as a member of Congress.

Hochul: I thought he had a responsibility to do so. I held him to the same standard. When

Democrats were in charge and they asked for information from George Bush, they did the same thing. So it was simply a matter of how our government functions, and I thought that the information that was requested by an oversight Committee in Congress should have been given. But I have stood with Eric Holder on so many other issues, and President Obama who called me after I lost my seat in Congress because I would not abandon him, to my own detriment. I love that seat in Congress and I lost by 1% because I would not walk away from him and what he asked me to do in fighting for the Affordable Care Act. He said, "Kathy, it is a lost to our country that you lost your seat in Congress."

Ben: And let me just follow up that to minute, but the ad that your campaign released, some

comment from a supporter, there's been a lot of blow back in terms of racial/class undertones. Do you have a response to what Mr. Williams asked you about that?

Hochul: Yeah. I think that we can use opportunities to elevate the conversation.

Absolutely. The reference to what a supporter did, I think it was very clear it had nothing to do with my campaign. Supporters say and do a lot of different things. But you know what? I look at opportunities, and perhaps the council member can engage in this conversation to kind of elevate this. And if there's concerns or questions, let's continue a positive conversation in the right direction. And I'm willing to do that.

Ben: Okay. And I have a final question for each you and then we'll move to closing statements. Council Member Williams, you've talked about being activist, being bold, taking the lieutenant governor role to a new level as a public advocate of sorts. In the city council over your multiple terms, you voted, I think, over something like 9000 times but on over 200 votes you've abstained. You haven't decided yes or no, and as far as I can tell, none of those instances has there been a conflict of interest that will require you from abstaining. So how have you managed to sort of avoid taking so many votes that you found difficult to choose yes or no on?

Williams: Well, I do want to mention that it's not just one instance with Ms. Hochul being with Republicans, whether it was the NRA endorsing over Chris Collins...

Ben: If you could answer my question please. You'll have time in your closing statements.

Williams: Just by... He was the first person to endorse Donald Trump, or saying she would turn over people who applied to undocumented immigrants to ICE. I didn't avoid taking a vote, actually. There are three votes that can be taken in the city council, yes, no, and abstention. I can't see the record that you're pointing to, but my guess is a lot of those abstentions had to do with land use.

Ben: They did.

Williams: I voted against MIH which I think has been a failure. Thankfully now because of my leadership and others, we began to make changes to those but they should have been done long before. I tried my best to be collegial while at same time expressing my disappointment in what was moving forward. And the way to do that for me was an abstention, to try to be collegial so I can pass things like the issues of stop, question, and frisk. That needed a 34 votes and I only had 34 volts, while expressing my disdain for what the council and the mayor were doing at that time. Hurting us and not getting the type of deeply income taller affordable housing that we needed.

Ben: Okay, thank you. And final question to you before moving to the closing statements lieutenant governor. You mentioned new sexual harassment policies that the state is

passed to a lot of fanfare and a lot of acclaim that the state was taking this issue on both in state government and in the private sector. The discussions around those laws did not include public hearings, and they were hammered out unless you want to correct the record, by four men behind a closed door. Was that something that you tried to get your voice listened to on, the discussion around new sexual harassment laws? Or did the governor keep both you and Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, who he said he would include, out of those conversations?

Hochul: I can only speak for myself. I was very much involved in those conversations. I was used as a resource, as someone who has lived this experience personally. And this is why I'm so passionate about standing up for women all across this country who've been silenced because men in power have abused that and made them feel that they would not be believed if they came forward with their stories of sexual harassment. I'm so excited about the size of the societal shift that we're finally starting to see, but we have a long way to go. And again, as the only woman in statewide office, I have a special responsibility. So I was there helping chart the course that the state ended up adopting, and I'm proud of that.

Ben: Okay. Well thank you both for participating. We'll move to closing statements and we start with you Lieutenant Governor. Hopefully, you have two minutes to talk to the voters.

Hochul: Again, thank you Ben, for allowing this opportunity, and for Council Member Jumaane Williams who we'll see again probably this evening in another form. And I want to thank him for his participation. And I love this position. I think people know that four years ago when the voters overwhelmingly elected me in the Democratic primary and in general election, they expected the Governor Cuomo and I to get things done for them. They don't want gridlock. They don't want to descent ion. They don't want us fighting, and today more than ever, we have our accomplishments I'm proud of. Increasing minimum wage, paid family leave, our sexual assault bill. We have done so much. But now because of the election of Donald Trump, we must stand united as one voice Democrats to make sure that we wipe out the Republican party in our own State, and we have that opportunity this November. So I'm going to continue doing as I've done. Helping to elect Democrats to the New York State Senate, but also to Congress because they need my help. I've lived in there. I know what it's like to get elected in a tough, tough area. I've got the scars to show it, but I'm going to be there to help them because that is the only check we have on Donald Trump

who is hurting New Yorkers, hurting immigrants, hurting members of the LGBTQ community, hurting women, hurting communities of color.

And we as New York State have a special responsibility, have a moral obligation to stand

up and fight back. And Governor Cuomo and I are proud to lead the resistance against Donald Trump. And if you elect us once again, you can count on that advocacy for the next four years. And I thank you, and I ask everyone please, humbly, for your support.

Ben: Thank you. Council Member Williams, you're closing statement.

Williams: Thank you so much again, and thank you to Ms. Hochul. As I said at the beginning, what

I thought we'd see here was a starkly different vision and perception of what this office should be. And I believe I was right. In one perception Ms. Hochul believes that the perception is to serve the governor. I believe the job should be to serve the people of the state of New York. There hasn't been one thing that, under the current perception, would have not been accomplished without the lieutenant governor's office.

We must change that. We are in a critical time where we have to have Democrats who unafraid to say, even while discussing reproductive justice, that there are no women in the room. There was no voice there, that there have been three men running the state when Andrea Stewart-Cousins should be the rightful leader and was not allowed in the room in the budget debates.

Lastly identity politics is important. It is important to see yourself in leadership, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, but that cannot be the only thing. That's the gravy. We have to have a meal. I am not asking anyone to vote for me because I'm a black man. I don't want to lose those votes, so if that's what you want to do... But I really want people to vote for me because of the vision I've laid out of what this office can do for the state of New York, and what I have done in the past nine years with passing those 49 pieces of legislation.

And then on top of that, we have their identity. I'm a black man. I'm a first generation of immigrants. I have Tourette Syndrome. You may have seen me shake a little bit. ADHD. I

made through the public school system from preschool to Masters. I was raised by a single mother who was very strong, who would be very disappointed if I didn't stand up for women's reproductive rights, including the rights of women to have a safe and legal abortion, and raised two knucklehead children by herself.

The meal with the identity is a complete package of what this state needs in this time, 2018. Yes, as you may have seen, as was quoted, I am a charismatic black man at times.

But I'd like to add to that, with your help, the next lieutenant governor of the state of New York, and I hope to have your vote. Thank you.

Ben: Thank you both for participating in today's debate.