



RTCNYC Tool 9.2.3

Questions to Ask about RTC to Key Lawmakers at Public Events

One of our strategies in pressuring Mayor de Blasio to support the bill was to prepare and ask questions at public events in order to try and get his position on the Right To Counsel on the record. We developed this strategy as part of our broader campaign planning and power analysis. The goal was to get the Mayor to speak publicly about Right to Counsel, and to put pressure on him to take a position and, ultimately, the right position! This meant spending time researching the Mayor's schedule, and identifying people who could respond rapidly to commit to attending events where we could ask questions.

For your campaign, you may have different targets, but the strategy can be the same. Here are some questions that we came up with, and you should tweak these questions to connect to the electeds you are targeting. These particular questions were asked when the bill had been in City Council for some time.

Questions to ask Elected Officials at Events

- You've made a real funding commitment to eviction prevention in [our municipality or state], which not only prevents displacement, but also keeps housing affordable. But there seems to be tremendous support in New York for making legal representation in housing cases an enforceable right. Are you planning to support and fund the right to counsel bill?
- The Right to Counsel bill has been out now for over a year. When do you plan on going public with your position on the bill?
- Will you come out publicly and support Right to Counsel?
- Why haven't you supported Right to Counsel ?
- To what degree do you see right to counsel as connected to your stated goal of preserving affordable housing?
- You've made your legacy about affordable housing and have begun to implement a new plan to develop affordable housing. Do you see Right to Counsel as a key preservation strategy?
- Given that evicted tenants are disproportionately people of color, do you see the right to representation in evictions as a racial justice issue?
- Right to Counsel would continue to set a precedent for cities throughout the country and establish us as a progressive city. Don't you want to be responsible for making that happen?

If your campaign is in a municipality or district but your state doesn't have Right to Counsel either:

- [Our state] doesn't have a right to counsel in housing cases, and neither does any other city or state. Do you feel it's important for [our municipality] to be a leader on this?