

New York Democrats express willingness to collaborate with Trump

Philip Guelpa

18 November 2024

The WSWS invites readers to attend an important online discussion Wednesday evening of the outcome of 2024 US presidential elections: “Of the oligarchy, by the oligarchy, and for the oligarchy, Trump’s cabinet & the restructuring of the American state.” Please register here.

Democratic state and city officials in New York state, taking their cue from lame duck president Biden and others, are expressing their willingness to work “constructively” with the incoming Trump administration. The state’s governor, Kathy Hochul, and New York City Mayor Eric Adams have even gone further, expressing agreement with Trump on aspects of his fascist program. This is despite the fact that Trump’s proposals to defund federal support for education, healthcare, housing and transit would have devastating effects on the state and city, along with the impact of his policies regarding democratic rights.

Hochul, who replaced former Democratic Governor Andrew Cuomo when he resigned after a media-driven sexual harassment scandal, has carried out a right wing, pro-business program, differing in degree but not in kind from that of the Republicans.

The *New York Post* reports that in a telephone call two days after the election, Governor Hochul congratulated Trump on his victory, in a conversation that “focused on collaboration.” In a clear signal that she wanted to do business with Trump, Hochul told reporters, “Relationships work both ways and as a result of that call I feel confident right now that, as he said to me, that he wants a cooperative relationship with New York.”

Hochul is hoping, probably on little basis other than Trump’s vague words promising cooperation, and despite his promises to cut spending for a wide range of federal programs, for financial support for a number of large infrastructure projects. These include continuing construction of the Second Avenue Subway, the renovation and expansion of Penn Station, both in Manhattan, and financial support for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), which serves New York City and its suburbs. She is signaling a willingness, in return, to accommodate Trump on his fascist program, particularly in relation to immigration.

One of Trump’s signature campaign promises is to carry out mass deportations of undocumented immigrants, estimated to

number more than 11 million nationally. This is one of the most important elements of his fascist program, which he brought up constantly at pre-election rallies everywhere. In order to carry out such a brutal operation, the deployment of a huge number of federal police and military personnel, supplemented by state and local police and National Guard units, will be necessary. The cooperation of state and local governments will be vital. In the past, more limited deportation programs, carried out by both the Obama and first Trump administrations, met with varied levels of cooperation.

The Cuomo administration mounted some limited resistance to Trump’s first-term efforts against immigrants, in the form of executive orders and legislation prohibiting cooperation with federal authorities from detaining undocumented individuals at state court houses and other state facilities. Unlike in some other states, however, these restrictions did not extend to county and local governments. Efforts to pass legislation in New York to that effect were unsuccessful.

The fascist program known as Project 2025, which is Trump’s unofficial agenda, calls for the punishment of state and local governments that resist the mass deportation policy by withholding a variety of federal funds.

Governor Hochul has not explicitly stated whether or to what degree her administration will cooperate with Trump’s deportation program. However, last February, she did tell CNN that, “The state of New York has the power to work with ICE [the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement].”

Hochul’s attitude toward immigrants is revealed by her comment in response to an assault by police on migrants in Manhattan. The clash was initially falsely blamed on the immigrants even though the attack was initiated by the police. “I want them [the migrants] arrested, tried, and if convicted, I want them to spend time in New York jails before they are deported,” she said at the time. “Get them all and send them back.”

Furthermore, Hochul has promoted intelligence-sharing between federal, state and local agencies, creating mechanisms by which information about immigrants, political dissidents and opponents of Trump’s policies is easily available to all levels of government.

New York City’s right-wing Democratic mayor, Eric Adams,

who has been indicted on corruption charges, has in fact pledged to collaborate with Trump's plans for mass deportations, even while formally voicing some opposition.

New York is known as a "sanctuary city," with laws currently in place barring cooperation with ICE. During a recent news conference, Adams stated that while he didn't want to "go to the days where people are going to hide in the shadows," the sanctuary city laws should be changed. Adams' ferocious attacks on immigrants did not begin yesterday. He has asserted that the large inflow of migrants, estimated at more than 200,000 over the last two years, many of them bused by the Republican governor of Texas, Greg Abbott, would "destroy New York City," and he said that he could be of assistance to the Trump administration in addressing the issue. Adams has repeatedly criticized the Biden administration over its allegedly weak border policy, in language similar to that of Trump, and even though the Biden-Harris administration moved viciously against immigrants.

Currently, there are an estimated half a million undocumented immigrants in the city of 8.8 million, more than half of them in the US for ten years or more. About 70 percent of them have paid work in a variety of industries, including catering, construction, retail, driving, and cleaning. They pay more than \$3 billion annually in federal, state and local taxes. Despite paying into Social Security, Medicare, and unemployment insurance, they are not able to access those benefits.

Some of the undocumented live in mixed families that include US citizens. Trump's proposed "border czar," Tom Homan, has pledged to deport entire families, whether or not they include US-born citizens. Homan also threatened to double the number of ICE agents assigned to New York City if municipal authorities don't cooperate with Trump's fascistic deportation program.

Mayor Adams has been notably quiet recently regarding Trump's agenda as a whole, clearly hoping to cozy up to the incoming president. During a press conference a week before the election, following Trump's fascist rally at Madison Square Garden, Adams pointedly refused to answer reporters' questions regarding then-candidate Trump, who, as president, will have the authority to remove the US attorney who had Adams indicted. The mayor may be angling for a pardon from Trump if he is tried and convicted, although it is also conceivable that a new US Attorney could modify or even drop the charges.

At the recent annual Al Smith political charity dinner in New York, Trump expressed sympathy for Adams. "I know what it's like to be persecuted by the DOJ for speaking out against open borders," Trump said, addressing Adams. Subsequently, in an obvious signal, the mayor objected to labeling Trump a fascist.

In a further example of agreement with the president-elect, Adams has expressed support for Trump's appointment of Elon Musk, the world's richest man, to lead the proposed

Department of Government Efficiency, which is intended to take a meat ax to government programs and staff. Adams claimed that the aim of the new agency would be in line with his own efforts to streamline city government. During an interview on a local television station, Adams said, "One of the people I think it was important to bring on board, some people may argue, is Elon Musk." In Adams' view, "We're dealing with an antiquated government filled with bureaucracy unwilling to make any changes." Adams has praised Trump for "choosing those who believe [in his vision]." Clearly, Adams views the fascist incoming president as a kindred spirit.

In a recent interview with the local ABC affiliate, Adams criticized what he called toxic rhetoric, and suggested that "both sides" should tone it down—this while his fellow Democrats have already been groveling to Trump since he won the presidency. Adams also downplayed the significance of Trump's ultra-right-wing cabinet appointees.

The collaborative environment being promoted by the Democratic governor and mayor towards Trump and his fascist allies shows that, despite tactical differences, both parties represent the interests of a ruling oligarchy that is moving very sharply to the right. Notwithstanding occasional rhetoric to the contrary, the Democrats are incapable and indeed unwilling to counter the massive attacks on living standards and democratic and constitutional rights being prepared by Trump and the Republicans. Only with a complete break from the entire capitalist political structure can the working class fight back against the impending onslaught. A clear class break with the two parties of the ruling class must be fought for, as part of the fight for a new leadership committed to the fight for a socialist program and the ending of the profit system of war and dictatorship.



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)