



CELEBRATING  
30 YEARS



## **AIANY president's message: Architect|Activist**

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Each day, we architects work towards designing a better built environment. This applies to all of us, regardless of whether we work in academia, private practice, or public service. Nevertheless, design thinking is too often underutilized in the political arena.

For all of the effort and thought we put into designing a more equitable and beautiful New York City, we are rarely the ones making the decisions to turn those designs into reality. Too few architects run for office, let alone serve in advisory political positions in their free time. We not only need architects running for local, state, and federal office, but we also need them volunteering on campaigns and joining political organizations.

At AIA New York, we have sought to address this dearth of architects in the political arena as part of the Architect|Activist presidential theme for 2018. As a first step, we pushed hard to have our members join their local community boards, the most local form of representation in New York. While their role is advisory, they have a major influence over land use.

The outpouring of passion and excitement among our members to apply and serve was astounding. Currently, we have counted 20 AIA members that serve on community boards. This year, we could easily double that level of participation.

Architects can contribute to their communities by providing their deep personal knowledge of land use issues: zoning, preservation, streetscaping, and more. Nevertheless, communities can contribute to us as well. Positive involvement in the political arena will encourage more architects to become civically engaged, leading more architects to consider taking the important step of running for office.

It may not even be too much to think of an architect serving as President of the United States! If we want that to be a reality, we need to take the first steps to make it so.

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