

# The Epoch Times

## District Attorney Candidates Talk Women's Issues

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[District Attorney](#) candidate Leslie Crocker Snyder (D)  
(Christine Lin/The Epoch Times)

NEW YORK—Candidates for Manhattan district [attorney](#) spoke on women's issues at a forum hosted by the National Organization for Women on Thursday. Here are the candidates:

Leslie Crocker Snyder (D) is a [lawyer and](#) former judge. Having worked in the DA's office, she formed the Sex Crimes Prosecution Bureau. She ran for DA in 2005, but lost to incumbent Robert M. Morgenthau by a 16 percent margin.

Cyrus Vance Jr. (D) has the backing of Morgenthau. Vance is a former assistant district attorney in his office and the son of former U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, who served in the Carter administration.

Richard M. Aborn (Democratic and Working Families Party) is heavily involved in the gun control movement. The Brady Bill, which he supported, set tougher regulations on gun purchases. He has worked as assistant DA under Morgenthau, he focused mainly on street crimes such as homicides.

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**Question:** Often, rape by someone who the victim knows is treated as a misdemeanor while rape by a stranger is treated as a felony. How will you address the disparity between how the two are prosecuted?

**Cy Vance Jr.:** There needs to be an attitude shift among prosecutors, to not [apply](#) different standards to an acquaintance rape. It's a matter of training and shift in attitude.



District Attorney candidate Cyrus Vance Jr. (D)  
(Christine Lin/The Epoch Times)



District Attorney candidate Richard M. Aborn (Democratic and Working Families Party). (Christine Lin/The Epoch Times)

**Leslie Cocker Snyder:** In the past, assistant DA's were scattered throughout trial courts and had to answer to different bosses. We need a real unit to be dedicated to addressing rape and sexual assault.

**Richard Aborn:** We need to work side by side with investigators and victims to develop critical relationships, and have women realize what their legal rights are.

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**Question:** NYC is a major entry point for human trafficking, yet Manhattan has not made a single conviction of traffickers. How will the Manhattan DA catch up to other boroughs in this regard?

**Cy Vance Jr.:** It's a matter of will and resources. If we have multiple convictions, that's not progress. Pull the victims out to be witnesses so they can help us build cases.

**Leslie Cocker Snyder:** The victim is often reluctant to speak to come forth. Police need to speak to prostitutes to see if they have been trafficked. If they cooperate, their prostitution record should be expunged.

**Richard Aborn:** If we can investigate international [white collar crime](#), then we can

investigate sex trafficking. We should work with the NYS police to track trafficking routes.

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**Question:** There wouldn't be prostitution if not for the demand. Would you go after the johns?

**Cy Vance Jr.:** Yes.

**Leslie Cocker Snyder:** I would go after the johns especially if the victim is underage. Also will go after the pimps who profit.

**Richard Aborn:** Some men use travel agents in New York City to book sex tours. The threat of indictment could propel them to work with us.

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**Question:** Prosecutors of domestic violence case often do not understand the cultural intricacies that complicate cases. How should we train assistant DA's?

**Cy Vance Jr.:** Repeat misdemeanors should be treated as a felony. Manhattan needs a Family Justice Center like Brooklyn and Queens do.

**Leslie Cocker Snyder:** Every domestic violence case is a homicide waiting to happen. Prosecutors need to be trained in evidence-based prosecution, so that the case can go forth if the victim is unwilling to testify.

**Richard Aborn:** Training needs to be evidence based. For prevention, women need financial support, transitional housing, and psychological help. Children need early intervention, too.

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**Question:** The public lacks information about the DA's performance. How will you make the office more transparent?

**Cy Vance Jr.:** Address the disparity in numbers: Police reports on rape are far fewer than hospital records. The NYPD needs to write up the reports if they know about a case.

**Leslie Cocker Snyder:** Establish a bureau to check the work of prosecutors. Victims need to know where their cases are. A Special Victims Division will keep statistics on each bureau.

**Richard Aborn:** We need a system to publicly track stats on prosecutions, prevention, and DA spending. Long-term data can be useful in lobbying the State and even Congress in the efficacy of prevention versus incarceration.