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New Poll Released by Fontas Advisors and Core Decision Analytics Sheds Light on the NYC Mayor's Race

The poll is the first of three to be presented by 'Pulse of the Primary: 2021 NYC Mayor's Race,' a series of quantitative voter surveys conducted in advance of the NYC Democratic Primary

NEW YORK, NEW YORK — (February 10, 2021) — *Pulse of the Primary: 2021 NYC Mayor's Race*, a recurring series of quantitative voter surveys, was unveiled today to provide fresh insights on the upcoming New York City Democratic primary and key issues in the race for mayor. The project, sponsored by Fontas Advisors and Core Decision Analytics, takes an independent look at major candidates as well as key issues. Results released today from the first poll of N=842 NYC Democratic Primary likely voters offer a revealing peek at the fiercely contested race to replace term-limited incumbent Mayor Bill de Blasio.

"New York City is at a crossroads and the election of the new mayor will be a pivotal milestone in our recovery from the pandemic and the resulting economic devastation," said George Fontas, Founder and CEO of Fontas Advisors, a leading NYC-based government affairs consultancy. "Our poll found that New Yorkers seek mayoral candidates who offer clear plans to tackle the many pressing issues facing the city, and voters especially value proven experience demonstrated in government or the public sector."

"Our survey shows that voters are concerned about the many challenges facing the city, though their pick for mayor is still quite fluid at this time," said Adam Rosenblatt, President of Core Decision Analytics (CODA), a non-partisan national public opinion research and analytics firm based in Washington, DC. "Awareness appears to aid three candidates as of late January, though the vast majority of voters are unfamiliar with the wider set of prominent candidates running."

The full survey results, including complete question wording, all questions asked, as well as demographics and screening criteria, will be publicly available at PulseOfThePrimary.com.

This first Fontas/CODA Pulse of the Primary Poll suggests that the COVID pandemic will be the dominant issue on the campaign trail. Key findings included:

- **57%** of likely voters said **"the pandemic caused a significant negative impact on my household finances."** (26% strongly agree + 31% somewhat agree)

- **47%** indicated that **"If I had the ability, I would consider moving out of NYC permanently."** (19% strongly agree + 28% somewhat agree)

- When presented with a list of nine major topics frequently discussed on the campaign trail, **nearly half of voters (49%) said the "most important" issue** to them when considering the candidates **relates to COVID**: health aspects (30% "preventing the spread of COVID / vaccine distribution"), as well as economic aspects (19% "reopening the economy / job creation").

Fielded from January 20-25th, the first Fontas/CODA Pulse of the Primary poll presented voters with nine candidates to assess across several key metrics including familiarity ("awareness"), as well as the "horserace" ("If the Democratic Primary election for mayor of New York City were held today…"). The survey also examined ranked choice voting as well as attributes voters often consider when evaluating candidates. Key findings included:

- **Three candidates enjoy strong awareness among voters:** Four in five NYC likely voters (84%) indicated that they have heard of Andrew Yang. He is likely a familiar name to many Democrats given his prominence during the 2020 presidential primary, though it is also worth emphasizing that this survey was conducted in the wake of Yang's campaign launch and heavy media blitz. Three in five voters say they have heard of Scott Stringer and Eric Adams (66% and 60%, respectively). Familiarity was 33% or less for the other six candidates examined.

- **Boosted by strong awareness, Andrew Yang appears to lead in the "horserace" question, followed by Eric Adams and Scott Stringer.** By design, the Fontas/CODA Poll's "horserace" question included a short description of the candidate, aiming to simulate what voters might hear, read, or see if the candidate were described in the news. Andrew Yang (described as "entrepreneur and former Democratic presidential primary candidate") drew support from one in four likely voters (28%). "Eric Adams, Brooklyn Borough President" and "Scott Stringer, NYC Comptroller" were closely tied with the support of 17% and 13% of likely voters, respectively. One in four likely voters (23%) indicated a preference for one of the other six candidates presented. Meanwhile, essentially one in five voters (19%) said they were undecided.

- **Voters value having a plan plus government experience:** Voters said the most important attributes they consider when evaluating candidates for mayor were someone who has a "detailed plan on an issue [they] care about", a "broad plan of many issues", as well as "proven experience in government / public sector." These attributes rank very high, with over 90% of voters valuing each of these attributes. By contrast, voters placed significantly less importance on someone who has "proven experience in business / private sector" or even "has held elected office before." Whereas 72% said proven government / public sector experience was "extremely or very" important, only 44% said the same regarding proven business / private sector experience, and 39% for prior elected experience.

- **NYC likely voters are overwhelmingly unaware of the new ranked choice voting process:** 88% of voters indicated that they have not heard "a lot" about ranked choice voting. Fully one-third (34%) said they have heard "nothing at all."

"The lack of awareness concerning ranked choice voting is worrisome," said Rosenblatt. "This process is likely to be a major factor in the race for mayor and other offices, yet 9 in 10 voters are in the dark. We will examine this closely in the next survey since ranked choice will influence how campaigns communicate as they attempt to persuade New Yorkers to cast a ballot for more than one candidate."

"While this is where things stood in late January, it's essential to remember that there's five months of campaigning still ahead and most voters are just starting to recognize the significance of the June Democratic primary in determining our new mayor," said Fontas. "Awareness is still low for many of the candidates, endorsements have just begun, and, for the most part, retail campaigning has yet to kick off — although candidates will need to utilize different tactics this year due to the pandemic. Our next poll will present a great opportunity to assess how the race for mayor is progressing."

The Fontas/CODA Pulse of the Primary Poll is a three-part series which will publish poll results and analysis leading up to the New York City Democratic primary. The next poll is slated to field in March, followed by a final poll in May in advance of election day on June 22nd. Visit www.PulseOfThePrimary.com for the latest poll reports, analysis, and to subscribe to receive updates.

Methodology
Core Decision Analytics (CODA) conducted N=842 online interviews among New York City Democratic primary likely voters from January 20-25, 2021. By definition, all likely voters interviewed had to say they currently live in one of the five boroughs, are registered to vote as a Democrat, and will "definitely" or "probably" vote in the June primary election for NYC Mayor and other elected offices. The overall margin of error is +/-3.38% at the 95% confidence interval. The report of findings, including all survey questions, screening criteria, and demographics, are available at PulseOfThePrimary.com

About Fontas Advisors
Fontas Advisors is a boutique government affairs consultancy focused on the New York metropolitan area. Leveraging our strong knowledge of city and state administrations combined with our robust network honed over decades of experience, we drive results by serving the next-generation needs of corporations, nonprofits, and trade associations. Learn more at fontasadvisors.com

About Core Decision Analytics
Core Decision Analytics (CODA) provides actionable opinion insights and cutting-edge data analytics programs grounded in trustworthy quantitative, qualitative, and advanced analytics methods. CODA leverages decades of experience in over 20 countries on behalf of governments, campaigns, business organizations, associations, and corporate clients. Learn more at coredecision.com

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