



League of Women Voters of Broome and Tioga Counties

GUIDELINES FOR CANDIDATE DEBATES

Purpose

- Educate the public about the issues in the campaign(s).
- Provide an opportunity for voters to witness candidates discuss those issues face-to-face.
- Stimulate public interest, and participation, in the election(s).
- Provide an opportunity for the public to engage the candidates.

Definition

Debate [per the Federal Election Commission (FEC)]

- includes at least 2 candidates;
- does not promote or advance one candidate over another; and
- allows candidates to appear together, in face-to-face interaction, with opportunities to respond to each other.

Criteria for Candidate Participation

- **Constitutional Eligibility:** Candidates must meet requirements of the NYS Constitution and the Constitution of the United States.
- **Ballot Access:** Candidates must meet all requirements to be on the ballot according to NYS Election laws. This includes major and minor parties; no write-ins.
- **Public announcement of candidacy and clear evidence of a campaign.**
- **A level of support as reflected in polling data or eligibility for public funding.**

Format

Formats should allow equal time and be fair to all candidates. No surrogates may stand in for candidates.

Model 1:

- Moderator led.
- Opening statement by all candidates with the order of speaking determined by lots.
- Questions from the audience. Each candidate has opportunity to respond.
- Closing statements in reverse order from opening statements.
- Audience can ask questions directly or questions can be written on cards distributed in the debate area.
- Written questions can be screened by moderator or sponsor(s) to avoid duplicate, irrelevant, or otherwise non-answerable questions.

Model 2:

- Media panel (newspaper, radio, TV reporters) ask the questions.
- Panel is limited to asking no more than four questions.
- All candidates have opportunity to answer each question.
- Opening statements can be omitted, but closing statements should be included.

Candidate Fairs

- Follows League of Women Voters of US and NYS guidelines

Co-Sponsor and Partnering with Other Organizations

- Follows League of Women Voters of US and NYS guidelines.
- LWVBTC will be solely responsible for preparation, content and timely submission of all correspondence, media and press releases via mail, e-mail or any other means, for candidate debates.

Approved and Adopted: Board of Directors, League of Women Voters of Broome and Tioga Counties, Board of Directors Meeting, 3/10/15.