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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS *of New York State*

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW YORK STATE GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION IN DEBATES AND FORUMS BY CANDIDATES FOR STATEWIDE OFFICE

The purpose of League sponsored debates and forums are fourfold:

1. To educate the public about the issues in the campaigns;
2. To provide an opportunity for voters to hear candidates discuss those issues face-to face;
3. To stimulate public interest and participation in the elections;
4. To provide an opportunity for the public to engage their candidates.

The League believes these purposes are best served by adoption of nonpartisan, objective, and understandable written criteria for candidate inclusion. To that end, the League will apply the following guidelines in determining whether candidates have the right to participate in League sponsored debates and forums.

Guidelines for Candidate Participation:

1. **Constitutional eligibility:** The candidates must meet the requirements of the NYS Constitution and the Constitution of the United States.
2. **Ballot Access:** The candidates must meet all requirements to be on the ballot according to NYS Election laws.¹
3. **Financial Compliance:** The candidate must show that all financial reports required by the NYS Board of Elections have been filed and verified.
4. **Demonstration of significant voter interest and support.** Candidates may demonstrate significant voter interest and support by meeting one of the following two requirements:

¹ When ballot access has not been certified by the New York State Board of Elections, whether because the date for certification has not yet arrived or because a legal challenge of one or more candidates has delayed certification, the League shall exercise its judgment about which candidates to invite and may invite any candidate whom it believes has a reasonable possibility of obtaining ballot access.

- A. The candidate seeks to be (in the case of a primary election) or is the candidate of a party, as that term is defined in section 1-104(3) of New York State Election Law;² or
- B. The candidate can demonstrate significant statewide interest and support, as evidenced by:
 - i. Evidence that a formal statewide campaign is being waged; e.g., presence of headquarters, campaign staff, issuance of position papers, campaign appearances throughout the state, fundraising activities, etc; and
 - ii. Receipt of 5% of support in one or more current nonpartisan statewide public opinion polls.

Based on the above criteria, a final determination of eligibility for participation will be made by the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of New York State.

² When the ballot has not yet been certified by the New York State Board of Elections, whether because the date for certification has not yet arrived or because a challenge to one or more candidates has delayed certification, the League shall exercise its good faith judgment about which candidates to invite and may invite any candidate whom it believes has a reasonable possibility of obtaining ballot access of a party.