



League of Women Voters ABC Candidate Forum Ground Rules

Reviewed, Revised and Approved April 23, 2018

1. League of Women Voters (LWV) is a non-partisan organization which promotes the active and informed involvement of citizens in the voting process. LWV does not support or oppose political parties or individual candidates.
2. LWV sponsors candidate forums to give the voters the opportunity to hear and compare candidates' stands on issues. All events are free and open to the public and the media. Questions will be gathered from various sources. As many questions as possible will be asked within the time limits.
3. To be invited to appear in an LWV ABC forum, a candidate must have publicly announced his/her intention to run, be eligible to hold the office, and be qualified to be on the ballot. Write-in candidates for local offices may be invited if they have made a substantial showing that the candidacy is bona fide. (Bona fide might include campaign speeches, distribution of literature, press releases, issue papers, a campaign committee, website, and/or headquarters.) Write-in candidates who have been eliminated in a primary are not eligible to appear in a general election forum.
4. The order of speaking will be determined by drawing numbers and the order will alternate or rotate thereafter. Occasionally the order will be randomized.
5. LWV ABC encourages members of the public to submit questions to candidates before or during the forum. Questions should strive to accomplish one or more of the following purposes:
 - Define a candidate's position on issues concerning the office to which she/he seeks election.
 - Ascertain the process or method by which a candidate has formulated positions and/or would make decisions if elected.
 - Explain the reasons for past actions or positions taken by an incumbent candidate (with opportunity for non-incumbent candidates to explain what they would do on the same issue.)
 - Determine a candidate's knowledge, background and skills related to the office to which she/he seeks election.
6. LWV ABC reserves the right to screen questions. Our intention is, in good faith, to select questions that represent the interests expressed by the members of our audience and those who submit questions.
 - a. Questions will not be asked if they are:

- Illegible
 - On personal matters unrelated to the elective position
 - Unclear
 - Inappropriately hostile/antagonistic/belligerent or friendly/supportive/gratuitous
 - Submitted for the purpose of making a statement rather than gaining information.
- b. Questions on one issue or similar issues will be consolidated and rephrased.
 - c. All written questions become the property of LWV ABC.
7. If any listener feels an issue has not been adequately addressed, we urge that listener to contact the candidates directly.
 8. Time limits on responses will be strictly observed. Timekeepers will hold up a card to indicate the amount of time remaining with a STOP card at the end.
 9. A table outside the forum hall will be available for distribution of campaign literature.
 10. If an invited candidate is unable or unwilling to appear on the day of the scheduled event, the forum will still be held. The remaining candidate(s) will have an opportunity to express their positions on issues in their opening and closing statements and in response to questions submitted by the audience and read by the moderator. Unopposed candidates may appear alone.
 11. LWV ABC will announce to the audience the candidates who are unable to or choose not to appear.
 12. No substitutes or stand-ins for the candidates will be allowed. Under extraordinary circumstances, the moderator may read a statement from a candidate.
 13. Candidates are asked not to endorse another candidate during their comments.
 14. No statements of a personal nature about another candidate will be tolerated. A person's public record, not her/his character may be examined.
 15. Candidates may bring speaker notes to remind them of key points to make, however, briefing books are not allowed. Display props are not allowed.
 16. No applause or outbursts from the audience will be tolerated. The moderator has the authority to terminate the forum if warranted.
 17. If seating space is a problem, each candidate will be requested to ask their supporters to yield their seats to undecided voters.
 18. No campaign signs (including buttons or t-shirts worn by anyone attending) will be permitted in the forum hall.
 19. Cable TV will be taping the forum and it will be available online on Facebook, cable websites and YouTube and broadcast several times on appropriate cable stations. Candidates should also expect that local media and audience members may also record the event.