

What to Expect at a League of Women Voters Candidate Forum

League of Women Voters of Sonoma County forums are well known for fairness and are a trusted source for voters for balanced, non-partisan information on candidates. The purpose of a candidate forum is to hear and question the candidates. It is not a debate, so candidates will address the moderator not the other candidates.

Preparing for a forum

- Candidates prepare opening and closing statements, usually 1 minute in length.
- Opening statements often include information on why the candidate chose to run, their background and qualifications, and priorities.
- Closing statements usually include thanking citizens, why voters should vote for the candidate and reiterating the candidate's priorities.
- Forums also include questions from the audience.

How will the forum be run?

- The moderator will pick names from a basket to determine who will go first or will go in alphabetical order by last name of the candidates. The first speaker will rotate for each response.
- The moderator will introduce each candidate and ask for opening statements.
- League question-screener will review questions submitted via email in order to avoid duplication, provide a diversity of questions, ensure readability, and avoid inappropriate (e.g., ad hominem attacks) or irrelevant questions (e.g., a foreign policy issue question for a county race). League members will also have questions prepared to ensure a steady flow of questions.
- The timekeeper will have cards showing the time remaining and a stop sign to remind candidates to quickly complete their sentence. Candidates usually have 1 minute to respond to each question.
- Time limits are strictly enforced. Our timer will give candidates a 30-second warning and a signal when their time has ended.