



## **League of Women Voters ABC Candidate Forum Ground Rules**

1. League of Women Voters (LWV) is a non-partisan organization that promotes 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. Questions will be gathered from various sources including on the [lwvabcmn.org](http://lwvabcmn.org) website. As many questions as possible will be asked within the time limits.
3. To receive an invitation 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. Most forums will be held without an audience. Candidates may bring up to two guests with them to the cable studio.
5. The order of speaking will be determined by drawing numbers and the order will alternate or rotate thereafter. Occasionally, the order will be randomized.
6. LWV ABC encourages members of the public to submit questions for candidates before the forum on our website: [lwvmnabc.org](http://lwvmnabc.org). 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.

7. LWV ABC reserves the right to screen questions. Our intention is, in good faith, to select questions that represent the interests expressed by 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 may be consolidated and rephrased.
8. If viewers feel an issue has not been adequately addressed, we urge them to contact the candidates.
9. Time limits on responses will be strictly observed. A timekeeper will hold up a card to indicate when you have 15 seconds remaining and when you must STOP.
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 from the moderator.
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 permitted. Display props are not allowed.
16. The moderator has the authority to terminate the forum if warranted.
17. No campaign signs, clothing or materials will be permitted in the forum hall.
18. Cable TV will tape the forum. It will be available online on YouTube, [LWVABC website](#), cable websites, and broadcast on local cable stations. You are welcome to put a link on your website, but must not use parts of the broadcast.