

## QUESTION SORTER INSTRUCTIONS

As a general rule, we prefer to use questions submitted from the audience (after all, these are public forums). We will use the "prepared" questions from the League or a co-sponsoring organization if there is one when we need to, for example when:

- The audience has not submitted enough questions.
- Audience-submitted questions are obvious plants from candidate supporters -- either deliberate soft-balls intended for their own candidate or personal attacks on the opponent.
- To supplement when audience questions do not mention an issue we think it is important to cover.

The question sorter's job is to

- Sort the questions by topic.
- Keep the moderator "stocked" with an ongoing supply of question cards (either from audience or "prepared" by LWV, preferably with preference to questions submitted by the audience.
- When there are multiple questions on the same topic, consolidate related questions, being careful not to create multi-part questions that cannot realistically be answered in the 1 minute time period allowed.
- Generally discard any question directed to a single candidate, unless it can be modified to be answered by all. We on rare occasions do permit questions for a single candidate if they are fairly stated and relate to an important issue in the campaign, but the moderator may choose to allow other candidates to respond to the question as well
- Discard questions aimed at attacking a particular candidate(s).
- Discard questions that are irrelevant to the office at issue.
- Don't engage in negotiating or editing of questions with audience members. Make no promises about priority or sequence of questions.
- Listen to the questions the moderator is asking and be on the look-out for topics that haven't yet been covered.
- "Edit" audience questions to make it easier for the moderator and candidates to understand and respond to them.
- Make sure any nearby mike is on mute, as card shuffling or whispers between sorters can be distracting.
- Conduct the question sorting in a discreet manner, without interference by audience members.
- Maintain a neutral demeanor, without facial expression.
- Keep eye contact with the Moderator throughout the forum in the event the Moderator needs clarification on a question.
- Rewrite the question if it is not easy legible by the moderator
- Spell out any acronyms that are used by the questioner
- Ok to write in large print or in highlighter if a particular question is "priority"

Good questions:

- Not hostile.
- Not leading, where it's obvious what answer is preferred.
- Concise but not too general.
- Cover a variety of subjects/issues relevant to the office.
- Do not reference a League position - this is a Voter Service event, not an advocacy event.
- Can address controversial issues.
- Should include "good governance" and basic issues such as "What are your major responsibilities as a representative of the public?"

We try to pair an experienced sorter with a newcomer, with the understanding that they will be continually conferring throughout the question sorting process.

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