

## **LWVMHR Moderating & Sponsorship Guidelines**

### **League of Women Voters of New York State: Guidelines for Candidate Participation:**

1. Constitutional eligibility: The Candidates must meet the requirement so 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. \*
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 shall demonstrate significant voter interest and support by evidence that a formal campaign is being waged; e.g., presence of headquarters, campaign staff, issuance of position papers, campaign appearances, fundraising activities, etc.

\*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.

### **Guidelines for Federal Level Races**

1. Unopposed candidates- A debate may NOT be held.
2. A late candidate- A debate should not start if only one candidate is present: There is no guarantee that the “late” candidate will ever arrive.
3. Candidate canceling due to emergency- A debate must be canceled if only one candidate remains. If more than one candidate is present the debate can proceed.
4. Empty chair debate is not permitted. (If all but one candidate decline the League’s offer to participate in a debate, the debate shall not be held to insure that the League does not promote or advance one candidate over another.)
5. Surrogate standing in for a candidate- No surrogate may stand in for a candidate.

Local and State Races: the same advice applies at the local and state level.

### **Debate Sponsors**

Any organization with an interest in promoting citizen participation, strengthening democracy, putting candidates’ views on the record, and providing voter information in a non-partisan manner is invited to be a sponsor.

**Sponsor responsibilities:** The sponsor will work with the League of Women Voters to insure the following:

1. Candidates will be sent an invitation letter.

2. Candidates who accept must be sent an outline for the program, a description of the format and the rules for the debate.
3. The League will be given candidate names and contact information.
4. Candidates who choose not to attend will be noted at the event.
5. Events that feature missing candidates may not be recorded or televised (per LWVUS rules).
6. Write-in candidates may not participate in these events (per LWVUS rules).
7. The sponsor will be responsible for publicity.
8. Copies of all written materials disseminated to the candidates or the public shall be provided to the League prior to the scheduled date.
9. Participation (or lack thereof) shall be confirmed in writing (or e-mail) to the League by each candidate.

**Additional responsibilities for a successful sponsorship:**

1. Inform the moderator of any contentious issues or anticipated difficulties.
2. Insure the correct pronunciation of all candidates' names.
3. Name signs should be made for each candidate and placed where they are legible and visible to the audience as well as the moderator.
4. A table with microphones and drinking water should be provided for the candidates.
5. A podium, microphone, and drinking water should be provided for the moderator.
6. A donation of \$75.00 to the League of Women Voters of the Mid-Hudson Region (LWVMHR) is recommended.

**Candidate Formats**

The format of the debate is critical to its success. There are many varieties of debate formats. The question-and-answer format with timed responses is the most common. In a "cross-questioning" format, the candidates ask questions of one another while the moderator acts as a referee. Sufficient time should be allowed to plan for the type of format so that all candidates are fully versed in the rules before the event.

The suggested time for a format is 90-120 minutes, depending on the number of candidates.

Campaigning at the event is not allowed but candidates may provide literature and materials on a designated table.

**The League retains the sole property rights for all recording of debates/forums. The recording and/or distribution of these events requires prior league consent.**

**Contact Information**

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