

Guidelines for LWVLC Sponsored Candidate Events

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Candidate Event Goals:

The LWVLC sponsors candidate forums to:

- 1) educate the public on candidates and issues;
- 2) motivate voters to participate in the election; and
- 3) give voters the opportunity to hear the views of legally qualified candidates.

Definitions

Events defined:

Based on Federal Election Commission (FEC) regulations that permit organizations recognized by the IRS as tax exempt under Section 501 (c)(3) (e.g. the Education Funds) or 501 (c)(4) (local LWV chapters) to sponsor candidate events without the event being considered a campaign contribution, LWVLC candidate events must:

- 1) include at least two candidates for the same office (proposed 4/2012: “and same party if primary election”) meeting face-to-face, and
- 2) be structured in such a way that it does not promote or advance one candidate over another.

Event formats:

Interview – a candidate interview is a taped event for broadcast. This is a one-on-one interview with a moderator asking the candidate a set of questions and the candidate having a set time to respond.

Forum – a forum is held in front of a live audience and generally taped for broadcast. A moderator will ask the candidates the same set of questions, with each candidate having the same set time to respond. There are no rebuttals and usually very little interaction between the candidates.

Debate – a debate is held in front of a live audience and generally taped for broadcast. A moderator will ask the candidates the same set of questions, with each candidate having the same set time to respond. Candidates have the opportunity for rebuttals, and this format encourages candidate interaction.

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Legally qualified candidates defined:

Based on Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations of equal opportunity for all qualified candidates, the LWVLC invites all legally qualified candidates to its candidate events. A legally qualified candidate is one who:

- 1) has publicly announced an intention to run; and
- 2) is eligible under the applicable local state, and federal laws to hold the office being sought; and
- 3) either, (a) has qualified to be on the ballot, or (b) has publicly committed to being a write-in candidate, is eligible to be a write-in candidate, and has made a substantial showing that the candidacy is bona fide (by such actions as making campaign speeches, distributing literature, issuing press releases, maintaining a campaign committee, or establishing campaign headquarters); and
- 4) has informed LWVLC of the candidacy.

Event selection and logistics

The League of Women Voters of Lackawanna County, based on its available resources (volunteers/time), will determine:

- 1) whether to hold or not hold a specific sponsored candidate event;
- 2) the actual format of any and all sponsored candidate events; and
- 3) the date, time, and location of any and all sponsored candidate events.

The LWVLC makes every effort to invite all qualified candidates and accommodate them all fairly.

No candidate can negotiate any of the event logistics other than date. The ultimate decisions for the event are determined by the LWVLC, not the candidates.

As the purpose of these events is to educate the public about the race, if a candidate is unable or unwilling to participate, and there are at least two other candidates taking part in the debate:

- 1) the event will be held; and
- 2) the full slate of candidates will be made known to the audience so that they are aware of all candidates for the position.

Event Selection

The type of event held is based on many factors, but primarily on the interest, availability and time of the LWVLC volunteers.

Events may be initiated by the LWVLC or at the request of outside organizations. Requests are fulfilled at the discretion of LWVLC.

LWVLC retains ownership of event type/questions.

The LWVLC will not accept partisan requests, nor have partisan co-sponsors. Co-sponsors must commit to sponsor the event; whether or not a specific candidate is participating. Co-sponsor will share in the responsibility to publicize, help with logistics, and/or formulate question.

Date and time selection

The LWVLC makes every effort to select a date and time that works for all candidates. However, there will be times in which all qualified candidates simply cannot align schedules. The LWVLC will select a date and time that works for the majority of participants.

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Site Selection

The following criteria will be used to identify appropriate location for the each any sponsored candidate event:

- 1) within the election district of the candidates;
- 2) a public building and buildings of nonprofit organizations (i.e. schools, universities, fire houses);
- 3) provides the infrastructure needed for televising the forum;
- 4) is able to seat anticipated audience; and
- 5) is handicap accessible to attendees, and to candidates as needed.

Questions

The questions asked at the event, other than the 1 or 2 question asked by the LWVLC moderator, are reviewed and agreed to by the LWVLC.

Questions may or may not be made known to the candidates prior to the event, at the discretion of the LWVLC. At no time will one candidate be provided the questions when others have not had the same access.

Each candidate will be asked the same set of questions.

Questions are based on issues and/or qualifications relevant to the office for which the candidates are competing. The LWVLC's objective in developing questions is to be fair to all candidates while educating the electorate on candidate issue positions and qualifications.

Copyright

Taped events are the property of the League and the cable company and no unauthorized tape/rebroadcast is permitted. Audio and video recording, and flash photography is prohibited.

Candidate responsibilities and rules

Candidates may bring notes, and/or a writing instrument. No props, signs, or partisan materials are allowed in the event site, nor to be used in the event to answer questions.

Candidates will be required to acknowledge receipt of these rules prior to event.

Revision History:

Version 1.00 Proposed 2/17/01;	Recommended for adoption	4/14/01;	Adopted	5/01
Version 1.03 Proposed: 8/20/05;	Recommended for adoption:	8/20/05;	Adopted:	8/20/05
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