



## **League of Women Voters Rockland County Candidate Debate 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 debates/forums to give voters the opportunity to hear and compare candidates' stands on issues. Questions will be reviewed by a bipartisan panel. As many questions as possible will be asked within the time limits.
  
3. To receive an invitation to appear in an LWVRC debate/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, Rockland BOE Candidate List.).
  
4. The order of speaking will be determined by drawing numbers and the order will alternate or rotate thereafter.
  
5. LWVRC encourages members of the public to submit questions for candidates before the forum. Questions should help to:
  - 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.

### **6. LWV DEBATE TIME ALLOTMENTS**

\*For a two (2) Candidate Debate

Opening Statement	2.0 minutes	Closing Statement	1.5 minutes
Questions	1.5 minutes	Rebuttals (optional)	0.5 minutes (30 sec)

\*Please note this is subject to change if there are more than two candidates.

7. LWVRC 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, the debate will still be held, provided that there are at least two candidates in the race who have responded positively. If a candidate has indicated that she/he will participate and cancels, the debate will continue as long as at least two candidates appear. If there is only one candidate, the Rockland League will determine whether or not to allow a single candidate to have an opportunity to express their positions on issues in their opening and closing statements and in response to questions from the moderator based on criteria that the League has established for that forum. (N.B.-this is a modification of past policy regarding empty chair debates)

11. LWVRC 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.

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 debate if warranted.

17. No campaign signs, clothing or materials will be permitted in the debate hall.

18. The debate will be recorded. It will be available online. You are welcome to put a link on your website.

**LWVRC October 2024**