



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND

STANDARD RULES OF DEBATES / FORUMS

There will be no substitutes or stand-ins for the candidates.

All news releases about the debate will be handled by the sponsoring organization and sent simultaneously to all the candidates. Confidentiality of the debate negotiations will be maintained by the candidates and by the sponsor.

No recording, or flash photography is permitted. Cell phones MUST be silenced.

Photographers and the press will be placed at a reasonable distance from the candidates and microphones to reduce distractions.

A press area will be provided near the entrance to the debate for arrival and departure photographs of the candidates and interviews after the debate if the candidates wish to speak to the press.

Each candidate will have access to the site at a reasonable time period before the debate to check on the lighting, acoustics and set design.

No campaign banners, signs, clothing, buttons, literature handouts or other campaign paraphernalia will be allowed in the debate hall.

The audience will be asked to refrain from applauding or in other ways demonstrating support or nonsupport for a candidate.

There will be no audience reaction shots during the debate, although panning of the audience before and after the debate may be allowed.

The winner of a coin toss / random draw on the day of the debate will have first choice of podium or stool position. The candidates will remain behind the podiums at all times during the debate. Stools / tables will be provided. Bottled water will be provided to each candidate.

The candidates will bring no notes or props. Each candidate will be provided with a legal pad and pens for taking notes during the debate.

There will be a coin toss / random draw to determine candidates' order of taking the first question. Questions will proceed to the right of the stage from the moderator thereafter unless a question is directed to a specific candidate, in which case, answering will resume in the order it was suspended.

Time limits on responses will be strictly observed. A timekeeper will hold cards, visible to the speaker, indicating how much time remains. When the "stop card" is shown, the speaker must end his/her speech within 10 seconds.

In general, candidates have 1:30 minutes to respond to each question. The moderator may reduce this in the event of a large number of candidates or in the interest of time, but it must be stated clearly and apply to all candidates equally. If another candidate wants a rebuttal, it is 30 seconds in length.

The moderator will have the responsibility for enforcing time limits. The moderator also will have the authority to interrupt the proceedings to enforce the ground rules and format that were agreed to by the candidates.

The moderator may restate the question.

The panelists and moderator may interrupt the candidates if they believe the candidates are straying from the subject.

The candidates will not interrupt one another.

The candidates' closing statements should be significantly related to the matters debated previously. Because there is no opportunity for rebuttal following the closing statements, candidates should refrain from personal attacks or charges.

Candidates are invited to remain for a reception and a news media availability following the debate.