



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

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LWVME & LWVME EDUCATION FUND CANDIDATE DEBATE POLICY

(Amended and re-adopted by the League and by the Ed. Fund 3/12/16)

The League of Women Voters of Maine Education Fund intends to sponsor nonpartisan candidate debates for the offices of United States House of Representatives in the fall of 2016. Such debates will provide fair and impartial treatment of candidates, will not promote or advance one candidate over another, and will make no reference to an issue advocacy position taken by the League of Women Voters of Maine.

The debates are designed to meet four goals:

1. to educate the public about a broad range of issues in the campaigns,
2. to provide an opportunity for voters to hear candidates discuss those issues face-to-face,
3. to stimulate public interest and participation in the elections, and
4. to provide an opportunity for the candidates to engage their constituents.

We believe that these purposes are best served by including those candidates with significant district-wide voter support and interest. After careful consideration, the League of Women Voters of Maine Education Fund has adopted criteria it believes are nonpartisan, capable of objective application, and understandable to candidates and the public.

To be invited to participate in a League-sponsored debate for Governor, United States Senate or United States House of Representatives, a candidate must:

1. win the nomination of his/her party in the primary election
or
2. qualify for the ballot as an unenrolled or independent candidate and receive support of at least three (3) percent of those polled in an independent, credible, district-wide professional poll. Such a poll must be taken after the primary election and its results must be available on or before August 30, 2016. The poll cannot be one commissioned by a party or a candidate.

Invited candidates must e-mail or send a letter of intent to participate no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled debate.

If the debate is to be broadcast, invited candidates must sign the broadcast agreement prior to the debate or they will not be able to participate—no exceptions. Any audio or video tape of a debate

must be broadcast in its entirety unless the broadcaster is a member of the media using the tape in a bona fide newscast.

If one or more of the invited candidates declines to attend (or fails to appear at) the debate, the debate may go forward only if at least two of the candidates for that office accept the invitation and attend the debate. The League Ed. Fund will not sponsor debates in elections where the candidate is unopposed.

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

The League may opt to cosponsor a debate with other organizations as long as those potential partner organizations do not endorse candidates or have a 501(c)(4) affiliate organization that endorses candidates.