THE ROAD TO THE VOTING BOOTH
Part II-A

A Toolkit for Candidate Events
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CANDIDATE EVENT ESSENTIALS

EVERY CANDIDATE EVENT - REGARDLESS OF WHAT IT IS CALLED - MUST COMPLY WITH WRITTEN POLICY

1. Develop a comprehensive written Candidate Event Policy that is reviewed annually by the Board that includes:
   - Nonpartisan statement (delete all periods following bullets)
   - Adherence to Empty Chair Policy: Two or More Candidates for Each Race Must Be (LWVNY adopted policy July 2017).
   - Recording policy.
   - Criteria for candidate inclusion (LWVNY recommends only including candidates on ballot).
   - Policy on distribution of campaign literature.

2. Send the Candidate Event Policy to candidates with the invitation to event.
   - Obtain acknowledgement of receipt of Candidate Event Policy signed by candidate and campaign manager.

3. If sponsoring a primary candidate event, you MUST OFFER to sponsor a candidate event for any other party holding primary for same race (LWVNY adopted policy July 2017)

4. Careful planning of event by local League requires attention to site, moderator, date, venue, adherence to nonpartisan and Empty Chair policy.

5. Publicity must include a Nonpartisan statement and the Empty Chair policy.

6. Display signage with Nonpartisan statement the evening of event.

7. If event is cancelled because of an Empty Chair reason, (only one candidate for a race shows up), publicize this fact.
GUIDELINES FOR CANDIDATE EVENTS

A. The Purpose of League-Sponsored Candidate Events

1. To educate the public about the 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
4. To provide an opportunity for the public to engage their candidates

The League believes these purposes are best served by adoption of nonpartisan, objective, and understandable written criteria for candidate inclusion. To that end, the League will apply the following guidelines in determining whether candidates have the right to participate in League sponsored candidate events.

B. Guidelines for Candidate Participation

If the date for certification has not yet or arrived or because a legal challenge of one or more candidates has delayed certification, the League shall exercise its good faith judgment about which candidates to invite and may invite any candidate whom it believes has a reasonable possibility of obtaining ballot access. However, only those candidates actually on the ballot can participate at the event.

C. Empty Chair Events

The League’s policy for all candidate events is as follows:

- Empty Chair policy: Two or More Candidates for Each Race Must be Present, and
- Candidate events must be staged in a way that it is fair to all participating candidates, i.e., the format does not promote or give an advantage to one candidate over the other(s).

In referring to this policy, once the concept is clear, you may elect to refer to it as either:

- Empty Chair Policy or,
- Two Or More Candidates for Each Race Must be Present; or the longer version,
- Empty Chair: Two or More Candidates for Each Race Must be Present.

A League cannot hold an event unless there are at least two candidates "face to face" (there cannot be a substitute for a candidate): therefore, with only one candidate the League has no option but to cancel. In the case of an event involving only one race, if only one candidate agrees to participate, that event needs to be cancelled. In the case where there are multiple races, only the segments where there is one candidate need to be cancelled, but the event can take place with the races where there are two or more candidates. The Moderator will explain at beginning of program our policy and at the conclusion of the event, allow time for the candidate to mingle with the audience.
D. **Multiple Seats with Multiple candidates** may present unique challenges. Please call LWVNYS Voter Service Chair, Judie Gorenstein, 914-231-5534, judieL728@aol.com.

E. **Candidate Event Co-Sponsorship Guidelines**
   It is important that the League of Women Voters maintain its nonpartisan position when co-sponsoring a Candidate Event. The first step in agreeing to co-sponsorship is to review the other organization’s mission statement to ensure that its goals are consistent with those of the League.

F. **League Member Serves As Moderator**
   The Moderator of a Candidate Event manages the event and has to remain in control of the event.
SAMPLE VIDEO-RECORDING POLICY FOR CANDIDATES AND VENUES

a. The content of this forum is owned by the League of Woman Voters of ________________

b. Only the videographer authorized by the League may record this forum.

c. Any use of the authorized recording requires the advanced approval of the League of Women Voters of ________________, except other local leagues may post the recordings on their websites. Only licensed media, including TV, radio, and newspapers, are entitled by FCC regulations to air portions of this recording. Anyone else who airs this recording may do so only in its entirety.

d. No one is permitted to edit footage for campaign purposes or any other purpose.

e. The League of Women Voters of _______________ will post recordings of the (Candidate Event) in its entirety on League media.

f. All party chairs and candidates will sign a release form stating that they have read and accepted the conditions stated above.

Agreed and accepted by

__________________________  ________________________  ________________
Candidate Name             Candidate Signature       Date
SAMPLE CALENDAR FOR PLANNING A CANDIDATE EVENT

June       Board decision to hold an event and approval of basic policies made on recommendation of Voter Service Committee

Summer    Meeting of the Voter Service Committee to establish a tentative calendar
          Create the necessary committees, assign responsibilities.
          Research availability of meeting dates, sites, TV, cable, radio.
          Invite all potential candidates after they have filed with the Board of Elections.
          Discuss formats and ground rules.
          Obtain the Moderator and work with the Moderator in planning the format.
          Decide on a site and reserve potential dates.

September   Bring committee recommendations to the first board meeting for confirmation.
             Board decision on LWV publication display and policy on candidates’ literature.
             Correspond with candidates re: place, time, format, ground rules and campaign literature.
             Decide on need for a printed program/Voters Guide, refreshments.

Early Oct  Inform board of committee progress, request assistance with questions for candidates.
            First press release on social media by Public Relations Chair.
            If there is a Voters Guide or program, deadline to receive biographical information from candidates

Mid Oct    If there is to a Voters Guide or program, prepare the copy and deliver to printer.
            Continue to work out details of event.
            Public Relations Chair continues to issue press releases on confirmed participants.

Late Oct    Provide final format to Moderator and timekeepers.
            Completion of all committee business.
            Final check with candidates, Moderator, timekeepers, co-sponsors.

Night/Day of Candidates Event:
            Set up platform, podium, table name signs, banners, refreshment area, parking signs, direction signs inside the facility, water for participants.
            Check lighting, sound system with technicians before the meeting.
            Final check with committee members and others assigned tasks.

November  Evaluation
SAMPLE SAVE THE DATE LETTER FOR A CANDIDATE EVENT

The League of Women Voters of ________________ (and add any co-sponsor) is/are planning a "Meet the Candidates Night," for [INSERT RACE(S)] in the [INSERT NAME] election to be held at the [ INSERT PLACE] on either [INSERT DATES]. We are inviting you to participate in our event.

Only candidates whose names are on the ________________ County Board of Elections ballot may participate in the event. This will include the candidates of major and minor parties in the district. We are aware that the ballot has not yet been certified but we are sending this information to potential candidates so that you can enter our event in your calendar.

We will circulate Candidate Event rules to all candidates prior to the event which will include our “empty chair” policy that states at least two candidates for each race must appear for the event to be held. Prior to the event, we ask that you agree to and sign off on the rules.

The League of Women Voters is a nonprofit, nonpartisan political organization whose primary purpose is to promote the informed and active participation of citizens in their government. League-sponsored candidate events serve to: educate the public, motivate voters to participate in the elections, and give voters a chance to hear the views of the candidates. The League never supports or opposes candidates or political parties.

We look forward to your participation in this event. By sharing your views with the electorate, they will be able to make an educated choice on their ballots. Please confirm your availability for one or both of the possible event dates.

Please respond to me as soon as possible by phone or email. The League of Women Voters of ___________ (and the co-sponsor __________) look forward to hosting this event and widely publicizing it to voters, and all other interested residents.

Sincerely yours,

[contact person, contact info]
SAMPLE INVITATION LETTER TO CANDIDATES
TO CANDIDATE EVENT – Primary Election

Re: LWV “Meet the Candidates Night,” [date time and place]

Dear (CANDIDATE NAME),

The League of Women Voters of ______________ (“LWV”) is pleased to invite you to participate in a “Meet the Candidates Night.” We are inviting all ________ Party certified candidates approved to run for the office of [insert office] to participate.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that promotes participation of citizens in government. The League does not support any political party or candidate. The League of Women Voters has had a long and successful history of running “Meet the Candidate Nights” throughout the country for many years. This forum will provide the public with the opportunity to hear the candidates’ views on issues important to the constituents of [the ___rd Congressional District] and to generate excitement for getting out the vote.

Enclosed is a copy of the “Ground Rules for League of Women Voters Candidate Nights.” Every effort is made to give each candidate the opportunity to express his/her views. We look forward to your agreement to participate in the forum, and to your acceptance of our rules. Please confirm your participation and sign your agreement to our procedures. The signed agreement should be sent to [address_________] no later than_________________________.

We hope this will facilitate your preparation and provide a framework for your interaction with the audience.

We are looking forward to meeting you at [address_______], no later than _____pm. If you have any questions, feel free to call or e-mail us. Our contact information is below.

Thank for your willingness to participate.

Sincerely yours,

[contact person, contact info]

Enc.: Ground Rules for League of Women Voters Candidate Nights
SAMPLE INVITATION LETTER TO CANDIDATES
TO CANDIDATE EVENT – General Election

[Times limits and other details are suggestions only.]

To [Candidate] for __________ Race

Re: [Event Name e.g. Meet the Candidates’ Night] [date]

Dear (Candidate Name),

The League of Women Voters of __________________________ invites you to [Event Name] on [day, date and time]. We are inviting all of the candidates on the ballot for the [offices]. The event will be held at [place], and will be open to all members of the public and the media.

The event will be divided into _______________ segments, with [describe order of debates] ending at approximately _____p.m.

Please note:

- Our Empty Chair policy requires that two or more candidates for each race must be present.
- Some events will be videoed and the video will be made available on the League website.

We will start the evening with opening remarks from the Moderator. Our format for each segment thereafter will be as follows:

- Candidates’ opening statements of no more than 2 minutes
- Moderator will ask written questions collected from the audience
- Candidates’ answers will be no more than 1½ minutes
- Each candidate will be given two red cards to be used in the Question and Answer period. Each card will allow an additional 1½ minutes to add to your response or to respond to something another candidate has said. Red cards may not be used during the opening or closing statements.
- Candidates’ closing statements of no more than 1 minute each

Candidates and audience members will be strongly encouraged to focus on the issues, not personalities. No personal attacks will be allowed. Candidates are
asked not to distribute campaign literature inside the event venue. Campaign signs, hats, pins, etc. are also not allowed.

We request that candidates arrive no later than ______ p.m..

Thank you to those who have already agreed to attend. Please confirm your attendance and acceptance of the rules by email or phone call to [contact person, contact info and last date to respond].

We look forward to your agreement to participate so that voters can make an informed decision on November___th.

Sincerely yours,

[name of contact person and contact info]

The League of Women Voters is a nonprofit, nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active citizen participation in government, and works to increase understanding of major public policy issues. The League does not support or oppose any political candidate or party. This has been League policy for 100 years!
SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCING A CANDIDATE EVENT

For Immediate Release
Date ______
lwv.org (email address)

Contact: _________
(XXX) XXX-XXXX
xxxxx@gmail.com

NEWS RELEASE

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ____________
INVITES PUBLIC TO LWV [CANDIDATE EVENT]
[insert day, date, time and place]

To enable voters to hear the candidates and question them about important issues in the Tuesday, [insert date] Election, the League of Women Voters of ____________ is sponsoring a debate/forum/event on [date, time and place.] At least two candidates for each race must be present or that portion of the program will be cancelled. [LIST CANDIDATES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER]

Event format consists of the candidates making timed opening and closing statements and answering questions submitted by a panel of local media and the League, as well as by the audience.

The event is organized by the League of Women Voters of ____________.

Further information is available from the League at [PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL.]

###
SAMPLE BIOGRAPHICAL DATA REQUEST
for Voters Guide or Program, if used

Name: _____________________________________________________________

Residence: __________________________________________________________

 Post office address (if different from above): _____________________________

Telephone number (internal use only): _________________________________

Present occupation: _________________________________________________

Office sought: _______________________________________________________

Location: (city, town, ward, district) _________________________________

Term of office: ____________________________Salary: ______________________

Party designation(s): _______________________________________________

Incumbent: Yes_____No______

OPTIONAL
Education (degrees, dates, names of school): ____________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

Personal: ___________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

On the back of this form, please provide a statement in 50 words or less of your special qualifications, accomplishments, and goals. This material will appear in a printed program/Voters Guide. The League of Women Voters reserves the right to edit statements that exceed the word limit.

Information released by: _____________________________ Date: ______
SAMPLE GROUND RULES FOR A CANDIDATE EVENT
ORAL or WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF _____________ CANDIDATES’ NIGHT
[DATE TIME AND PLACE]

GROUND RULES

Please arrive early and introduce yourself to LWV personnel so that drawing by lot may be done and timekeeping procedures may be explained. **There will be no substitutes or stand-ins for the candidates.** Campaign literature, banners or signs will not be permitted.

**Drawing by Lot:** Candidates will draw numbers to determine the order or presentation of opening and closing statements. (The League will decide if the opening and closing statements are given in the same order or reversed.) If there are two candidates, the candidate drawing #1 will speak first for the opening and closing statements; the candidate drawing #2 will speak second for the opening and closing statements.

**Meeting Format:** The format for the meeting is on a separate sheet.

**Introductions:** The Moderator will introduce the candidates using the title of “Mr.” and “Ms.”

**Opening Statement:** Each candidate will have a maximum of two minutes to present an opening statement.

**Question/Answer Session:** A question and answer period for each office will include questions from the League and the audience. Before questions are taken from the audience, the League may ask a question of all the candidates. The questions will not be made available to the candidates before the forum.

**Oral Questions from the Audience:** Members of the audience will identify themselves by name and specify to whom they wish to address their question. All questions will be oral. Questions will be brief (no more than one minute) and pertinent. Speeches from the floor will not be permitted. No member of the audience will be allowed to ask a second question until all other questions have been entertained. The Moderator will have the right to rule on all questions and may restate the question. All questions must be answerable by all candidates, and each candidate will have the opportunity to answer each question.

-OR-

**Written Questions from the Audience:** Cards will be distributed by volunteers from the League of Women Voters to the audience for questions. League members will collect and vet the cards to make sure that they are legible, relevant, and not repetitive, or abusive. All questions must be answerable by all candidates, and each candidate will have the opportunity to answer each question.
Answers from Candidates: Responses to questions will be limited to a maximum of two minutes. The candidates may not interrupt each other, or make personal attacks.

Closing Statement: Closing statements are limited to one minute and should be related to matters covered at the forum.

Time Keeping: A timekeeper will hold up signs signaling candidates when “1 minute” remains, when “30 seconds” remain, and when to “STOP”. Candidates are expected to respect and comply with time limits and the Moderator will strictly enforce those limits.

Physical Arrangements: Candidates will sit and speak from a table on the dais. Microphones will be available.

Applause: The audience will be asked to hold their applause until the end of each segment of the program.

Empty Chair Debates: The LWV does not permit ‘empty chair’ debates; at least 2 candidates for each race must be present.
SAMPLE FORMAT FOR A CANDIDATE EVENT

7:30  Welcome, opening remarks, introduction of the Moderator by the president or Voter Service chair.

7:35  Moderator introduces the candidates and explains the format:

   1. Each candidate will make a two (or other time limit to be determined by the hosting League) minute opening statement; order determined by drawing lots before the meeting.

   2. Timekeeper will hold up sign when 30 seconds remain and stand when the time is up.

   3. After all opening statements, questions will be taken from the audience.

   4. Applause should be held until the end of the forum, leaving more time for questions.

7:38  Opening Statements.

7:52  Moderator explains rules governing the question period.

   If Oral Questions:

   1. Questioners will be asked to stand (or go to the microphone), state their name and address, succinctly state question. All candidates may answer all questions.

   2. Issues, not personalities, are to be addressed; no personal/abusive questions are to be asked.

   3. Speeches from the floor will not be permitted. Questions are limited to one minute.

   4. The Moderator has the right to rule on all questions.

   5. Candidates will be limited to answers not exceeding two (or other time limit) minutes.

   If Written Questions:

   1. Cards will have been collected from audience members and vetted by League members to make sure they are legible, relevant, and not repetitive, or abusive.

   2. Cards will continue to be collected during the event; audience members will be asked to raise their hands if they have a card to submit.

   3. The order of responses for each question will be rotated so that everyone gets a chance to respond first.
7:55  Questions from the audience.

8:30  Closing statements; each candidate may have up to two (or other time limit) minutes for a closing statement.

8:45  Moderator closes the meeting with a reminder to vote on Election Day.

**SAMPLE PANEL FORMAT**

LWV President or Chair opens the meeting and introduces the Moderator.

The Moderator introduces the panel members and the candidates and outlines the format.

**Part I:**  Opening statements

**Part II:**  Questions from the panel

The same question may be asked of each candidate with a two (or other time limit) minute response; each candidate will have the opportunity to respond and the order of responses will be rotated for each question.

**Part III:**  Closing

**Variation:**  Plan for questions from the audience; limit questions to one minute. Questions may be directed to one or all candidates, but all candidates may respond.
SAMPLE MODERATOR SCRIPT FOR A CANDIDATE EVENT

My name is _________________. I am a member of the League of Women Voters of _________________. I live in the town of ______and I will be your Moderator tonight.

Tonight is your opportunity to listen to all the ___(insert race)________________ Candidates who are on the ballot and to hear their views on the issues. (If this has been arranged: Note that we are live streaming this evening’s event to an at home.

Before we begin tonight I want to remind everyone to please turn off all personal electronic equipment.

The League is a nonpartisan, political organization dedicated to the informed and responsible participation of citizens in government. The League never supports or opposes any political party or candidate; this has been our policy for 100 years. Membership is open to anyone who is 16-years and older. Please consider joining the League.

The League has produced an online voters’ guide including statements from all the candidates in the _____________races. All candidates who responded to the League queries are included on our website.[Mention VOTE411.org.]

I realize that many of the people in the audience tonight may support one candidate over another. However, I will insist that the candidates and the audience treat each other with respect. Personal attacks will not be allowed.

If the audience is submitting questions on cards: (NB: Some of the cards will have already been collected.):  
Thank you for submitting your questions. We will continue to collect your cards during the event. Please raise your hand when you have one for us to collect. We are reviewing them to avoid repetitive or non-relevant questions. The order of candidate responses will be rotated, so that everyone gets a chance to respond first.

If the audience is asking questions orally:  
It is the job of the audience to listen and to ask questions at the appropriate time. We ask that you all listen respectfully to each candidate's answers. Please try not to repeat a subject that has been asked before. In the interest of time, please hold applause to the end of the event. Bear in mind that we may not have time for all the questions. This meeting will conclude at 9:00 p.m. or sooner.

The Timekeeper for this evening’s event is seated in the front row. She/He will hold up cards for the candidates to glance at. Green means 1minute left; Yellow means 30 seconds and Red means time is up.

The format for this evening will be as follows:
Opening statements from candidates (no more than 2 minutes) followed by the audience’s questions.

The audience is reminded to ask a question, not make a statement. With that in mind, we remind you that there is a 1 minute limit for posing questions. Please remember to make your questions pertinent to the office, and addressed to all candidates. If a question is directed to one candidate, the other candidates may respond if they wish. Each person may ask one question and must wait until all others have had a chance before asking a second question, if there is still time. If you want to ask a question please come forward and wait in line. [If this has been arranged; the at home audience may type in their question as we go. It will be put in a queue and will be asked by a league member when their turn comes]

- Questions will be directed to candidates in rotation, so that everyone gets a chance to respond first.
- Candidates have been given two red cards to be used in the Question and Answer period. Each card will allow an additional 1½ minutes to add to your remarks or to respond to something another candidate has said. It may not be used during opening or closing statements.
- Closing statements will be no more than 1 minute each.

The candidates for _________(insert race) in alphabetical order are:
1. _______________________
2. _______________________
3. _______________________

It is time for their opening statements of no more than 2 minutes. The candidates drew lots to determine their order. The first speaker during opening statements will also be first during closing statements. We will hear from _________ first.

Now we will hear from ______________.
Now we will hear from ______________.

Now we will get to the questions from the audience. Candidates are reminded that they have 1½ minutes to answer. A candidate is not required to answer if he/she does not wish to.

We will start with ___(use your Grid) … Now we will hear from … etc.

(At 8:45, announce that)
“This will be the last question before closing statements”.

Before we hear the closing statements, I wish to thank you all for demonstrating your civic concern by attending this event. And I want to thank the candidates and the audience for the respect you showed throughout the evening. Don’t forget to pick up the League information from the literature table.

There is information about the ballot and budget proposals in the online guide at ______.
And don’t forget to vote on Tuesday, _____________. The polls will be open from ____________. Again thank you for coming.

SAMPLE GRID FOR QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1</th>
<th>Candidate #1</th>
<th>Candidate #2</th>
<th>Candidate #3</th>
<th>Candidate #4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Etc.

SAMPLE CO-SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT FOR CANDIDATE EVENT

[This agreement may be in the form of a letter from one sponsor to the other. Both organizations should retain a signed copy until after the forum.]

This document signifies agreement between the Co-Sponsor __________ and The League of Women Voters of ________________ to jointly sponsor a School Board Candidates’ Forum. Further, this outlines the division of responsibilities previously agreed upon.

The meeting will be held on (date), at (time). at (place).

Both sponsors have agreed not to endorse any candidate prior to or immediately after the forum.

The Co-Sponsor will:
- Provide a written invitation to each candidate to be sent by e-mail as an attachment.
- Accompanying the invitation will be an acceptance form.
  - The candidate will be instructed to print and retain a copy of the acceptance and return a hard copy to the League, or scan and send by e-mail to the League.
- Accompanying the invitation will be the Ground Rules.
- All communication will be sent by e-mail.
- All publicity will include the name of the Co-Sponsor and the League.
- Provide paper and pencils for questions from the audience, or provide mics for questions from the audience, depending upon how the Co-Sponsor wants questions to be asked of candidates.
- Provide microphones for the Moderator and candidates.
- Provide identification cards (tent cards) for each candidate at the table so the audience knows the names of all of the candidates.
- Provide water for all candidates.

The League will:
- Provide the Moderator and the timekeeper.
- Formulate equitable ground rules.
- Provide a committee to formulate questions for the candidates.
- Provide a committee to collect and screen questions submitted in writing by the audience.
- Provide refreshments for a social hour that will follow the forum.

______________________________________________________________
Chairperson, Co-sponsor Date

______________________________________________________________
Chairperson, League of Women Voters Date
SAMPLE STATEMENT CANCELING A PRIMARY CANDIDATE EVENT DUE TO EMPTY CHAIR POLICY NOT BEING MET

Statement to be read when only one of the invited candidates is present at the Forum or when none of the candidates is present.

The League of Women Voters of _________ regrets that we are unable to hold our Candidates’ Forum for candidates running in the June 25 Democratic/Republican Primary for ________office. In accordance with our Empty Chair Policy, the League of Women Voters cannot hold a Candidates’ Forum when there is only one candidate present.

__________, ____________, and __________ all confirmed their intention to participate in tonight’s Forum. At this time, _______ and ________ are no-shows [or only one candidate is present] so in accordance with League rules we must cancel the Forum [this segment of the Forum].

The League of Women Voters of _________is deeply disappointed that residents of _________will not able to hear from all the candidates in the Democratic/Republican Primary for ________ office. A Candidates’ Forum is a unique opportunity for voters to learn about who will be on their ballots. So when candidates decide not to attend or participate, it is a lost opportunity for all voters. Declining to participate in a Candidates’ Forum to discuss the issues that matter most to voters is contrary to the public interest and it is the voters who are harmed. We like to think of the Candidates’ Forum as a job interview. After all, the winner of the election contest will be competing to work for all of us.

We believe it is important that all candidates participate in League of Women Voters of __________activities intended to promote an informed and engaged electorate.

We are grateful to our moderator, ___________to __________Community Media, and to the __________Public Library for their help in making this evening possible.

Candidate ___________is present this evening. Mr/Ms ___________please identify yourself. You are welcome to remain and talk to the audience after the conclusion of this forum.
SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE CANCELING A CANDIDATE EVENT DUE TO EMPTY CHAIR POLICY NOT BEING MET

For Immediate Release
Date ______
lwv.org (email address)

Contact: __________
(____) _____-______
xxxxxx@gmail.com

NEWS RELEASE

Candidates Forum for NYS AD ___ Election Canceled by
League of Women Voters of _________

The League of Women Voters of _________ has canceled the Candidates Forum for contestants in the New York State Assembly District ___ election originally scheduled for Tuesday, October 23rd. _________ accepted the League’s invitation to participate in the Forum. The other candidate, __________ did not respond to invitations to participate by the League’s deadline.

“The Candidates Forums are a key element of the League’s mission to promote an informed and engaged electorate. They are opportunities for voters to learn about who will be on their ballots. So when a candidate decides not to participate it is a lost opportunity for all voters” said __________, President of the League of Women Voters of _________.

“A candidate declining an invitation to discuss the issues that matter most to voters is contrary to the public interest and it is the voters who are harmed.”

The League of Women Voters takes no position on candidates for public office or on political parties. The League works to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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