



Debate Rules

1. ***Introduction of the debate:*** The moderator will begin the debate promptly at the agreed starting time. The debate will run for 60 minutes. The moderator will quickly introduce the rules of the debate to the audience so they will know whether the candidates conform to the rules.
2. ***Opening Statements:*** Each candidate will deliver an opening statement of up to 2 minutes to introduce themselves to the audience and to explain why they are running for the office in question. A coin toss will be held in advance of the debate to determine who delivers the first opening statement. The individual who delivers the first opening statement will also deliver the first closing statement.
3. ***Question Timing:*** After opening statements, the moderator will pose questions. Each candidate will respond to each question. Each candidate will be given 1.5 minutes (90 seconds) for an initial response to each question. At the moderator's sole discretion, the moderator may offer the candidates an opportunity to each offer a 30 second rebuttal. Examples of times when the moderator *may* choose to offer the candidates rebuttal time include, but are not limited to: opposing points of view by the candidates, an attack on the other candidate, need for more time for candidates to express their positions, or continuation of a good conversation that draws distinctions between the two candidates.
4. ***Time Keeper:*** A designated time keeper will indicate to the candidates when they have 30 seconds left in their response and when they have 10 seconds left in their response. These signals must be designed to be visible to the candidates and should also be designed to be visible to the audience.
5. ***Alternating Responses:*** Whoever gives the second opening statement will give the initial response to the first question. Thereafter, the candidates will alternate giving the first response to a question so neither candidate will be required to give the first answer to a question on consecutive questions.
6. ***Question Development:*** The moderator will develop a list of questions in advance of the debate. These questions are not to be disclosed to the candidates in advance of the debate. Where feasible, the core content of a majority of the questions should come from citizens. It is preferable to questions to be solicited from citizens in advance of the debate. The



moderator may edit the questions for clarity, quality, and for balance. The moderator will select questions on a variety of topics that span the issue agenda for the office in question. While not preferable, questions can also be solicited from the audience as they arrive at a debate. If questions are solicited from the audience as they arrive, the questions must be written (assistance can be offered for anyone who has challenges with writing) and a designated individual who is unaffiliated with the campaigns will be assigned to review the questions and, in conjunction with the moderator, sort them by topic and select questions on a variety of topics. These questions may be edited for clarity, quality, and balance. The moderator may supplement questions from the public with his/her own questions.

7. ***Closing Statements:*** When approximately 5 minutes remain in the allotted time for the debate, the moderator will conclude the question and answer period and invite the candidates to deliver closing statements. The closing statements allow each candidate approximately 2 minutes, but may be shortened to 90 seconds or lengthened to 2 minutes and 30 seconds minutes to fit the time remaining in the debate.
8. Candidates should be provided with a copy of these rules at least 48 hours in advance of the debate.

Additional items to consider:

- Each candidate will be allotted the same amount of time for a pre-debate meet & greet with attendees from 6:00 pm to 6:45 pm. The same rules apply as for County Convention.
- Each candidate will be allowed a blank notepad and writing implements so they can make notes and help organize their thoughts.
- Each candidate will be allotted equal time to speak with the media after the debate has ended.