

## DEDICATED TO EMPOWERING VOTERS AND DEFENDING DEMOCRACY

### What is a Candidate Forum?

A candidate forum is an event where candidates answer uniform, vetted questions about their background, motivations, and goals as they pertain to the office they seek. Moderated by trained League members, these events are recorded and shared in the community, often in collaboration with other nonpartisan groups.

### Why Participate in Forums?

**FAIR.** LWVMN's forums maintain a strong nonpartisan tradition, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties. We focus on vital issues of concern to members and the public.

**TRUSTED.** Our nonpartisan brand is the "gold standard" for producing candidate forums. We prioritize fairness, respect, and addressing questions of top community interest without "gotcha" moments or political theater.

**EXPERIENCED.** LWV has been hosting forums for many decades. Our practices and standards are well established and are part of our brand. We take pride in producing them and are serious about the quality from start to finish.



### Forums Benefit Candidates

**EXPOSURE.** Recorded forums, shared online, become a critical resource for voters and the media alike, providing candidates with valuable exposure. In 2023 our forums were viewed over 40,000 times.

**NEUTRAL GROUND.** Forums offer candidates the opportunity to share their views and goals while participating on neutral ground.

**DEMONSTRATE CONCERN.** Participation demonstrates a candidate's commitment to issues affecting voters, fostering a sense of care, civility and responsibility.

### Most Importantly, Forums Benefit Voters

**INFORMED DECISIONS.** Voters deserve to know where candidates stand on issues. Forums empower voters to make informed decisions at the ballot box.

**ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY.** Forums provide a platform for voters to ask questions and get to know the individuals seeking to represent them, fostering engagement, connection, and civic participation.

*Questions or concerns,  
reach out any time!*

**Amy Perna**  
LWVMN Associate Director  
Direct | 651-424-4603  
Email | [aperna@lwvmn.org](mailto:aperna@lwvmn.org)

*League of Women Voters of Minnesota, founded in 1919, is a nonpartisan organization with 35 local Leagues and over 2,200 members statewide. We are dedicated to empowering voters and defending democracy.*

## PREPARING FOR A FORUM

### How do I prepare for a forum?

- Prepare opening and closing statements, usually 1-2 minutes (check your forum rules sent with your invitation).
  - Opening statements often include why you chose to run, what your priority issues are, your qualifications, and some background information about you.
  - Closing statements often include thanking citizens for their interest, why voters would choose to vote for you, and reiterating your highest priority issues.
- Questions from the audience can be predicted, to a certain extent. Hot and emerging issues might be learned by:
  - Listening to citizens as you door knock and talk to voters.
  - Attending meetings of the board or council you are running for.
  - Reading the minutes of past meetings.
  - Asking elected officials, staff and involved citizens.
- Research various points of view and determine your position.
- Prepare talking points to use if the issue comes up in the forum.

### How will the forum be run?

- Your invitation to participate in the LWV forum will spell out the specific format including timing of the opening and closing statements and questions.
- Your invitation will include the **Candidate Participation Policy**, which gives some additional guidelines for the forum and your participation, and can also be found online at [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i8mXK\\_gEApI5dvW2myHUSUKqtGHQtpbf/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i8mXK_gEApI5dvW2myHUSUKqtGHQtpbf/view).
- The Moderator, who may come from outside your district, will explain the seating arrangement and how candidate response order will vary. The first speaker will rotate for each response.
- The Moderator will give an introduction to the forum and ask for opening statements.
- The live audience will write questions on cards and hand them to a question facilitator.
- Question facilitators will organize and consolidate the questions and give them to the Moderator.
- A timekeeper will sit in the front row and hold up a “15 second” and “30 second” card when time is running out and a “Stop” card when you must quickly complete your sentence.

### How does LWV choose which questions to ask?

All questions must be submitted in writing in advance of or during the forum and are submitted to an impartial committee familiar with the issues. The committee will review the questions, or create new ones, based on these criteria:

- It is our intention, in good faith, to select questions that represent the interests expressed by the voters.
- Questions should focus on the future and not be based on hindsight.
- Questions must be on subjects relevant to the forum, race or elected office being sought.
- Questions that are personal in nature, embarrassing, hostile, or unclear in intent will not be asked.
- All questions must be addressed to all candidates.
- Questions may be consolidated or edited.
- The Moderator will make the final selection of questions being asked.