

You are Invited to Join Us in Caucus to Consider the Presidential Debates in 2016



Many Americans believe that the League of Women Voters sponsors the Presidential Debates. The truth is that the League has not participated in the debates since 1984. Beginning in 1988 the Presidential debates have been controlled by the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD), a private corporation controlled by the two major parties, who set the rules in their favor, including limiting the role of the moderator, packing the hall with their supporters, and excluding independent and third party candidates.

LWV Mason County is presenting a Resolution to support the idea of holding LWV-sponsored Presidential debates again beginning in 2016. We hope this Resolution will start a dialogue among League members nationwide and will encourage members of the national LWV Board to adopt their own Resolution to officially reinstate the debates.

Please join us for a discussion that will include a video of the 1988 press conference of League President Nancy Neuman explaining their decision not to participate in CPD-run debates, discussion of the pros and cons of the Resolution, and brainstorming where we go from here. The Resolution will be brought up for vote on Sunday.

Whereas, the LWVUS *Position on Process* calls for the League to be involved in activities that “Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct-popular-vote. Support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. Support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates”; and

Whereas, the LWVUS *Position on Citizen’s Rights* calls for the League to be involved in activities that “Protect the citizen’s right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision-making”; and

Whereas, the LWVUS has a distinguished history of sponsoring candidate debates including national Presidential debates in 1976, 1980 and 1984; and

Whereas, in 1988 the major parties formed a Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) which instituted policies that forced the LWVUS to withdraw from a role in the debates and has resulted in a situation where the CPD has strictly limited the role of journalist moderators, avoided addressing controversial issues, and failed to provide a non-partisan forum open to third party and independent candidates for President; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the League of Women Voters of Washington meeting in Convention, May-June 2013, send a letter to the LWVUS Board within one month, regarding the following:

- * We respectfully but urgently request that LWVUS Board consider reinstating Presidential Debates in 2016, inviting all national candidates who meet qualifications set by the national LWV Board, including invitations to the two major party candidates plus two or more independent or third party candidates.
- * If LWVUS decides to reinstate the Presidential Debates, we pledge to use our best efforts to raise awareness and support to help LWVUS make this important endeavor a success.

The Caucus will be Friday night. Hope to see you there!

For more information visit our web site: lwmasoncounty.org/resolution.html