



**League of Women Voters
Chaffee County
Candidate Participation Policy**
(Adopted July 2018)

Candidate forums for primary, special and general elections are part of the League of Women Voters Chaffee County (LWVCC) tradition of helping voters obtain information about candidates' stands on issues. As LWVCC works to "Grow the Vote, Protect the Vote, Empower the Vote", the Candidate Participation Policy plays a vital role in our efforts to protect the vote and empower voters. Therefore, LWVCC has developed the following Candidate Participation Policy for all state and local LWVCC candidate forums.

LWVCC is a nonpartisan, political organization that strives to protect citizens' voting rights and deliver unbiased education to voters. LWVCC does not endorse candidates for office or political parties. Together with our cosponsors and partners, LWVCC conducts candidate forums (including debates), meet-and-greet gatherings, video recordings, town hall meetings and other candidate events. This policy is adopted by LWVCC in response to voters' concerns about LWVCC not having events or being forced to cancel events, sometimes moments before they are scheduled to begin.

This policy addresses situations in which one candidate in a two-candidate race is unable or unwilling to participate, except when Federal Communications Commission (FCC) or Federal Elections Commission (FEC) regulations apply to the US House of Representatives, US Senate, or Presidential elections. This policy (sometimes referred to as the "empty chair" policy) is based on an updated understanding of IRS rules regarding 501(c)3 organizations' activities and a careful review of the LWVCC mission, values and traditions. It reflects the changing climate of our political discourse and campaigns and the growing demand from voters for direct access to candidates and substantive discussion of issues.

How the Policy is Implemented:

1. LWVCC will invite candidates registered with the Secretary of State, County Clerk, City Clerk or pertinent Special District for the office in question to participate in our events and as specified in the LWVCC Candidate Selection Criteria approved by the LWVCC Board on May 31, 2018. After considering potential conflicts in dates, all candidates will be invited simultaneously and in the same manner which may include email. If an email address is not available from either the candidate or the Secretary of State, regular mail may be used for that candidate. Invitations will include the LWVCC Participation Policy. Flexibility is key to the selection of a date.
2. **If an invited candidate is unable or decides not to appear at a scheduled event, the event will still be held.** This is the case even if only one candidate appears, except as noted above when FCC or FEC rules apply. Unopposed candidates may appear alone.
3. The moderator will announce that all candidates were invited to participate. In announcing that a candidate is not participating, the moderator will present a brief statement that a candidate either did not respond or declined to participate without any editorial comment.
4. The candidate or candidates who attend will have an opportunity to make opening statements and express their positions on issues and in response to questions submitted by the audience.
5. No stand-ins or substitutes as selected by the candidate will be allowed except to read an opening statement provided by the candidate equal in length to the agreed upon time limit. The stand-in/substitute may not respond to questions from the audience that are directed to the other candidates.
6. This policy will be shared with all media outlets that typically cover or are expected to cover LWVCC candidate events.
7. LWVCC events will be conducted in accordance with other event rules as provided to candidates with their invitations.
8. Eligible candidates' campaign materials may be placed only at the designated location.

If you have any questions about this policy, contact the LWVCC Voter Service Coordinator, (name) at (email) or (mobile phone) or info@LWVChaffeeCounty.org