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For immediate release

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**Commission on Presidential Debates Announces Formats for 2004 Debates**

The Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) today announced formats for its 2004 debates. Dates and sites for these debates were announced on November 6, 2003 as follows:

- First presidential debate: Thursday, September, 30, 2004  
University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL
- Vice presidential debate: Tuesday, October 5, 2004  
Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH
- Second presidential debate: Friday, October 8, 2004  
Washington University in St. Louis, MO
- Third presidential debate: Wednesday, October 13, 2004  
Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ

**Format**

- The candidates will be seated at a table with the moderator in the first and third presidential debates and in the vice presidential debate.
- The second presidential debate will use the town meeting format in which undecided voters, selected by the Gallup Organization, will question the candidates.
- Each debate will last for ninety minutes, start at 9:00 p.m. ET, and take place before a live audience.
- The first presidential debate will focus primarily on domestic policy, and the third presidential debate will focus primarily on foreign policy. The town meeting debate and the vice presidential debate will be open to all topics.

*Cochairmen*  
Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr.  
Paul G. Kirk, Jr.

*Executive Director*  
Janet H. Brown

*Honorary Cochairmen*  
Gerald R. Ford  
Jimmy Carter  
Ronald Reagan  
William J. Clinton

*Directors*  
Howard G. Buffett  
Representative Jennifer Dunn  
Antonia Hernandez  
Caroline Kennedy

Newton N. Minow  
Dorothy Ridings  
Alan K. Simpson  
H. Patrick Swygert

Moderators

- Each debate will have a different single moderator to be selected by the CPD. The four moderators will be announced no later than September 10.
- The moderators' job in the first and third presidential debates and the vice presidential debate will be to introduce and change topics, to ensure that the participants have equal time, and to encourage some direct exchange among the candidates. The moderators will select all topics and questions.
- In the town meeting debate, the town meeting participants will pose their questions to the candidates. The town meeting participants will review their questions with the moderator before the debate for the sole purpose of avoiding duplicate questions.
- The moderators will have discretion to ask follow-up questions in all debates.

Participation in the debates sponsored by the CPD is subject to the application of the CPD's Non-partisan Candidate Selection Criteria for 2004, which were issued on September 24, 2003. They are:

- Eligibility under Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution, which requires that a candidate be at least 35 years of age, a natural born citizen of the United States, and a resident of the United States for fourteen years;
- Appearance on a sufficient number of state ballots to have a mathematical chance of securing an Electoral College majority in the 2004 general election; and
- Fifteen percent support of the national electorate as determined by the average of five national public opinion polls taken as close to the first debate as practicable. The polls to be used will be announced no later than September 10.

The candidate selection criteria will be applied before each debate. If a presidential candidate is eligible for the first presidential debate, his or her running mate will automatically be included in the vice presidential debate. A copy of the criteria is attached.

Coverage of the debates will be provided by members of the White House pool who drew lots to determine the following assignments:

First presidential debate: Fox  
Vice presidential debate: ABC  
Second presidential debate: NBC

Pool coverage for the third presidential debate has not yet been determined.

The CPD is the non-partisan, non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization that has sponsored all general election presidential debates since 1987. Further information can be found at [www.debates.org](http://www.debates.org).

**COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL  
DEBATES' NONPARTISAN CANDIDATE SELECTION CRITERIA  
FOR 2004 GENERAL ELECTION DEBATE PARTICIPATION**

**A. INTRODUCTION**

The mission of the nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates (the "CPD") is to ensure, for the benefit of the American electorate, that general election debates are held every four years between the leading candidates for the offices of President and Vice President of the United States. The CPD sponsored a series of such debates in each of the past four general elections, and has begun the planning, preparation, and organization of a series of nonpartisan debates among leading candidates for the Presidency and Vice Presidency in the 2004 general election. As in prior years, the CPD's voter educational activities will be conducted in accordance with all applicable legal requirements, including regulations of the Federal Election Commission that require that debate sponsors extend invitations to debate based on the application of "pre-established, objective" criteria.

The goal of the CPD's debates is to afford the members of the public an opportunity to sharpen their views, in a focused debate format, of those candidates from among whom the next President and Vice President will be selected. In each of the last four elections, there were scores of declared candidates for the Presidency, excluding those seeking the nomination of one of the major parties. During the course of the campaign, the candidates are afforded many opportunities in a great variety of forums to advance their candidacies. In order most fully and fairly to achieve the educational purposes of its debates, the CPD has developed nonpartisan, objective criteria upon which it will base its decisions regarding selection of the candidates to participate in its 2004 debates. The purpose of the criteria is to identify those candidates who have achieved a level of electoral support such that they realistically are considered to be among the principal rivals for the Presidency.

In connection with the 2004 general election, the CPD will apply three criteria to each declared candidate to determine whether that candidate qualifies for inclusion in one or more of CPD's debates. The criteria are (1) constitutional eligibility, (2) ballot access, and (3) electoral support. All three criteria must be satisfied before a candidate will be invited to debate.

**B. 2004 NONPARTISAN SELECTION CRITERIA**

The CPD's nonpartisan criteria for selecting candidates to participate in its 2004 general election presidential debates are:

**1. EVIDENCE OF CONSTITUTIONAL ELIGIBILITY**

The CPD's first criterion requires satisfaction of the eligibility requirements of Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution. The requirements are satisfied if the candidate:

- a. is at least 35 years of age;
- b. is a Natural Born Citizen of the United States and a resident of the United States for fourteen years; and
- c. is otherwise eligible under the Constitution.

## **2. EVIDENCE OF BALLOT ACCESS**

The CPD's second criterion requires that the candidate qualify to have his/her name appear on enough state ballots to have at least a mathematical chance of securing an Electoral College majority in the 2004 general election. Under the Constitution, the candidate who receives a majority of votes in the Electoral College, at least 270 votes, is elected President regardless of the popular vote.

## **3. INDICATORS OF ELECTORAL SUPPORT**

The CPD's third criterion requires that the candidate have a level of support of at least 15% (fifteen percent) of the national electorate as determined by five selected national public opinion polling organizations, using the average of those organizations' most recent publicly-reported results at the time of the determination.

## **C. APPLICATION OF CRITERIA**

CPD's determination with respect to participation in CPD's first-scheduled debate will be made after Labor Day 2004, but sufficiently in advance of the first-scheduled debate to allow for orderly planning. Invitations to participate in the vice-presidential debate will be extended to the running mates of each of the presidential candidates qualifying for participation in CPD's first presidential debate. Invitations to participate in the second and third of CPD's scheduled presidential debates will be based upon satisfaction of the same multiple criteria prior to each debate.

Adopted: September 2003