



NEWS RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

Frederick M. Herrmann, Executive Director of the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC), announced today that steps are being taken by the Commission to implement the general election debate requirement provision of the New Jersey Gubernatorial Public Financing Program. Participation in two general election debates is required as a condition of each general election gubernatorial candidate's receipt of public matching funds.

Herrmann explained that it is the responsibility of the Commission to select organizations to sponsor the mandatory debates. He indicated that the deadline for receipt of applications to sponsor a general election debate is July 1, 1993, and that the selection process for general election debate sponsors must be concluded by the Commission by August 2, 1993.

The 1993 gubernatorial general election debates must occur between September 21 and October 22, 1993, unless the candidates agree to an emergency postponement of the second debate deadline. If an emergency requiring

postponement is declared by the candidates, the second debate must occur no later than the second day before the general election.

Herrmann outlined the specific statutory criteria which must be met by an organization in order to be considered by the Commission for debate sponsorship. A sponsor must not be affiliated with any political party or with any holder of or candidate for public office and must agree not to make any endorsement in the pending general election for the office of Governor until the completion of any debate which the organization may be selected to sponsor. The organization must also be able to demonstrate experience since 1976 in sponsoring televised debates among candidates for New Jersey Statewide office.

Herrmann further explained that the criteria for debate sponsorship have been modified from those applicable in the first debates in 1989. Sponsors are no longer required to be "private" organizations and a new category of debate sponsor was added to the statute. Applicants in the new category, associations of two or more separately-owned news publications or broadcasting outlets and associations of press correspondents, are not required to demonstrate prior experience in televised candidate debates.

Representatives of organizations which meet the sponsorship criteria and wish to apply to sponsor one or both of the 1993 general election debate are invited to contact the Commission at (609) 292-8700 for an application and for further information, Herrmann announced.

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