



NEWS RELEASE

Respond to:
CN-185
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0185
(609) 292-8700

CONTACT: **FREDERICK M. HERRMANN, Ph.D.**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FOR 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 debate requirement provision of the New Jersey Gubernatorial Public Financing Program.

Participation in two primary and two general election debates is required as a condition of each candidate's receipt of public matching funds. The first such debates were held in 1989.

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, 1997, and that the selection process for general election debates sponsors must be concluded by July 31, 1997. The Commission will select general election debate sponsors at its July 22, 1997 meeting.

The 1997 gubernatorial general election debates must occur between September 16 and October 24, 1997, unless the candidates agree to an emergency postponement of the second debate deadline.

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

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Located at: 28 W. State Street, 13th Floor, Trenton, New Jersey

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 debate sponsor applicants which are associations of two or more separately-owned news publications or broadcasting outlets and associations of press correspondents having a substantial audience or readership in New Jersey 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 a 1997 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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