



Open The Debates



A democratic, open and free society requires a democratic, open and free debate.

The Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD), a private organization composed entirely of Democrats and Republicans, and headed by a former Republican National Committee Chair and a former Democratic National Committee Chair, have created exclusionary new criteria for participation in the year 2000 televised Presidential debates: all participating candidates must first reach 15% in the polls.

This sets up a catch 22 for third party candidates, who cannot gain such an extraordinary amount of public support without first being heard in the televised debates, and yet cannot be in the televised debates without first gaining an extraordinary amount of public support.

If this year's criteria had been applied in past elections, neither Ross Perot nor Jesse Ventura would have been allowed to debate the major party candidates.

As of 8/10/00, Ralph Nader has been consistently polling between 5-8% nationally. We, along with a majority of Americans (Zogby Poll, 4/1-4/400, Fox News/Opinion Dynamics Poll, 7/12-7/13/00), want Ralph Nader to be allowed to participate in the debates with George Bush and Al Gore, regardless of whether or not he has met the exclusionary 15% threshold. We want the CPD to lower their criteria to 5% - the same threshold used by the Federal Election Commission for federal matching funds. Absent the 5%, a candidate should also be admitted if a majority of voters, when asked directly, support the candidate's participation in the debates.

Given the high percentage of Americans who have said in poll after poll that they want such debates, such an effort on the part of broadcasters is clearly in keeping with the TV networks' legal obligation to "operate in the public interest" (Title 47 of the US Code, Section 315) and to "serve the public interest, convenience, and necessity" (Telecommunications Act of 1996, Renewal of Broadcast Licenses).

A democratic, open and free society requires democratic, open and free debates.

For more information visit:

Nader campaign official site: www.votenader.org
Unofficial site: www.nader2000.org
Green Party of NJ: www.gpnj.org

Visit gpnj.org for information how to help, and for printable versions of this page and petitions.
Or call (609) 278-4467