



1200 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W. • Suite 445 • Washington, D.C. 20036 • (202) 872-1020 • Fax (202) 783-5923

President Obama and Governor Romney, Vice President Biden and Rep. Paul Ryan invited to CPD's debates

Washington, D.C. (September 21, 2012) – The non-partisan, non-profit Commission on Presidential Debates ("CPD") announced today that it has applied its Nonpartisan Candidate Selection Criteria for 2012 General Election Debate participation to determine eligibility to participate in the presidential debate to take place at the University of Denver in Denver, Colorado on October 3 and the vice-presidential debate to take place on October 11 at Centre College in Danville, Kentucky.

Pursuant to the criteria, which were publicly announced on October 31, 2011, those candidates qualify for debate participation who (1) are constitutionally eligible to hold the office of President of the United States; (2) have achieved ballot access in a sufficient number of states to win a theoretical Electoral College majority in the general election; and (3) have demonstrated a level of support of at least 15 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.

The Board of Directors of the CPD convened today to apply the criteria with the assistance of the Editor-In-Chief of the Gallup Polling Organization, Dr. Frank Newport. Of the declared candidates, President Barack Obama and Governor Romney were found to have satisfied all three criteria. Accordingly, President Obama and his running mate, Vice President Joe Biden, and Governor Mitt Romney and his running mate, Representative Paul Ryan, qualify to participate in the October 3 presidential debate and the Oct. 11 vice-presidential debate, respectively. No other candidates satisfied the criteria for inclusion in the October 3 and October 11 debates.

The CPD has successfully sponsored the presidential and vice presidential general election debates since 1988. The CPD's planning for the 2012 debates has extended over a period of years and has drawn upon the CPD's now-extensive experience in sponsoring general election debates. On October 31, 2011, the CPD announced the four dates and locations for this year's debates, and on August 13, 2012, the CPD announced the four journalists who will moderate those debates: Jim Lehrer, Martha Raddatz, Candy Crowley and Bob Schieffer. The CPD is firmly committed to providing, in a professional and nonpartisan manner, debates in 2012 that will allow the American public to view the leading presidential and vice presidential candidates discuss the issues facing the country.

The candidates who have qualified to participate today previously have committed to participate in the debates sponsored by the CPD.

For more information, please see www.debates.org.

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