

ASKING QUESTIONS AT A CANDIDATE FORUM

In any election season, the major political parties are assessing what Americans care about by monitoring the questions that are asked at candidate forums.

Attending and asking questions at a candidate forum or other political or civic functions helps raise the visibility of an issue both in the public's eye and in the mind of the candidates or elected officials. After all, you care enough about the issue to put in the time and effort to attend the event.

Candidate forums and other events where campaign surrogates are campaigning on behalf of their candidates are often publicized in your local newspaper and on local radio stations. Blogs and websites are also good sources of information for announcements of upcoming events, town hall meetings or office hours. Most importantly, sign up to be on the campaign e-mail or mailing lists.

HELPFUL TIPS!

- If it is an invitation-only event, call up the organizers and find out how to get invited.
- Feel free to invite others to join you. Meet with your group in advance to develop a plan of action. Make sure everyone knows what questions they will ask the candidate if given the opportunity.
- If it is a public event or you have gotten an invitation, be sure to arrive early to get good seats. If there is a question and answer time, spread out. Event organizers are not likely to take multiple questions from people sitting together.
- Sit towards the front or near the microphones if there are multiple mics in the aisles.
- Most importantly, get your hands up FIRST, FAST and HIGH. Do not hesitate or wait for a later round of questions.
- Use the Constitution Voter pledge as a guide for your questions. Write down your question or statement in advance since it is very easy to stumble, ramble or forget your question otherwise. Short questions that make the point are the most effective.
- Download materials from the ACLU website at www.aclu.org. The ACLU has created a variety of concise, attractive leave behind materials for you to use to educate others on becoming a Constitution Voter. Download door hangers, brochures, stickers and other helpful materials.
- Don't forget to bring extra materials and ask others at the event to sign the Pledge!