

THIRD PARTY BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

Third-Party and Independent Presidential Candidates Receiving 5 Percent or More of Popular Vote			
CANDIDATE <i>(PARTY)</i>	YEAR	PERCENTAGE OF <i>POPULAR VOTE</i>	ELECTORAL <i>VOTE</i>
Ross Perot (Reform Party)	1996	8.5	0
Ross Perot (Independent)	1992	18.9	0
John 8. Anderson (Independent)	1980	6.6	0
George C. Wallace (American Independent)	1968	13.5	46
Robert M. LaFollette (Progressive)	1924	16.6	13
Theodore Roosevelt (Bull Moose)	1912	27.4	88
Eugene V. Debs (Socialist)	1912	6.0	0
James B. Weaver (Populist)	1892	8.5	22
John C. Brekinridge (Southern Democrat)	1860	18.1	72
John Bell (Constitutional Union)	1860	12.6	39
Millard Fillmore (Whig-American)	1856	21.5	8
Martin Van Buren (Free Soil)	1848	1 0.1	0
William Wirt (Anti-Masonic)	1832	7.8	7

**Signature Requirements for a
New Party to Get on the Ballot**

COUNTRY	SIGNATURES REQUIRED	DO ALL PARTIES HAVE THE SAME REQUIREMENTS?
United States	5,141,472 total	NO
Australia	0	YES
Austria	2.600 total	YES
Belgium	200-400 per candidate*	YES
Canada	25-100 per candidate	YES
Croatia	0	YES
Finland	0	YES
France	0	YES
Germany	200 per candidate	YES***
Great Britain	0	YES
Greece	0	YES
Ireland	0	YES
New Zealand	2 per candidate	YES
Norway	0	YES
Poland	75,000 total	YES
Portugal	5,000 total**	YES
Spain	0	YES
Sweden	0	YES
Switzerland	2,500-10,000 total	YES
The Netherlands	190 total	YES

* or three signatures from sitting members of parliament.

**This is a one time only requirement

***If a party has elected one member of parliament, no signatures are required.

Candidate Selection Process

Commission on Presidential Debates' Nonpartisan Candidate Selection Criteria for 2004 General Election Debate Participation

The CPD's nonpartisan criteria for selecting candidates to participate in its 2004 general election presidential debates are:

1. Evidence of Constitutional Eligibility

The CPD's first criterion requires satisfaction of the eligibility requirements of Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution. The requirements are satisfied if the candidate:

- a. is at least 35 years of age;
- b. is a Natural Born Citizen of the United States and a resident of the United States for fourteen years; and
- c. is otherwise eligible under the Constitution.

2. Evidence of Ballot Access

The CPD's second criterion requires that the candidate qualify to have his/her name appear on enough state ballots to have at least a mathematical chance of securing an Electoral College majority in the 2004 general election. Under the Constitution, the candidate who receives a majority of votes in the Electoral College, at least 270 votes, is elected President regardless of the popular vote.

3. Indicators of Electoral Support

The CPD's third criterion requires that the candidate have a level of support of at least 15% (fifteen 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 at the time of the determination.

***Open Debates Files FEC Complaint Against the
Commission on Presidential Debates***

2/19/2004

WASHINGTON, Feb. 19 /U.S. Newswire/ -- Today, Open Debates filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission (FEC) against the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD). The complaint contains previously unreleased, secret documents that reveal how the major party candidates collude with the CPD to dictate the terms of the presidential debates and exclude third-party and independent challengers.

"FEC regulations require presidential debate sponsors that accept corporate contributions to be 'nonpartisan' and to employ 'pre-established objective' candidate selection criteria. The CPD, which accepts millions of dollars in corporate contributions, fails to stage the debates in accordance with these FEC regulations," said Open Debates' Executive Director George Farah.

The complaint alleges that presidential debates sponsored by the CPD are controlled by the major parties in violation of FEC debate regulations.

The complaint further alleges that the CPD was created by the Republican and Democratic parties, for the Republican and Democratic parties. The CPD exists to secretly award control of the presidential debates to the Republican and Democratic nominees. Questions concerning third-party participation and debate formats are resolved behind closed doors, between negotiators for the Republican and Democratic candidates. These negotiators draft secret debate contracts called Memoranda of Understanding that dictate precisely how the debates will be run - - from decreeing who can participate, to prohibiting candidate-to-candidate questioning, to stipulating the height of the podiums. Posing as an independent sponsor, the CPD implements the directives of the Memoranda of Understanding, shielding the major party candidates from public criticism. Many of these issues are documented in the forthcoming book /No Debate/ (Seven Stories Press) authored by Open Debates' Executive Director George Farah.

The complaint requests that the FEC prohibit the CPD from staging future corporate-sponsored presidential debates.

"The CPD has sold out the American people; vital issues which need to be examined by the discerning voter have been suppressed," said Paul Weyrich, Chairman of the Free Congress Foundation.

"The major party candidates can openly hold exclusionary and stilted pseudo-debates if they want to, but to do so under the rubric of nonpartisanship is an unacceptable lie that gravely damages our democracy," said Ambassador Alan Keyes.

"Under the CPD's control, presidential debates have devolved into artificial news conferences, where the major party candidates merely recite prepackaged sound-bites and avoid discussing many important issues," said Kert Davies, research director of Greenpeace USA.

"A nonpartisan Citizens' Debate Commission should replace the CPD," said Rob Richie, executive director of the Center for Voting and Democracy.

Open Debates is a non-partisan organization that works to make the presidential debates serve the American people first. Along with over fifty other civic organizations it has established a non-partisan Citizens' Debate Commission, led by 17 national civic leaders, to replace the CPD. The Citizens' Debate Commission will sponsor real presidential debates that are rigorous, fair, and inclusive of important issues and popular candidates.