

ASSEMBLY, No. 1260

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 1996 SESSION

By Assemblyman RUSSO

1 AN ACT concerning the debates in which publicly financed candidates
2 for the office of Governor participate and amending P.L.1989, c.4.

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4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

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7 1. Section 10 of P.L.1989, c.4 (C.19:44A-46) is amended to read
8 as follows:

9 10. a. The series of gubernatorial primary debates under
10 subsection a. of section 9 of P.L.1989, c.4 (C.19:44A-45) shall consist
11 of **[two]** three debates. Each of the debates shall be of at least one
12 hour's duration. The first debate in the series shall occur not earlier
13 than the date on which the ballot for the primary election in which
14 candidates are to be nominated for election to the office of Governor
15 is finally certified by the Secretary of State to the clerks of the several
16 counties, and the **[second]** final debate in the series shall occur not
17 later than the 11th day prior to the primary election to select
18 candidates for that office unless an emergency, as determined by the
19 vote of a majority of the participating candidates, requires the
20 postponement thereof, but the **[second]** final gubernatorial primary
21 debate shall in no event be held later than the second day preceding
22 that primary election.

23 b. The series of gubernatorial election debates under subsection b.
24 of section 9 of P.L.1989, c.4 (C.19:44A-45) shall consist of **[two]**
25 three debates. Each of the gubernatorial election debates shall be of
26 at least one hour's duration. The first debate in the series shall occur
27 not earlier than the third Tuesday following the first Monday in
28 September of the year in which a general election is to be held for the
29 office of Governor, and the **[second]** final debate in the series shall
30 occur not later than the 11th day prior to the general election for that
31 office unless an emergency, as determined by the vote of a majority of
32 the participating candidates, requires the postponement thereof, but

EXPLANATION - Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 the final gubernatorial election debate shall in no event be held later
2 than the second day preceding that general election.

3 c. Organizations which are not affiliated with any political party or
4 with any holder of or candidate for public office [.] and which have not
5 endorsed any candidate in the pending primary or general election for
6 the office of Governor [, and which have previously sponsored one or
7 more televised debates among candidates for Statewide office in the
8 State since 1976,] shall be eligible to sponsor one or more interactive
9 gubernatorial primary debates or interactive gubernatorial election
10 debates under subsection a. or subsection b., respectively, of this
11 section. In addition, any association of two or more separately owned
12 news publications or broadcasting outlets, including newspapers, radio
13 stations or networks, and television stations or networks, having
14 between or among them a substantial readership or audience in this
15 State, and any association of print or broadcast news or press service
16 correspondents having among them a substantial readership or
17 audience in this State, shall be eligible to sponsor any such
18 gubernatorial primary or gubernatorial election debate [, without
19 regard to whether that association or any of its members shall
20 previously have sponsored any debate among candidates for Statewide
21 office].

22 The Election Law Enforcement Commission shall accept
23 applications from eligible organizations and eligible associations of
24 news publications and broadcasting outlets or news or press service
25 correspondents to sponsor one or more of those interactive
26 gubernatorial debates. Applications to sponsor debates under
27 subsection a. shall be submitted to the commission no later than March
28 15 of any year in which a primary election is to be held to nominate
29 candidates for the office of Governor, and applications to sponsor
30 debates under subsection b. shall be submitted to the commission no
31 later than July 1 of any year in which a general election is to be held
32 to fill the office of Governor.

33 Where the number of eligible applicants to sponsor gubernatorial
34 primary debates or gubernatorial election debates exceeds the number
35 prescribed under subsection a. and subsection b. of this section,
36 respectively, the Election Law Enforcement Commission shall select
37 the sponsors from among the applicants within 30 days of the last day
38 for submitting those applications, as provided by this subsection. To
39 the maximum extent practicable and feasible, the commission shall
40 select a different sponsor for each of the interactive gubernatorial
41 debates, but shall not be precluded from selecting the same sponsor for
42 more than one debate.

43 The sponsors selected by the commission shall be responsible for
44 selecting the date, time and location of the debates, subject to the
45 limitations set forth in this section. The rules for conducting each
46 debate shall be solely the responsibility of the sponsors so selected, but

1 shall not be made final without consultation with both the chairman of
2 the New Jersey Republican State Committee and the chairman of the
3 New Jersey Democratic State Committee in the case of gubernatorial
4 primary debates, and with a representative designated by each of the
5 participating candidates in the case of gubernatorial election debates.
6 (cf: P.L.1991, c.317, s.1)

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8 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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13 This bill provides for an increase in the number of debates in which
14 candidates for the office of Governor are required to participate as a
15 condition of receiving public financing. Under present law, two
16 debates are held among publicly financed candidates in the primary
17 election and two debates are held among publicly financed candidates
18 in the general election. Under the bill, the number of debates in each
19 case is to be increased to three.

20 In addition, the bill would eliminate an existing provision of law
21 that limits sponsorship of gubernatorial debates to organizations
22 "which have previously sponsored one or more televised debates
23 among candidates for Statewide office in the State since 1976".

24 The provisions of this legislation increasing the number of
25 gubernatorial debates would implement a May 18, 1994
26 recommendation of the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement
27 Commission.

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31 Increases number of gubernatorial debates in which publicly financed
32 candidates for office of Governor must participate from two to three;
33 eliminates certain restriction on debate sponsorship eligibility.