



COMMISSION ON
PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

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

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James A. Baker, III, Esq.
Baker Botts L.L.P.
1299 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20004

Vernon E. Jordan, Esq.
Lazard Freres L.L.C.
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10112

Gentlemen:

We are enclosing a press release issued today by the Commission on Presidential Debates announcing the results of the application of its Non-Partisan Candidate Selection Criteria for 2004. We are pleased to advise you that President Bush and Senator Kerry, as well as Vice President Cheney and Senator Edwards, have met the requirements for participation under the Criteria.

On September 20, 2004, you jointly announced President Bush and Senator Kerry's commitment to participate in a series of three presidential debates and Vice President Cheney and Senator Edwards' commitment to participate in one vice presidential debate, as proposed by the Commission. The September 20 announcement also adopted the Commission's proposals regarding the debates' locations, dates, times, moderators and 90-minute lengths.

The Commission is extremely pleased that highly respected journalists Jim Lehrer, Gwen Ifill, Charles Gibson and Bob Schieffer have agreed to serve as moderators for the 2004 debates. Their participation will greatly enhance the integrity, fairness and professionalism of the debates.

We have reviewed the terms of the memorandum released by the campaigns on September 20. As we go forward with our debate planning, and in order to ensure that the 2004 debates proceed in an orderly, fair and informative way, we will make every good faith effort to accommodate those terms. If departure from the terms becomes necessary, we certainly will confer with the appropriate campaign representatives.

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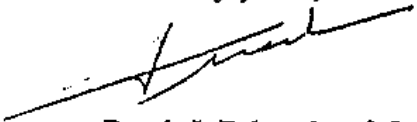
The Commission is agreeable to the September 30 presidential debate being devoted primarily to foreign affairs and homeland security and the October 13 debate being devoted primarily to domestic and economic policy. We say "primarily" simply to acknowledge the possibility that a significant development may lead a moderator to conclude that some modest deviation from the primary topic is necessary. For example, if an international event were to occur between the September 30th debate and the October 13th debate, the moderator may conclude that the event should be addressed in the subsequent debate. We are also agreeable to the candidates using podiums in the first and third presidential debates.

The Commission is pleased that the campaigns have agreed to the town meeting format for the October 8 debate scheduled to take place at Washington University in St. Louis, as the Commission had proposed. This format is very popular with the public and adds to the value of the series of debates. In 1992, 1996, and 2000, the town meeting participants were undecided voters selected by the Gallup Organization from the standard metropolitan statistical area of the debate cities. We are confident that once the campaigns' representatives have had an opportunity to discuss participant selection methodology with Dr. Frank Newport of Gallup, the open issues, if any, will be resolved satisfactorily.

Now that the Candidate Selection Criteria have been applied, the Commission's production staff will be pleased to finalize with the campaigns' appropriate representatives technical issues pertaining to the debates.

We look forward to these important voter education events.

Sincerely yours,



Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr.



Paul G. Kirk, Jr.

Enclosure