

## **WPR ELECTION COVERAGE POLICY**

Wisconsin Public Radio (WPR) provides in-depth balanced election coverage on all of its platforms (News and Classical Service, the Ideas Network and Digital at wpr.org). As a statewide network, WPR covers federal and statewide races as an essential component of its public service and educational mission. In addition, state legislative races and issues and other races of significant regional or local importance may also be covered based on their significance to a statewide or regional audience.

### **GENERAL ELECTION COVERAGE**

WPR will apply the same editorial judgment and journalistic standards in election coverage as it does with all other news and public affairs coverage. WPR's news and public affairs staff (including reporters, producers, hosts, web editors and editorial managers) will provide the best balanced and unbiased coverage possible of the issues and the candidates for a particular race.

### **CANDIDATE APPEARANCES ON REGULAR PROGRAMS**

Based on its good faith journalistic judgment, WPR will determine how to address general election issues and races on Ideas Network programs that regularly feature news and public affairs coverage (The Joy Cardin Show, The Kathleen Dunn Show, Central Time, Route 51, The West Side, Hear Me Out and Newsmakers). Exercising such journalistic judgment, it will invite selected candidates to appear on such programs. These appearances will take place after the candidacy filing deadline for each office. Not all candidates for particular races will necessarily be invited to appear, and if a candidate declines the invitation to appear, his or her opponent(s) may still be invited to appear. In addition, regional coverage on location stations in Eau Claire, La Crosse, Green Bay, Superior, Wausau and Milwaukee may include races or issues of significant regional importance on their regional news and public affairs programs (The West Side, Route 51, Hear Me Out, Newsmakers). This coverage may vary from one region to the next.

### **CANDIDATE INCLUSION CRITERIA FOR SPECIAL ELECTION COVERAGE**

During election cycles, WPR may produce special election coverage in the form of debates, town hall meetings, election forums, or other formats that are outside of the regular news or talk programs ("Special Election Coverage"). In such cases, WPR will invite candidates for a particular race to participate based on the pre-determined objective criteria set forth below. In certain cases, WPR will partner with another journalistic organization to produce Special Election Coverage and will adopt a separate specific set of candidate inclusion criteria for that particular event, which will be published online. In such cases, the event specific criteria will take precedence over the general criteria outlined here.

Unless other criteria have been established for a particular Special Election Coverage event, the following criteria shall apply and candidates who meet **all** of the criteria outlined below for the particular race will be invited to participate in the Special Election Coverage:

**Federal Offices (President/Congress/Senate)**

- 1) The candidate has qualified for a place on the election ballot.
- 2) The candidate is running an active campaign, demonstrated by:
  - a. At least ten (10) percent support in a professionally conducted independent poll, without taking into account the poll's margin of error. WPR defines "independent" as a poll not commissioned or paid for by the candidate, the candidate's campaign, political party or any interest group that has a stake in the outcome of the election. This requirement is waived in races where there is no independent polling;
  - b. The candidate maintains a campaign staff (paid or volunteer) operating in an office other than a candidate's home; and
  - c. The candidate maintains an active, publicly accessible website or Facebook page devoted to the campaign that addresses at least three issues related to the race for the office the candidate seeks.

**Statewide Offices (Governor/Attorney General/Supreme Court/ etc.)**

- 1) The candidate has qualified for a place on the election ballot.
- 2) The candidate is running an active campaign, demonstrated by:
  - a. Ten (10) percent support in a professionally conducted independent poll, without taking into account the poll's margin of error. WPR defines "independent" as a poll not commissioned or paid for by the candidate, his or her campaign, political party or any interest group that has a stake in the outcome of the election. This requirement is waived in races where there is no independent polling;
  - b. The candidate maintains a campaign staff (paid and/or volunteer) operating in an office other than a candidate's home;
  - c. The candidate submits campaign finance reports to the state. In the event, that no reports have become due since the candidate declared candidacy and the date of the event, then this criterion is waived; and
  - d. The candidate maintains an active website devoted to the campaign that addresses at least three issues related to the race for the office the candidate seeks.

### **State Assembly and State Senate**

- 1) The candidate has qualified for a place on the election ballot.
- 2) The candidate is running an active campaign, demonstrated by:
  - a. The candidate has made at least three (3) personal campaign appearances. Campaign appearances may include a campaign speech before a public audience, a public campaign rally, a presentation on the campaign issues to an organized civic or political event or an interview with a newspaper, television station or other media outlet that covers the district; and
  - b. Submits campaign finance reports to the state. In the event, that no reports have become due since the candidate declared candidacy and the date of the event, then this criterion is waived.

### **Local Officials (Sheriff/ Mayor/County Executive/etc.)**

- 1) The candidate has qualified for a place on the election ballot.
- 2) The candidate has made at least three (3) personal campaign appearances. Campaign appearances may include a campaign speech before a public audience, a public campaign rally, a presentation on the campaign issues to an organized civic or political event or an interview with a newspaper, television station or other media outlet that covers the district..

WPR reserves the right to cancel any scheduled program based on its good faith journalistic judgment that the program should not proceed due to scheduling conflicts, canceled candidate appearances, or for any other reason.