



## **ETV Debate Criteria 2014**

A vital part of ETV's mission is advancing good citizenship by producing and broadcasting quality local public affairs programming about South Carolina, including select candidate debates. ETV, at its sole editorial discretion, decides which race or races to offer debates on its statewide network. The following clarifies ETV's commitment to a fair and balanced process for debate invitations:

ETV uses pre-established objective criteria in selecting candidates for its debates as allowed by the Supreme Court decision of *Arkansas v. Forbes* in 1998. For all debates ETV adopts the Federal Election Commission rule requiring federal debates must include at least two candidates, and debate sponsors must use certain "pre-established objective criteria" in selecting participating candidates. For this purpose, ETV reserves the right, in the public interest, to exercise journalistic judgment and limit participants and the manner of the production in accordance with this ETV Debate Criteria. ETV requires a minimum of two candidates for debates. Additionally, candidates must meet certain other criteria, as noted below:

1. The candidate must be a "legally qualified candidate" under FCC guidelines based on the following:
  - a. Has publicly announced his/her intention to run for office, is qualified under applicable law to hold office, has qualified for a place on the ballot, and documents that he/she is conducting an active campaign, including has a staffed campaign headquarters, outside of the candidate's home, and is receiving press coverage;
  - b. Has publicly committed to seeking election by the write-in method and documents that he/she is conducting an active campaign, including has a staffed campaign headquarters, outside of the candidate's home, and is receiving press coverage.
2. The candidate must meet at least four of the following five criteria:
  - a. The candidate has been nominated for the current election by a political party recognized under state law;
  - b. The candidate has public position statements on at least three issues (e.g., in one or more press releases, campaign website, campaign brochure, speech, or other public statement);

- c. The candidate has accepted at least \$10,000 in contributions for the current election (e.g., as documented in Federal Election Commission reports available at [www.fec.gov](http://www.fec.gov) for federal candidates or equivalent campaign finance disclosure information for state or local candidates) exclusive of funding from the candidate's own resources;
- d. The candidate, if requested, must provide ETV with more than incidental press coverage e.g. identification as a candidate for the current elections in at least five (5) bona fide print, online, radio, television, or cable TV news stories; and/or
- e. The candidate must show at least five percent (5%) support for the current election in any legitimate, professionally conducted non-partisan public opinion surveys (polls) by an independent pollster.

ETV believes these criteria will ensure fairness and editorial integrity for any proposed candidates' debate. Legitimate candidates will be listed on ETV's election web site, [www.sctv.org/election](http://www.sctv.org/election), to ensure candidates are not excluded. ETV will also link to a candidate's web site, if available, so prospective voters might better understand those candidates' positions.