



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE:
August 25, 2021

Dates Set for Gubernatorial General Election Debates

The New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC) today reviewed and approved three dates recommended by sponsors for debates involving gubernatorial candidates and their running mates.

The dates are:

- 7 p.m. Tuesday September 28, 2021 for a debate between gubernatorial candidates in Newark organized by NJ Performing Arts Center.
- 7 p.m. Tuesday October 5, 2021 for a debate between lieutenant gubernatorial candidates in Lawrenceville arranged by NJ Globe.
- 8 p.m. Tuesday October 12, 2021 for a debate between gubernatorial candidates in Glassboro held by lead sponsor Public Media NJ Inc. (NJ PBS).

During an emergency meeting, the commission declined a request by the campaign of Governor Phil Murphy to instead hold all three debates within one week, respectively, on September 28, September 30 and October 5.

In its request, Murphy's campaign said it wanted to hold all three debates as early as possible for the benefit of vote-by-mail voters. Clerks can begin distributing mail-in ballots on September 18.

Commission members said they prefer to leave the debates a little more spread out to give voters more time to process information from each debate, because they doubt all mail-in voters will instantly send in their ballots, and because extensive preparations already had been made for the three dates that previously had been set.

The commissioners also pointed out there is nothing preventing the candidates from holding earlier debates not overseen by ELEC.

Under state law, gubernatorial candidates that receive public financing for their campaigns must participate in two ELEC-sanctioned debates. Their lieutenant governor running mates must take part in a third ELEC-approved debate.

Also under the law, debates must be held between September 21 and October 22.

The gubernatorial debates will feature Murphy, a Democrat who is running for reelection, and Republican nominee Jack Ciattarelli. Both candidates are participants in the gubernatorial public financing program.

Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver is running for reelection along with Murphy. Ciattarelli's running mate is former state Senator Diane Allen.

The first gubernatorial debate will be held 7 p.m. Tuesday September 28 at NJ Performing Arts Center in Newark. Its partners include WABC-TV, WPVI-TV, 6-ABC Philadelphia, Twitter, Univision, WBGO-FM, NJ Advance Media (www.nj.com), and Rutgers Eagleton Institute of Politics and Rutgers School of Public Affairs and Administration at Rutgers University.

It will be broadcast live via its television and radio affiliates. Once the live broadcast ends, it will immediately be posted on abc7ny.com and 6abc.com. It also will be available on NJ Advance Media and Rutgers University websites.

The lieutenant governor's debate will be hosted 7 p.m. Tuesday October 5 at Rider University in Lawrenceville by New Jersey Globe, Rebovich Institute of Politics at Rider University, and Project Ready. While News 12 has withdrawn as a sponsor, NJ Globe is seeking another television partner. If it is unable to find one, the debate will be live-streamed via New Jersey Globe, Facebook Live, Twitter, Youtube, and LinkedIn. It also will be rebroadcast on 77 WABC radio.

The second gubernatorial debate will be held 8 p.m. October 12 at Rowan University in Glassboro and sponsored by Public Media NJ, Inc. (NJ PBS), NJ Spotlight News, Rowan Institute for Public Policy and Citizenship at Rowan University, New York Public Radio, WNYC & The Gothamist.

It will be broadcast live via television and radio, and live-streamed on njspotlight.com, Youtube, WYNC website, and Rowan University website.

The general election is November 2, 2021.

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