

Elections – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1.) Q: Why is it OK for some candidates to follow the Q & A format on candidate statements and others not; and why are typos and other mistakes reprinted?

A: The Elections Committee has decided that a candidate's choice on how (or not) to outline their qualifications is their choice. Therefore, candidate statements will be unedited except for adjustments to accommodate space and design limitations but not to correct misspelled words or alter grammar or style. A statement to that effect will be contained in the candidate statement.

2.) Q: Can SEIU 503 or sub-locals endorse candidates for union office?

A: No. Current officers or governing bodies (executive boards, boards of directors, etc.) may not endorse candidates on behalf of the body.

3.) Q: Campaigning at Union Functions -- Can I speak as a candidate at meetings?

A: Only if the sponsor of the meeting has contacted other candidates and given them an opportunity to attend and speak as well.

4.) Q: What if the other candidates can't come/attend?

A: As long as they have been given the opportunity to also appear, single candidate presentations are allowed. – Others may send literature or a representative to speak for them.

5.) Q: What if one candidate can come one day but not another – Can the candidate be limited to attending a day by themselves?

A: No. As long as all candidates have been given the opportunity to appear, any candidate – even one – who does appear will be permitted to speak.

6.) Q: Does the other candidate need to be notified when I make a worksite visit or attend a meeting and talk to folks on the break or lunch?

A: No. Only if a candidate is officially present and given time/access to workers/members in an official way – such as being on the agenda of a union meeting.

7.) Q: Can a candidate distribute campaign literature at a union event, conference, or meeting; and do all candidates have to be notified of union events in order to do literature distribution?

A: Yes, a candidate can distribute campaign literature at a union event, conference or meeting so long as the distribution does not interfere with the agenda of the conference and complies with distribution rules in effect for the session. More specifically, campaign materials cannot be distributed during meeting times, placed on the registration table of the conference or be included in the conference/meeting materials. This activity must be done outside of the meeting program and must not be disruptive or viewed as part of the meeting agenda.

8.) Q: How can candidates find out about union events that they may wish to attend in order to campaign and or distribute campaign literature?

A: Major union events are usually posted on the union web site – www.seiu503.org. Candidates may also contact Headquarters or field offices for meeting/event dates.

NOTE: The union does not have an obligation to affirmatively inform or notify candidates of all union events unless the union is placing the candidates on the agenda or as part of the event allowing candidate presentations. In that case, the Union is responsible to notify all candidates (or if only one position, i.e., President, candidates for that position) of the event.

9) Q. Can candidates campaign and/or distribute literature at their workplace or other workplaces?

A: Any campaigning or distribution of literature at workplaces is subject to rules promulgated by employers and must occur when the candidate is not on work time and he/she has not gained special access to a work area by virtue of holding a union office.

10.) Q: Can a candidate use work e-mail to distribute campaign literature/endorsements?

A: No. The use of work e-mail constitutes use of employer resources, which is prohibited under federal law.

11.) Q: Can a candidate use the SEIU logo/picture?

A: Yes – but SEIU can't provide it to them – they can cut and paste – download from a publication, etc. (unless picture is under copyright).

12.) Q: What rights do I have to communicate with eligible voters?

A: Candidates may request that the Union send out campaign materials on their behalf at their expense, by following the Candidate mail and email request procedure.

13.) Q: Can a member who is serving on an Elections Committee have a role in a candidate's campaign?

A: The law guarantees all members the right to support or oppose candidates for elective office, but it also requires that the Elections Committee act impartially. To balance those considerations the 503 Elections Committee permits appointment as set out in the Election Guidelines, but will act to replace anyone who is running for an elected office covered by the particular elections committee.

Elections committee members involved in Elections Committee business – at meetings or otherwise – may not wear candidate stickers or buttons, or hand out candidate literature, or otherwise campaign for candidates. It is acceptable for members to participate in candidate campaigns outside of elections committee work.

NOTE: A member who acts as a candidate campaign manager for a candidate may not serve on an elections committee that oversees the election in which that candidate is running.

14.) Q: Can a candidate use Union or Employer Funds or Facilities?

A: No. The use of union or employer funds for campaign purposes is restricted. Using union or employer funds to promote for or against the candidacy of any person in a union officer election is prohibited. This prohibition applies to anything of value, no matter how small the amount or value, of facilities, equipment (e.g. telephones, computers, copiers, fax machines, e-mail systems, etc.), supplies and cash as well as campaigning on time paid for by either a union or employer as well as the use of any Union newsletter, website, or social media for campaign purposes. The prohibition against the use of union or employer funds applies to any union and any employer, not just to SEIU Local 503, OPEU or to the employers with whom SEIU Local 503, OPEU has collective bargaining agreements.

15.) Q: Who may contribute to a candidate's campaign?

A: Only members of SEIU may contribute to a candidate's campaign.