

# **Model Legislature & Court Candidate Handbook**

## **Running for Office in Y&G**

Congratulations on your decision to run for office! The purpose of this pamphlet is to guide you through this tumultuous and rewarding process. This handbook is intended as a guide. For a complete list of election rules please see the Election Rules.

## **Campaigning at Local YMCAs**

As a candidate, you will have the opportunity to campaign at conferences and at local YMCAs. Both are important. To campaign at a local YMCA, call the delegation president and make an appointment to attend an upcoming meeting. (Ask your advisor for the statewide list of contact information for delegations to get the phone number, or e-mail us at [elections@calymca.org](mailto:elections@calymca.org)) At the meeting, expect the opportunity to give a short speech on a topic of your choice and a brief question and answer session following. It's a good idea to campaign in more formal attire.

## **Campaigning at Conferences**

This is the formal part of your campaign. You must wear business attire during the Meet the Candidates Sessions (MTCs). All candidates will attend a brief meeting after the opening joint session to review the schedule. Before the MTC's, you will have the opportunity to meet people and hand out promotional items as long as they are not leaflets, flyers, stick-on badges, or confetti. During the opening Joint Convention, a slide show will introduce you along with other candidates running for your office. During dinner that same day, all candidates will be required to attend a candidate training session to become familiarized with the election process. Do not campaign near the Election Polling Place. Don't hang signs outside of your barracks.

## **Meet the Candidate Sessions**

The rules for the Meet the Candidate sessions will be closely observed. All speeches will be up to two minutes and will be timed. Time starts after a candidate states his/her name and delegation. Please time your speeches before hand to ensure that you are not cut-off. Each speech may be on an issue facing the state of California or related to why you make the best candidate. Some latitude will be granted on speech topics but it is important that your speech maintains the dignity of the office for which you are running. The point of the speech is to display your public speaking skills. Speeches that are off topic or inappropriate in nature will be cut off. After the speeches, candidates will address questions from the audience.

## **Important Rules for Elections**

There are some very important rules for the election process in Y&G. It is very important that you understand these rules, because failure to abide by them may result in disqualification. Please see the Election Rules for a complete list of candidate rules

- Your speech may be up to 2 minutes and will be timed. If you are over, you will be cut-off.
- Your speech may be on an important issue to the state of California or related to why you would make a good candidate. Speeches must be respectful in tone. Inappropriate or silly speeches will not be tolerated.

- Monetary Guidelines. Candidates will not spend more than \$250 on a campaign, unless they are running for Governor who may spend up to \$400. Any transportation costs incurred while campaigning at local delegations does not count as an expense. Donated items count towards spending limits.
- All candidates will keep track of their campaign financing & turn in their campaign financial disclosure statements must be submitted to the Office of the Secretary of State by end of dinner on the first day of each conference. The statement forms were included with this mailing.
- All candidates must be in Sacramento Attire during all Meet the Candidates sessions. At Camp Roberts, dress shoes may be substituted for appropriate shoes for the environment. Failure to follow this rule will result in disqualification.

### **Promotional Items at the Conferences**

- No sticky backed or adhesive promotion badges
- No confetti, small pieces of paper, or balloons
- Candidates may hand out candy, pins, pencils, etc., but they cannot distribute anything that will add to the "litter" problem. NO GUM!
- Campaign materials may not be affixed to or hung in undesignated locations.

***You will be required to supply a sample of each of your promotional campaign giveaways must be submitted to the Office of the Secretary of State by end of dinner on the first day of each conference.***

You are required to attend a candidate's meeting immediately following the opening joint session & an additional candidate check in meeting during dinner on the first conference day. Please check the conference handbook for the exact times and locations.

### **Five Things You Should Know**

- *Dress Accordingly* – Dress up. You must be in Sacramento business attire during all Meet the Candidate Sessions. You stand out and people can easily recognize candidates in Sacramento dress code, it also helps delegates to understand what the dress code is.
- Candidate Training – Be sure not to miss it immediately following the opening joint session at T&E. Location will be in the conference handbook.
- Speeches – Have one. Time it. Make sure it's on topic. Memorize it if you can. (This makes you look good). Practice.
- Meet the Candidate Sessions – These sessions are where you get to give your speech. You'll also be able to answer some serious and some not so serious questions from the audience.
- Have fun – This is a once-in-a-lifetime thrill ride. Enjoy it.

### **A Word on Philosophy**

Running for office in the California Youth & Government program is a big deal. As a candidate, you gain statewide exposure in the program. People know your name. People recognize your face. Even before you are elected (or even if you aren't – gasp), delegates look to you as an example of how to conduct themselves at conferences. It is incumbent upon you to approach this responsibility with pride, humility, and a keen awareness of the power that you hold to influence others.

Through the years, many winning and losing candidates from the California Youth & Government Program have gone on to top leadership positions in business and government. Much of the valuable experience that they gained was gained in the *process* of running for office, win or lose. Congratulations again on your decision to take part in this prestigious and rewarding process. Good luck!

### **After the Election**

*If Your Candidate Wins:* If your delegate wins their bid for office, they will be very busy throughout the ML/C. They will have to arrive in Sacramento a day early to prepare. Please impress upon your delegates the importance of being a role model and setting a good example.

*If Your Candidate Doesn't Win:* Running for office in the ML/C is a highly competitive process. Each year many more delegates run for office than win. Please prepare your delegate for the possibility that they may not win. A caring advisor can do a lot to minimize the heartache caused by losing an election and use it as a teaching moment.