

Ethics

Can Managers Question Gubernatorial Candidates in a Debate?

Q: A state association of city and county managers has identified local government issues that are important to its members. They have developed questions for gubernatorial candidates and are considering three options:

1. Participating on a panel of questioners.
2. Sponsoring a debate among candidates.
3. Providing their questions to a panel sponsored by the state municipal league or by the League of Women Voters.

A. The best option is to work through a group like the League of Women Voters. While it is appropriate for the managers' association to develop a set of questions for the debate on local government issues, the managers are advised not to serve as questioners themselves. The managers also can play an important role in analyzing the impact of proposals on local governments. Their analysis is invaluable to city and county organizations in formulating and advocating policy positions.

For advice on the ICMA Code of Ethics, or to find out more on ethics training and technical assistance available to local governments, call the Ethics Center at ICMA at 202/962-3521, or visit the Web site at <http://icma.org/ethics>. Calls or e-mails can also be directed to ICMA's ethics advisers Martha Perego, 202/962-3668, mperego@icma.org, and Elizabeth Kellar, 202/962-3611, ekellar@icma.org.