

Presidential Debate Watch Party Toolkit



Whether at the bargaining table or the ballot box, the AFT provides a vehicle for working people and our communities to build collective power and accomplish what cannot be achieved alone. The more involved our members are, the stronger our collective voice is and the more effective our political role becomes.

With the 2020 presidential campaigns underway, our members' voices need to be heard. That's why the AFT executive council approved a presidential endorsement process that aspires to ensure unprecedented member input, with the core objectives of:

- Expanding opportunities for members to give input and feedback;
- Keeping our members informed each step of the way;
- Providing for direct candidate engagement with AFT members to ensure candidates understand and value the issues affecting our members; and
- Striving for the highest level of member participation ever achieved in an AFT presidential endorsement process.

Debate-watch parties are just one part of the AFT's effort to ensure maximum member participation in the endorsement process. They help AFT members, and their families and friends, understand what is at stake in this election and hear the candidates explain their positions in their own words. Thank you for hosting a presidential debate-watch party—it's an important part of our endorsement process!

This kit includes:

- Party-planning tips
- Invitation and sample language for an email you can use to invite people
- Sign-in sheet
- Resources to get information on the candidates

Go to https://actionnetwork.org/event_campaigns/2020-primary-debate-watch-party to register your debate-watch party. Once you register, you'll get access to electronic copies of the materials you need to promote your party and make it successful.

How to host a primary debate-watch party:

1. Select a date and location for your party.
2. Copy and distribute the party invitation.
3. Email invitations to your friends and colleagues.
4. At the party, have a discussion about what the candidates are saying.
5. Take pictures of your party and send them to us!

DEBATE-WATCH PARTY TOOLKIT Q&A

Where should a debate-watch party be held?

You can hold a debate-watch party almost anywhere there is a TV—your home, the local union office, a local pub or restaurant, or the veterans' hall, for example.

What happens at a debate-watch party?

We want you to have a great time at your party! Building enthusiasm for the 2020 election starts here. This is a great opportunity to build a cadre of volunteers to get out the vote. Engaging our members in the primary and general election effort must be a top priority, so use this opportunity to encourage your members to sign up to volunteer for our political mobilization program.

How does a debate-watch party fit into the AFT's endorsement procedure?

- Debate-watch parties are a critical way of making sure members hear what the candidates are proposing, and are important in providing feedback on what members think about those proposals. Make sure partygoers visit [AFTvotes.org](https://aftvotes.org) and provide feedback.

Who should come to a debate-watch party?

We want you to encourage other AFT members and their families to come to the party. Use fliers, leaflets and email to encourage people to attend. Ask each person you invite to bring another AFT member along. Use your building representatives or stewards to distribute the fliers to members.

How do I get information on the candidates' positions on our issues?

- Additional information is available on [AFTvotes.org](https://aftvotes.org) that highlights the candidates' positions on issues important to our members.

When are the debates, and where will they be held?

June 26 & 27, 2019

Miami

Will air on NBC and Telemundo.

July 30 & 31, 2019

Detroit

Will air on CNN.

Sept. 12 & 13, 2019

TBD

Will air on ABC.



PRIMARY DEBATE-WATCH PARTY TOOLKIT TIPS AND CHECKLIST

- Have plenty of food and drink on hand.
- Make it a family-friendly event, if possible.
Having something for the kids to do will bring out more of our members.
- Make sure you get members to sign in when they arrive.
- Facilitate a discussion around the issues important to our members before the debate starts.
Then listen to see if those issues are discussed during the debate.
- How about taking pictures at the event for use in your next newsletter? And if you share your photos with the AFT, your party could be featured in a future publication or on the AFT Votes campaign website. Send your photos to photos@aft.org.
- Have plenty of information on the AFT's endorsement process available, so our members can find out what they need to know about being engaged in the process.
- Provide an additional volunteer sign-up sheet so members can sign up to volunteer for the AFT's primary and general election programs.
- Use this party to get members signed up for COPE. What better opportunity for a COPE fundraiser than watching the candidates debate?
- Tweet pictures from your party to us at [#AFTvotes](#) and tag [@AFTunion](#) in the tweet.
- Get more information on the candidates, tips on using social media to promote the party, and other useful information for hosting a party at AFTvotes.org.



SUPPORTER SIGN IN SHEET

Name of Local _____

Name of Watch Party Host _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

Nonwork email: _____

☐ Sign me up for updates!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

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Phone: _____

Nonwork email: _____

☐ Sign me up for updates!



PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY DEBATE-WATCH PARTY

YOU'RE INVITED

DATE: _____

WHERE: _____

TIME: _____

PARTY HOST: _____

Debate-watch parties are just one part of the AFT's effort to ensure maximum member participation in the endorsement process.

Come join your friends and colleagues to learn what is at stake in this election and hear the candidates in their own words.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Here are some questions that might spur discussion at your party:

- How prominent are the issues of education, labor and higher education in what the candidates are saying?
- Have the candidates shown they have plans to address the issue of healthcare?
- If you could pose one question to each candidate, what would it be?
- What is the most important thing a candidate said that stuck with you?
- What surprised you most about any of the candidates?