

EXHIBIT C



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LEAGUE REFUSES TO "HELP PERPETRATE A FRAUD" WITHDRAWS SUPPORT FROM FINAL PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

WASHINGTON, DC — "The League of Women Voters is withdrawing its sponsorship of the presidential debate scheduled for mid-October because the demands of the two campaign organizations would perpetrate a fraud on the American voter," League President Nancy M. Neuman said today.

"It has become clear to us that the candidates' organizations aim to add debates to their list of campaign-trail charades devoid of substance, spontaneity and honest answers to tough questions," Neuman said. "The League has no intention of becoming an accessory to the hoodwinking of the American public."

Neuman said that the campaigns presented the League with their debate agreement on September 28, two weeks before the scheduled debate. The campaigns' agreement was negotiated "behind closed doors" and was presented to the League as "a done deal," she said. Its 16 pages of conditions not subject to negotiation.

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Most objectionable to the League, Neuman said, were conditions in the agreement that gave the campaigns unprecedented control over the proceedings. Neuman called "outrageous" the campaigns' demands that they control the selection of questioners, the composition of the audience, hall access for the press and other issues.

"The campaigns' agreement is a closed-door masterpiece," Neuman said. "Never in the history of the League of Women Voters have two candidates' organizations come to us with such stringent, unyielding and self-serving demands."

Neuman said she and the League regretted that the American people have had no real opportunities to judge the presidential nominees outside of campaign-controlled environments.

"On the threshold of a new millenium, this country remains the brightest hope for all who cherish free speech and open debate," Neuman said. "Americans deserve to see and hear the men who would be president face each other in a debate on the hard and complex issues critical to our progress into the next century."

Neuman issued a final challenge to both Vice President Bush and Governor Dukakis to "rise above your handlers and agree to join us in presenting the fair and full discussion the American public expects of a League of Women Voters debate."