



Ballot-Qualified Presidential Candidates Scheduled to Debate

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BOULDER, Colorado, October 13, 2016 – The Free and Equal Election Foundation will be holding its United We Stand Fest and the People's Presidential Debate in Boulder on October 25th. Unlike the Commission on Presidential Debates, which is run mainly for the benefit of major party candidates, Free and Equal's mission is to broaden electoral choices through education and direct positive action and to give all ballot-qualified candidates the opportunity to debate important political issues in public forums. As such, the People's Presidential Debate is open to all credible ballot-qualified candidates.

In 2012, Gary Johnson, Jill Stein, Rocky Anderson and Virgil Goode, the presidential candidates of the Libertarian, Green, Justice and Constitution Parties, respectively, participated in the first debate. This year, Darrel Castle, Gloria LaRiva and "Rocky" Roque De La Fuente have already confirmed their acceptance. Castle is the Constitution Party's presidential candidate, LaRiva represents the Party for Socialism and Liberation, and De La Fuente is an independent who has also won the nominations of the Reform Party and the American Delta Party.

Castle and LaRiva hold positions that are almost diametrically opposed to one another, while De La Fuente describes himself as a "fiscally responsible social progressive."

Christina Tobin, Founder and Chair of Free and Equal, said, "We want to help level the political playing field and to inspire more independents and alternative party candidates to run for office." She continued, "We have invited other candidates including Gary Johnson and Jill Stein, who participated in 2012, and hope that they will join in this year's debate as well along. We believe it is important for voters to be fully informed about their options particularly in what has become a unique election year."

In addition to Johnson and Stein, Free and Equal has invited Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump and Evan McMullin as well. The organization invites all candidates who gain ballot access in enough states to reach 15% of the electoral vote.

De La Fuente brings an additional perspective to this year's debate. He competed for the Democratic nomination in the vast majority of states and territories and amassed more votes than many of his Republican counterparts. In fact, he received more votes than current Governors Walker and Jindal, former Governors Chafee, Perry, Pataki and Gilmore, current Senator Graham and former Senators Webb and Santorum combined as well as more votes than Carly Fiorina, former Governor Huckabee, current Governor Christie and current Senator Rand Paul individually. Yet, he suffered in relative obscurity, which De La Fuente attributes to "the manipulative practices that are in place to promote

the politically elite while undermining the opportunities for new, lesser known candidates to make an impact.”

To his credit, De La Fuente has already qualified on enough ballots and as a write-in candidate to theoretically reach the 270 electoral votes necessary to become President of the United States. He said, “I have enormous respect for what Free and Equal is trying to accomplish and am honored to participate in its debate. Just as I am working hard for election reform, Free and Equal is trying to level the playing field. In a way, we are traveling down parallel paths.”

The People's Presidential Debate will be held at Macky Auditorium on the campus of the University of Colorado Boulder on October 25th. For free tickets, go to <http://www.freeandequal.org/UWSF-2016-Tickets/> or watch via livestream at <http://www.freeandequal.org/>.

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