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Sheila /FYI

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SUSAN:

I've thought this over very carefully, and I recommend against any message. I think it might look a little odd for her to send a message to a group which had requested the attendance of both of them. Also we don't want to put her in the position of endorsing these forums, which from all appearances the President's staff is very wary of. Although the League is non-partisan, its members are not and some one might decide to use a message from MR Mrs. Ford against the President. W I think we should tread very lightly in these areas where both of them are involved.

Kaye

CC: Sheila



February 24, 1976

Dear Mrs. Lawrence:

The President and Mrs. Ford greatly appreciated your kind invitation to attend the dinner sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Florida.

Although the upcoming official schedule will not permit them the pleasure of being with you, I know they would want me to convey their best wishes that this occasion will be a memorable one.

With gratitude and warmest regards,

Sincerely,

Susan Porter
Appointments Secretary
for Mrs. Ford

Mrs. Mollie Lawrence
League of Women Voters of Florida
Room 203
255 University Drive
Coral Gables, Florida 33134

SP:bmr
SP-2

(To Kay Pullen for message)



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Television

A Presidential TV Forum, For and With the People

By Sander Vanocur

A series of five televised forums in which voters will have an opportunity to question presidential candidates was announced yesterday by the League of Women Voters.

The series will be broadcast live on the 258 affiliates of the Public Broadcasting System beginning Feb. 23. All of the Democratic candidates except George

to cover the forums without fear of demands for equal time from obscure presidential candidates due to a decision last September by the Federal Communications Commission. That decision freed broadcasters from equal time requirements so long as they were involved in "on the spot coverage" of "a bona fide news event."

The dates, locations and issues to be covered in each of the forums are:

RW

PRESIDENTIAL FORUM

BY MIKE SHANAHAN

WASHINGTON (AP) -- ALL MAJOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN INVITED TO APPEAR TOGETHER ON FIVE NATIONALLY-TELEVISED FORUMS DESIGNED TO HELP PUT THE FOCUS OF THE 1976 CAMPAIGN ON ISSUES, NOT PERSONALITIES.

PRODUCERS OF THE LIVE, PRIME TIME BROADCASTS FREELY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT CANDIDATES WHO BELIEVE THEIR CHANCES MIGHT BE HURT BY APPEARING WILL DECLINE THE FREE TELEVISION TIME.

"I'M NOT SURE IT WILL WORK," SAYS JIM KARAYN, DIRECTOR OF THE SERIES. "BUT AFTER VIETNAM, WATERGATE AND THE NIXON RESIGNATION, THERE'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER YEAR TO TRY IT."

THE FIRST OF THE BROADCASTS, CALLED THE '76 PRESIDENTIAL FORUM, WILL BE BROADCAST ON PUBLIC TELEVISION FROM BOSTON ON FEB. 23, THE EVE OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY ELECTION.

FOR THE INITIAL BROADCAST, KARAYN HAS COMMITMENTS FROM ALL OF THE 10 DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES EXCEPT SARGENT SHRIVER AND GEORGE WALLACE. KARAYN BELIEVES PRESIDENT FORD WILL AGREE TO APPEAR ON AT LEAST ONE OF THE LATER BROADCASTS, SCHEDULED MARCH 1 FROM MIAMI, MARCH 29 FROM NEW YORK, APRIL 26 FROM CHICAGO AND MAY 24 FROM LOS ANGELES.

EACH PROGRAM WILL HIT ON A FEW CLOSELY-RELATED ISSUES. "HIGH EMPLOYMENT, LOW INFLATION AND CHEAP ENERGY: CAN WE HAVE THEM ALL?" IS THE QUESTION FOR CANDIDATES AT THE FEB. 23 BOSTON FORUM.

QUESTIONS TO THE CANDIDATES WILL COME FROM THE AUDIENCE, TO BE COMPOSED OF LOCAL CIVIC, RELIGIOUS AND BUSINESS LEADERS, PLUS RECOGNIZED SPECIALISTS ON THE ISSUES.

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WASHINGTON (UPD) -- THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, WITH THE ENDORSEMENT OF BOTH MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES, WILL LAUNCH THE FIRST OF FIVE NATIONALLY TELEVISED PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES' FORUMS ON THE EVE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE'S FIRST-IN-THE-NATION PRIMARY.

THE FIRST FORUM, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO BRING AT LEAST SEVEN OF THE 10 DEMOCRATIC CONTENDERS TOGETHER ON THE SAME STAGE TO RESPOND TO AUDIENCE QUESTIONS, WILL BE HELD MONDAY NIGHT, FEB. 23, IN BOSTON. THE NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY IS THE NEXT DAY AND THE MASSACHUSETTS AND VERMONT PRIMARIES ARE ONE WEEK LATER.

THE OTHER FOUR FORUMS WILL BE HELD MARCH 1 AT MIAMI; MARCH 29 AT NEW YORK CITY; APRIL 26 AT CHICAGO; AND MAY 24 AT LOS ANGELES.

A SPOKESMAN SAID ALL THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES, EXCEPT GOV. GEORGE WALLACE OF ALABAMA AND SARGENT SHRIVER, HAVE AGREED TO APPEAR AT ONE OR MORE OF THE FORUMS. HE SAID THERE IS A "GOOD CHANCE" THAT PRESIDENT FORD AND FORMER GOV. RONALD REAGAN OF CALIFORNIA ALSO WILL APPEAR AT ONE OR MORE FORUMS.

Mrs. Clusen said. "So is the league."

Robert S. Strauss, Democratic National Chairman, endorsed the project on behalf of his party. His Republican counterpart, Mary Louise Smith, said support, but stressed that she could not speak for the Republican candidates.

Present plans call for the discussions to last from 90 minutes to two and one-half hours and to be broadcast as they occur live on the Public Broadcasting Service.

Women Voters Plan 5 Televised Forums In Presidential Race

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 3—With the blessings of the Republican and Democratic National Chairmen, the League of Women Voters said today that it would