



## 2022 CNMI Gubernatorial Debate Rules & Format

September 29, 2022 | 5:45pm-8:00pm

### Gubernatorial Candidates:

During the event, the moderator shall address the candidates as follows:

- Christina E. Sablan as “Representative Sablan”
- Arnold I. Palacios as “Lieutenant Governor Palacios”
- Ralph DLG. Torres as “Governor Torres”

**Moderator:** Patricia Rodriguez – Sorensen Media, K57 News, Guam

### Event Rules

#### 1. Audience Rules:

- a. Entry to debate hall requires a ticket confirmation number. No ticket confirmation number, no entry.
- b. Event will be open to the general public and entry tickets are \$10 each.
- c. No campaign materials, literature, hats, stickers, signs, banners, or the like shall be displayed or distributed at or around the debate venue.
- d. Applauding or making noise during the debate is prohibited.
- e. Audience shall not do anything visible or audible to express support or opposition to any candidate during the debate.
- f. Mobile phones and other electronic devices must be turned off or set to silent mode. If you must take a call, exit the hall quietly. To avoid distractions, you will not be allowed to re-enter the hall until intermission or after the debate.
- g. Audience shall refrain from talking during the debate.
- h. The use of mobile phones or devices to take photos or video shall not be permitted during the debate but such use may occur during intermission or after the debate.
- i. Rule violators will be promptly removed from venue.

#### 2. Debate Rules

- a. Candidates shall adhere to all time limits on statements, answers, rebuttals and responses. Time limits will be strictly enforced.
- b. Candidates shall not use props or visuals.
- c. Moderator will be seated in front of the audience facing the candidates for the duration of the debate.
- d. Candidates will remain at their assigned podium area for the duration of the debate, except upon their arrival and departure (to and from assigned seating).

- e. Candidates may refer to their notes which shall be placed at the podium for the entire debate. Notes may be written on letter-size paper or index cards that fit into a letter-size folder or a binder up to 2” thick.
- f. Candidates may take written notes for their own use.
- g. Surrogates/proxies will not be allowed to participate in place of a candidate.
- h. Candidates shall not use profanity, display obscene gestures, or intimidate anyone with a threat of any kind.
- i. Moderator may interrupt any candidate if they believe a candidate is attacking another candidate. Personal attacks will be shut down immediately by moderator. Candidates may attack positions, arguments, or ideas.
- j. Candidates shall not be allowed to interrupt another candidate or moderator. It is the moderator’s responsibility to enforce this rule.
- k. Candidates shall not have access to any person during the debate questions segment other than the moderators, Chamber staff, or official volunteers.
- l. Candidates will address the audience when responding to a question. Responses shall not be directed toward the opposing candidate.
- m. MODERATOR WILL SPECIFY WHEN TIME HAS STARTED. *i.e.* “Candidate, your time starts now.” This will ensure that timekeepers start at the right time.
- n. Questions will be drawn randomly by the auditor and presented by the moderator.

**3. Venue Rules:**

- a. No betel nut chewing or chewing of any kind, smoking/vaping, or alcohol consumption during the event.
- b. No outside food allowed inside the hall.
- c. Refreshments will be sold outside the hall.

**Debate Format**

- 1. Stage Placement & Order:** The order of each candidate on stage, the order of opening and closing statements, and the order of questioning shall be determined by the ballot numbers assigned by the Commonwealth Election Commission as follows:

#1 Representative Sablan; #2 Lt. Governor Palacios; #3 Governor Torres

- 2. Greetings:** Debate will begin with handshakes among the candidates. This will establish the overall atmosphere of the event.

**3. Opening and Closing Statements**

- a. Each candidate will be allowed an opening statement of not more than two (2) minutes long and a closing statement of not more than three (3) minutes long.
- b. Closing statements shall not include topics that have not been previously raised during the debate.

- i. If a candidate violates this rule and the attacked candidate has already completed his or her closing statement, the moderator may offer the attacked candidate the right to make an additional rebuttal (30 seconds or less).

## 2. Question and Response Sequence

- a. 1<sup>st</sup> Question:
  - i. Moderator asks Representative Sablan a question (up to 30 seconds)
  - ii. Representative Sablan answers (2 minutes)
  - iii. Moderator gives other candidates the opportunity to rebut
    1. Lt. Governor Palacios rebuts (1 minute)
    2. Governor Torres rebuts (1 minute)
  - iv. Moderator gives Representative Sablan (30 seconds) to rebuttal
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Question:
  - i. Moderator asks Lt. Governor Palacios a question (up to 30 seconds)
  - ii. Lt. Governor Palacios answers (2 minutes)
  - iii. Moderator gives other candidates the opportunity to rebut
    1. Governor Torres rebuts (1 minute)
    2. Representative Sablan rebuts (1 minute)
  - iv. Moderator gives Lt. Governor Palacios (30 seconds) to rebuttal
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Question:
  - i. Moderator asks Governor Torres a question (up to 30 seconds)
  - ii. Governor Torres answers (2 minutes)
  - iii. Moderator gives other candidates the opportunity to rebut
    1. Representative Sablan rebuts (1 minute)
    2. Lt. Governor Palacios rebuts (1 minute)
  - iv. Moderator gives Governor Torres (30 seconds) to rebuttal
- b. The above pattern will repeat for subsequent questions. For example, the 4<sup>th</sup> question will be addressed to Representative Sablan, the 5<sup>th</sup> question to Lt. Governor Palacios, the 6<sup>th</sup> question to Governor Torres, and so forth.
- c. There will be a 10-minute intermission after the 6<sup>th</sup> question series to allow candidates and the audience a break for refreshments/restroom.

### Timekeeper- Roles/Rules

1. Timekeepers shall monitor candidate response times.
2. Timekeepers will have FOUR cue cards: **1 minute, 30 seconds, 15 seconds, and STOP.**
  - a. Each cue card indicates the amount of time left for the candidate to speak. The timekeeper will stand briefly at the 1-minute mark, the 30 second mark, and the 15 second mark. **Once the STOP cue card is presented, the timekeeper will remain standing and the candidate will be expected to halt speaking.** The moderator will assist in preventing candidates from going over the time limit.

## Question Topics

- The Saipan Chamber of Commerce established an anonymous online portal for Chamber members and the general public to submit questions on related to any of the topics below listed.
- Debate questions will be selected from those submitted to the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.
- There will be approximately 12 questions from a variety of topics including, but not limited to:
  1. Environment & Sustainable Development
  2. Immigration/USCIS
  3. Retirement/Veterans Benefits
  4. Healthcare
  5. Education
  6. Cannabis
  7. Gaming
  8. Welfare
  9. Workforce
  10. US Military
  11. Economy/Diversification
  12. Agriculture/Seafood Production
  13. Infrastructure and Utility
  14. Other
- All questions must be submitted by 5:00pm, Tuesday, September 20, 2022 via <https://forms.gle/Gbj16gkmeNVeTxc6A>

## Rule Enforcement

1. The Saipan Chamber will strive to make sure the rules and debate format are fair and applied evenly to all candidates. Candidates are expected to strictly adhere to all rules without exception.
2. Candidate rules will be enforced by the moderator.
3. Should questions or concerns arise, please contact SCC Executive Director Kimberly Camacho at [executive@saipanchamber.com](mailto:executive@saipanchamber.com) or call (670) 234-7150.
4. Any grievance shall be addressed post-event and not during the debate.
5. Audience rules will be enforced by event volunteers and staff.
6. The Department of Public Safety will be present to ensure order and safety.

## **Logistics**

- Candidates should arrive at Saipan World Resort Taga Hall no later than 5:30pm.
- Doors will be opened to the audience at 5:00pm.
- Opening ceremony will begin at 5:45pm.
- Candidates will be given their own seat in a front row to prepare prior to the debate. This time may be also used to greet supporters, etc.
  - Each candidate will have 12 reserved seats in the front row for family or friends.
  - Moderator will indicate when candidates are to report to the stage (after opening ceremony and SCC president opening remarks).
- Water, notepads, and pens will be provided for candidates. Candidates may bring their own writing instruments and notes.
- Candidates will each have on stage an individual podium and chair stool.

## **Volunteers**

- Volunteers will have name tags and will be dressed in black attire to make them easily identifiable.
- Volunteers are Northern Marianas College students.

## **Media**

- There will be a designated area for media who register in advance of the event day.
- NMC will livestream the entire event via FaceBook. (confirmed)
- Various news and media companies have expressed interest in covering the event live or record the event for future distribution.

**Notice:** The above debate rules & format and all its contents are the sole property of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce (SCC) and is subject to revision, modification and/or corrections by SCC prior to the event date. SCC shall immediately inform the candidates or their authorized representatives via email of any changes made to the rules or contents contained herein.