

League of Women Voters of the Calumet Area
Statement on Libertarian Party Candidate's Display of
Paramilitary Organization's Flag During Debate

October 6th, 2020

The League of Women Voters of the Calumet Area and Lakeshore Public Media organized and moderated the 1st Congressional District debate between Republican Mark Leyva, Democrat, Frank Mrvan, and Libertarian Michael Strauss on October 6, 2020. Due to COVID, the debate was pre-recorded and held without an audience using an electronic platform in which the candidates participated from their homes.

The League of Women Voters maintains strict debate rules which bans the use or display of any political materials or symbols during debates. Further, the rules were updated to accommodate the use of electronic off-site platforms such as zoom and webex. The rules now clearly state that candidates are not to, "...wear or display anything political and do not use a political background." Each candidate was provided with a copy of the debate rules prior to the event.

Regrettably, Libertarian Party Candidate Mike Strauss ignored the rules and appeared in front of a Three Percenter Flag, the flag of the Three Percenters, a paramilitary organization.

Prior to the start of the debate, a Lakeshore employee asked candidate Strauss to remove the background. Strauss refused. The Lakeshore supervisor was not aware of the background until after the debate was recorded. The debate was broadcast as scheduled.

The League of Women Voters of the Calumet Area apologize for the display of a paramilitary organization's flag and strongly condemn this action by Michael Strauss and the Libertarian Party.