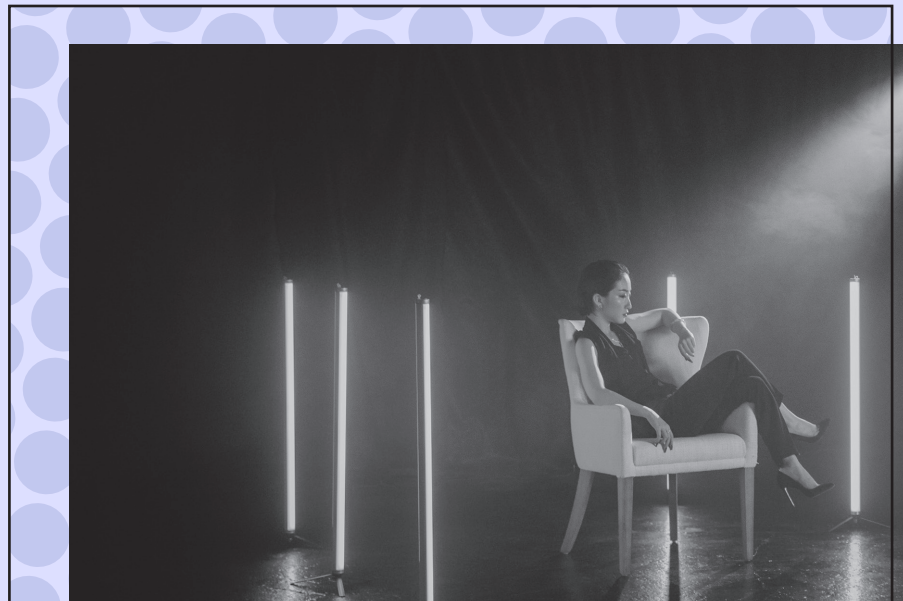
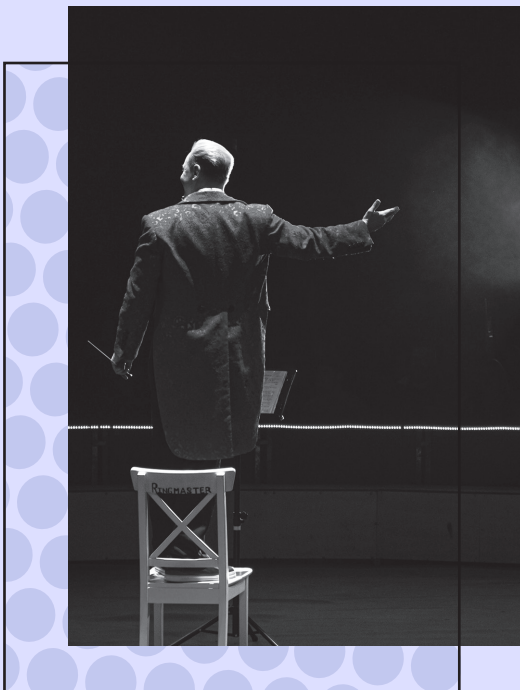


# Speaking Out in an Election Campaign





# Speaking Out in an Election Campaign: Challenging the Candidates

**Election campaigns are key strategic opportunities to gather and reflect on the issues that concern us as artists, producers and cultural workers. This is the ideal moment to ask political parties, candidates (later, elected officials) to make clear commitments to cultural policy.**

You can challenge candidates and elected officials in person:

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- Visit the campaign office of the candidates in your district to voice your concerns. If you can't make it, call.
- Speak at public events organized by the parties or by cultural organizations in your community, and stress the importance of issues related to creation, production and distribution (arts and culture).
- Are you involved in an organization that promotes theatre and the performing arts? Organize a meeting to discuss cultural issues and invite municipal election candidates to join you.
- Send a letter or email to candidates in your district summarizing your expectations and/or demands/proposals on cultural policy [see our sample letters].

Speak out in the media

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- Write an open letter to newspapers or a cultural magazine; participate in a radio call-in show.
- Regularly inform and educate regional and provincial media so they will circulate your questions and requests to the parties.

## Write an open letter to newspapers or a cultural magazine

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Here are some tips if you want to send a text to the „letters from readers“ column (e.g., Ideas, Opinion, Debates sections of the different newspapers and magazines).

1. Know how to seize opportunities: Increase your chances of getting published by linking your message to a news item. Do you think a party's cultural policy is too centred on Montreal? Ask for bold proposals for arts and culture outreach in your area. Do you have ideas and suggestions? Write them down!
2. Respond quickly: If you are responding to the news, you must respect the news cycle which is renewed every 24 hours. Whenever possible, send your letter or comment the same day to prevent it from becoming outdated.
3. Make it short: Plan a text of 100 to 500 words (100 words for a comment, maximum 500 words for a letter). Focus on the essentials (the entire background is unnecessary). Briefly explain why you are writing, make two or three strong arguments, and conclude by clearly stating what you want from the people you are writing to (candidate, elected official, public, etc.).
4. Don't get discouraged! Even if you have written an excellent piece, it may not be published. Keep sending in your demands, ideas and proposals: the more often you write, the more likely it is you will be published. You can also "publicly" post your text on your own social media accounts. Who knows who it will reach?
5. Be bold: Maybe someone in your personal contact network can help you? Don't hesitate to get your letter co-signed to add weight to your proposals. Call or email the newspaper to see if they are interested in the proposed topic. At the same time, try to find the angle or style that would best suit their readership.



## Participate in a radio call-in show

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- First, write an outline of your message, ideally in a conversational style.
- Before it's your turn to speak, take notes on what has already been said. This way, you will avoid repeating certain information unnecessarily, and you can easily follow up on an idea or a proposal someone else has already mentioned.
- Speak slowly and enunciate clearly. Avoid using acronyms, technical or vulgar expressions. Remember, your goal is to share a message (those who listen to you must understand it to support it!).



## To Do

- Challenge candidates, elected officials and journalists on their Facebook and Twitter accounts.
- Make your questions direct, short and polite.
- Express one idea at a time. If you want to address more than one issue, plan a series of posts, and/or write an email to the targeted candidates or elected officials.
- On Facebook, post your questions directly to the person's or party's wall so that everyone can see your question and the answer.
- On Twitter, use popular and context-specific keywords (e.g. #ourtheatre or #munpol) so that as many people as possible see it. \*Tip: ask a journalist or @media to retweet! However, keep in mind that if the person's name is the first word in your tweet, only people who follow you AND follow the person you're tweeting about will see it.
- You don't always have to address the candidates directly. Whether you use Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, interacting on posts and with other individuals can be an original and friendly way to draw attention to your issues. For example, you can give your opinion under a media article, or participate in informal exchanges with your friends.

## To avoid

- Follow basic netiquette: Avoid text message style, no insults and discriminatory comments, and do not write in all caps (this is like shouting).
- Try not to be too insistent: the moderator of the page or the account could ban you if you intervene in a persistent or inappropriate way.
- Likewise, avoid copying and pasting the same statement in different places. This may cause you to be identified as „spam“ by the algorithm.
- Avoid overly long questions (e.g., with several sub-questions). Address one issue at a time, concisely and accurately.