



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative John Kavanagh (R-23)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Representative Kavanagh Announces Intent to Sponsor Legislation to Sever State Support of Arizona PBS

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – State Representative John Kavanagh today announced his intention to introduce legislation to sever all state ties and support of the Arizona Public Broadcasting System (AZPBS) in Phoenix, if the station’s management fails to correct its troubling eleventh-hour decision to circumvent the agreed rules of the Arizona Clean Elections Commission debate.

Statement from Representative Kavanagh:

“The public interest is best served when candidates debate before the voters. The Arizona Clean Elections Commission wisely penalizes those candidates who refused to debate by giving their opponent a televised question and answer session and giving no time to the candidate who declines to debate. AZPBS has partnered with the Clean Election Commission for this year’s debates and is now undermining the debate process by circumventing the commission’s rules.

“It would be inappropriate for the state to continue its relationship with AZPBS, given its sabotaging of the clean election debates that were approved by the voters. The clean election rules are clear. If a candidate refuses to debate, their opponent (who is willing to debate) is eligible to have a 30-minute question and answer session.

“The terrible decision by the heads of AZPBS, if uncorrected, will encourage future clean elections candidates to avoid engaging in a debate and deprive voters of information they need to make their voting decisions. Moreover, I believe the station’s decision to reward a candidate’s refusal to debate, by giving them free television time, is tantamount to making a partisan political contribution to their campaign. AZPBS needs to keep its thumb off the election scale and not shortchange the voters.”

Representative Kavanagh says that his intended legislation would apply to all ties and contracts between state agencies and universities and AZPBS, and would include donations along with contracts for services, goods, and rental space. It would also prohibit the state from providing donations to any group that donates money, personnel, or services to AZPBS.

John Kavanagh is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 23, which includes Scottsdale, Fountain Hills, and Rio Verde. Follow him on Twitter at @JohnKavanagh_AZ.

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