



ARIZONA GOP EVENT WITH TRUMP SLATED TO SPEAK CANCELED FOLLOWING PARTY CONTROVERSY - THE CENTER SQUARE

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An Arizona Republican Party event where former President Donald Trump was slated to speak in Friday night has been canceled.

The cancellation comes after the resignation of state GOP Chairman Jeff DeWitt left after audio of a conversation between him and U.S. Senate candidate Kari Lake was leaked to the [Daily Mail](#).

In the conversation, DeWitt told Lake in February 2023 that there are people "back east" who would rather offer Lake a job or money to avoid her running for Senate. Lake, who previously ran for governor, ended up announcing her bid in October.

"There are very powerful people who want to keep you out, and what they're willing to do is put their money where their mouth is in a big way," he [told](#) Lake. In a statement defending himself, DeWitt said that Lake was an employee of his at the time and was under the assumption that the conversation was private.

Since his resignation, Lake hosted a live stream on Rumble where she discussed the situation, and her campaign has since been saying that she "can't be bought."

The event dubbed "Freedom Fest," was going to include a speech from the former president and other speakers, including Lake.

Lake and DeWitt both have close ties with the former president, who is inching closer to clinching the Republican nomination once again. Trump endorsed Lake's candidacy and she's served as a surrogate for him in Iowa and New Hampshire.

Meanwhile, DeWitt was the chief operating officer and chief financial officer for Trump's 2016 campaign, as well as his COO again in 2020. He also served as the CFO of NASA from 2018 to 2020 during the Trump administration.

Former state Rep. Jill Norgaard is currently serving as interim chair, but a new chair could be selected at the state party's annual meeting on Saturday. Arizona Corporation Commissioner Jim O'Connor is expected to run for the volunteer position, according to [Axios](#), but it's unclear who else may run.