

Report: Network Put Pressure on Christian Reality Star to Drop Statehouse Bid

According to a report by TheBlaze, ABC network executives pressured evangelical former “Bachelor” star Ben Higgins into dropping his planned run for the Colorado House of Representatives.

Another Republican, who had been running unopposed for the seat, currently held by disgraced Speaker Pro Tem of the House Dan Pabon, had dropped out of the race to let Higgins in, but the deadline to re-enter the race has expired. Pabon, a three-term Democrat who represents House District 4, was arrested in March for driving while intoxicated.

TheBlaze’s report states:

In a statement, Higgins announced he was withdrawing his candidacy for Colorado House District 4. Higgins filed the appropriate paperwork to run as a Republican just earlier last week, and the previous GOP candidate stepped aside.

However, sources familiar with the situation told TheBlaze that ABC was uncomfortable with Higgins running as a Republican. That detail never appeared in writing, but was only communicated over the phone, the sources said.

Caly Johnson, a spokesperson for Disney, which owns ABC, told TheBlaze Friday that there is “no truth” to the allegations that party played a role in the discussions.

Higgins and his fiancée, Lauren Bushnell, signed a contract with ABC’s Freeform channel for a “Bachelor” spinoff called “Ben and Lauren: Happily Ever After,” but had threatened to pull the deal if he didn’t drop out of the race. ABC also

“owns” the rights to Higgins and Bushnell’s wedding for the next several years, meaning the Disney-owned network could prevent the couple from marrying, as well.

The TV deal was reportedly Higgins’ only source of income.