

# FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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February 1, 2024

**SENT VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL: tom.horne@azed.gov, inbox@azsbe.az.gov**

The Hon. Tom Horne  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Arizona Department of Education  
1535 W Jefferson St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Re: Arizona's Partnership with PragerU Kids

Dear Superintendent Horne and Board of Education members:

We are writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) to object to your recent decision to partner with PragerU Kids to teach its constitutionally suspect and academically dubious curriculum in Arizona public schools. FFRF is a national nonprofit organization with more than 40,000 members across the country, including more than 1,000 members and a regional chapter in Arizona. FFRF works to protect the constitutional separation between state and church and educates about nontheism.

It is our understanding that you have partnered with PragerU Kids and its materials will now be allowed in Arizona's public schools. We urge the Board of Education to quash this egregious partnership between Arizona public schools and PragerU to ensure that Arizona students are educated, not indoctrinated.

It is important to note for the record that "PragerU" is not a university or academic institution, does not confer degrees, was founded by a conservative radio talk show host, and deceitfully uses a name that implies otherwise. It is little more than a glorified YouTube Channel lacking academic credentials and its declared purpose is to promote "Judeo-Christian values."<sup>1</sup>

PragerU CEO Marissa Streit has described the supposed reasoning behind the controversial partnership:<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Factsheet: PragerU, Georgetown University, March 17, 2020:  
[bridge.georgetown.edu/research/factsheet-prageru/](https://bridge.georgetown.edu/research/factsheet-prageru/).

<sup>2</sup>[https://www.breitbart.com/education/2024/01/30/exclusive-prageru-ceo-marissa-streit-details-plans-to-disrupt-arizona-schools-curriculums/?utm\\_source=ground.news&utm\\_medium=referral](https://www.breitbart.com/education/2024/01/30/exclusive-prageru-ceo-marissa-streit-details-plans-to-disrupt-arizona-schools-curriculums/?utm_source=ground.news&utm_medium=referral).

In Arizona in particular, it has been a battleground because people have really become very aware and very upset about what has happened educationally over there...They have been horrified by the curriculum and the efforts the teachers unions have, you know, suffocated kids with their left-wing agenda.

She also explained that she “believe[s] in book banning” and perpetuated the lie that students are being given pornography in schools. She claimed that “The left has been indoctrinating young Americans for years. I mean, I used to be an educator myself. I was taught how to indoctrinate with left wing ideas.” She continued:

So by having Superintendent Horne step in and say “This is okay. This is endorsed. This is blessed. Go ahead and use it.” I think it’s encouraging. It makes it a little less scary for that 20 or 30 year old teacher, or even the 40, 50, 60 year old teacher who is threatened by these monsters . . . . We have to fight against the biggest bully in school. The biggest bully in school is the political left.

PragerU and its revisionist content belongs nowhere near a public school classroom. The videos that are used as a part of this curriculum are little more than YouTube productions that spew propaganda and misleading or outright incorrect information.<sup>3</sup> For example, PragerU teaches that the gender wage gap is a myth; it is not.<sup>4</sup> It downplays the history of slavery and minimizes climate change, which is a fact.<sup>5</sup> It regularly rails against feminism and immigrants. Given the fact that a third of Arizona’s population is Latino, it is particularly insensitive, inappropriate and insulting to welcome PragerU into Arizona schools.<sup>6</sup> Its videos rely on the audience’s ignorance, presenting a heavily slanted view on culture-war issues couched as objective fact.

Dennis Prager, the founder of PragerU and PragerU Kids, even admitted that PragerU’s ideologically driven propaganda videos are a form of “indoctrination.”<sup>7</sup> The sad reality is that by partnering with and promoting PragerU, the Arizona Department of Education is rejecting factual, evidence-based teaching and endorsing PragerU’s indoctrination. It is

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<sup>3</sup><https://www.mediamatters.org/prageru/lessons-florida-public-school-students-will-learn-prageru-kids>.

<sup>4</sup> It is a fact that overall, women are not paid as much as men; on average full-time women workers earn only 83.7 percent of what men are paid and the inequity is greater for Black and Hispanic women. U.S. Department of Labor Blog, March 14, 2023: <https://blog.dol.gov/2023/03/14/5-fast-facts-the-gender-wage-gap#:~:text=Stats.,for%20Black%20and%20Hispanic%20women>.

<sup>5</sup> It is a fact that climate change is real. See NASA Global Climate Change: <https://climate.nasa.gov/>

<sup>6</sup> “How many Latinos live in Arizona?” Arizona Republic, Sept. 27, 2023: <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona/2023/09/27/how-many-latinos-live-in-arizona/70853443007/>

<sup>7</sup> [www.vanityfair.com/news/2023/08/prageru-coming-to-a-public-school-near-you](http://www.vanityfair.com/news/2023/08/prageru-coming-to-a-public-school-near-you).

shameful that PragerU offers a video providing misinformation on the legal principle of separation between state and church, delivered by disgraced former law professor John Eastman, who was recently featured as “Co-Conspirator No. 2” in Donald Trump’s indictment for attempting to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election.

Pushing PragerU propaganda is a logical next step in privatizing education in Arizona, and destroying the state’s system of secular public education. Despite your title of Superintendent of *Public* Instruction, you are doing a disservice to the public school students you are supposed to serve. Bringing PragerU propaganda into classrooms across the state undermines the public education system that you are supposed to protect and miseducates Arizona public school students, leaving them ill-equipped to eventually compete in a global market prioritizing science and critical thinking skills.

Americans who value the benefits of public education free from actual indoctrination know that a key to effective learning is a classroom experience that encourages critical thinking and relies on academically vetted instruction approved by objectively decreed educators, rather than on Christian nationalist opinions. PragerU, by the admission of its founder and its current CEO, runs counter to those principles. It is an ideologically motivated, biased propaganda machine that does not belong in classrooms. Please safeguard Arizona’s public schools by severing any ties with Prager“U.”

Very truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Annie Laurie Gaylor Dan Barker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Annie Laurie Gaylor & Dan Barker  
Co-Presidents