

**351—4.51(68A) Candidate debate—media organization; debate structure; debate funding; contribution reporting inapplicable.** Iowa Code section 68A.503 prohibits corporations from making contributions to state or local candidates in Iowa. This prohibition does not apply to incorporated media organizations that host candidate debates described in this rule.

**4.51(1) *Media organization defined.*** “Media organization” means a broadcaster, cable television operator, television programmer, television producer, bona fide newspaper, magazine, or any other periodical publication. The media organization shall not be owned or controlled by a political party, political committee, or candidate.

**4.51(2) *Debate structure.*** The structure of the debate shall be left to the discretion of the media organization provided that at least two or more candidates for the particular office are invited to participate. The debate shall not be structured to promote or advance one candidate over another. In choosing which candidates to invite to a debate, the media organization shall use good faith editorial judgment that is reasonable and viewpoint-neutral.

**4.51(3) *Funding debates.*** A media organization may use its own funds and may accept funds donated by corporations to defray costs incurred in staging a candidate debate under this rule.

**4.51(4) *Contribution reporting inapplicable.*** The costs of a debate under this rule are not a reportable monetary or in-kind contribution under Iowa Code section 68A.402.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 68A.402 and 68A.503.  
[ARC 5525C, IAB 3/24/21, effective 4/28/21]