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THINGS TO DO, 1C

MIXED SIGNALS

President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump will get their first chance to talk directly to Arizona voters from the debate stage tonight. If anyone tunes in, that is.

Voters in the battleground state are split on whether they will watch the first debate of the 2024 cycle, telling The Arizona Republic that they already know the major party options and find the November election exhausting.

"I really don’t want to watch two old guys going at it," Phoenix resident Alex Brown said. "I’m not gonna watch the debate. I already made up my mind on how I’m voting." After months of campaigning, Biden and Trump will go head-to-head for the first time this election cycle at a CNN presidential debate. Polls show Trump and Biden separated by single digits in Arizona with roughly four months to go until Election Day. Tens of millions of Americans are expected to tune into the debate, CNN reported.

Even though much has changed since the last time Biden and Trump squared off on the debate stage, the candidates are the same. That has left Arizona unexcited by tonight’s program and the presidential campaigns working to drum up interest.

"This is the first time in modern political history that we have had two presidents go head-to-head in a national televised event," Trump campaign advisor Steve Bannon said. "I’m probably going to have it on in the background. So I’ll pay attention but in the corner of my mind." See DEBATE, Page 6A

AG’s fake electricty indictment targeted

Hoffman seeks to have felony counts tossed

Stacey Barchenger and Elena Santa Cruz
Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

Attorneys for state Sen. Jake Hoffman are challenging Attorney General Kris Mayes’ prosecution of 2020 Trump electors and allies, claiming the “maliciously partisan” prosecutor filed the case as retaliation.

Hoffman, a Queen Creek Republican, is the second of 18 people charged in the Arizona case tied to the 2020 presidential election to file a motion seeking to dismiss the indictment. The motion filed Monday by Hoffman’s lawyer, Tom La Sota, cites a state law allowing quick dismissal in certain circumstances, including when criminal charges are involved.

The 58-page indictment, La Sota wrote in the motion, was retaliation for Hoffman and the other protected speech questioning of the election’s accuracy, association with one another and their petitioning of public officials, like former Vice President Mike Pence, over their concerns with the administration of the 2020 election.

"It is politics by other means," La Sota wrote. "An effort by an overtly partisan elected attorney general to shame and punish his political opponents and critics for exercising their constitutional rights.

See INDICTMENT, Page 6A

Migrant attempts to enter US down after Biden order, Mayorkas says

Sarah Lapidus
Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas announced Wednesday a decrease in migrants entering the U.S. illegally through the southern border since President Joe Biden’s order to temporarily restrict migrants seeking entry.

Speaking in Tucson, Mayorkas said the Border Patrol’s Tucson sector, which covers most of Arizona from New Mexico to the Yuma County line, has seen a 45% decrease in U.S. Border Patrol encounters since Biden’s rule.

See MIGRANTS, Page 5A

Filing: Tax ads ‘deceptive’

Arizona Attorney General Kris Mayes is part of a court brief against TurboTax that alleges the soft-ware brand exploited millions of consumers with ads-vertising falsely claiming free services.

Oak Creek resort rejected

The Sedona City Council overturned the approval of a proposed resort development along Oak Creek, approving appeals filed by residents who claimed the development would hurt the environment.

Heated rhetoric at debate 3A

From left: Patrick Brady, Abe Hamadeh, Anthony Kern, Blake Masters, Ben Toma. JOE RONDONE/REPUBLIC

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