

**Emailed statement on Oct. 28, 2024, from Russ Latino in response to Mississippi Today questions:**

*Adam, please print this statement in its entirety:*

*I welcome Mississippi Today's advertisement of my new public affairs program, "The Sit Down with Russ Latino," on MPB every Wednesday at 10 am. I was excited this fall to be approached by management at MPB about the potential of hosting a public affairs program. The station has a diverse array of talent and perspectives, including Mississippi Today's own Editor-at-Large, Marshall Ramsey. I accepted the offer on the express condition that I not be compensated for my time by either MPB or its Foundation. While other hosts are paid, I am uninterested in collecting taxpayer dollars for what I view as a public service.*

*Our hope is to create content that makes people think deeply about the issues that matter and to more fully embrace the wonderful aspects of Mississippi's culture. We were honored to have Governor Reeves join us for the first episode and hope your readers will tune in on Wednesday. We have many more great guests lined up in coming weeks.*

*Finally, while most of your questions are better directed to MPB itself, I will answer what I can. Other than Mississippi Today's effort to imply there's something wrong with me occupying the same airspace as its Editor-at-Large, I am unaware of any external pressure on the agency related to programming. My agreement with MPB was reviewed and approved by counsel for the agency from the Attorney General's office. And no, the Governor was not supplied with any questions prior to the interview, with the notable exception of our "Inside the Actor Studio" questions at the end of the program. Those include pivotal inquiries, such as "cornbread or biscuits?" Thank you for drawing attention to the program.*