

## Mitchell calls out Johnson, Charlie

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 10 June 2016 03:10

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### District 5 candidate says he was ‘wronged’

With the June 7 primary now a thing of the past, and certification occurring this week and some of next, a candidate for the District 5 seat of the House of Representatives spoke out against recently released false information he believes impacted the primary outcome.

Kevin Mitchell — vice president of the Gallup-McKinley County School Board and a former District 5 House candidate — said Melvin Charlie of Gallup wrongfully took to local media Saturday and misrepresented Mitchell’s position on a variety of topics.

“I don’t know this person and I have never met this person,” Mitchell said in a phone interview. “From what I’ve been hearing and been told, this person has told lies about me and my political stances.”

Mitchell said Charlie publicly stated that it was Mitchell who was behind the suspension of Gallup-McKinley County School District Superintendent Frank Chiapetti. Chiapetti was put on leave and the board never divulged the rationale behind the leave, saying the matter was personnel-related.

“Any time there is a decision about the superintendent regarding something personnel-related, that is a board decision,” Mitchell said. “Not one person makes those decisions. I don’t make those kinds of decisions by myself. On top of that, does Melvin Charlie attend school-board

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meetings? This was something that was false and used to discredit me.”

Mitchell alleges that incumbent District 5 State Rep. D. Wonda Johnson supported and encouraged the information put out by Charlie, and labeled Charlie a “Johnson operative.” Mitchell said he checked the minutes of school-board meetings dating back to March and could not find a Melvin Charlie listed in the minutes. Folks who speak at school-board meetings are recorded in the meeting’s minutes.

Mitchell said Charlie publicly called him a racist and suggested that, in an educational sense, he was against anything or anybody who isn’t Navajo.

“Nothing could be further from the truth,” Mitchell said. “This was a low-leveled attempt by my opponent to get people to not vote for me. I was wronged.”

Mitchell finished second to Johnson with 48 percent of the vote in the primary. But he noted that certification has yet to be done and said it could carry him to victory. Mitchell also said donors to the Johnson campaign need to be looked at; he suggesting there might be connections to campaign donations and school-district affiliation.

“There are some people within the district who don’t like me for whatever reason,” Mitchell said. “The bottom line is we all work to get the job done and try to get it right.”

Johnson denied Mitchell’s claims.

“As a result of serving a first term, and this is my second campaign ... campaigns do get ugly ... I haven’t participated in any ugly campaigning and I don’t know a Melvin Charlie,” she said.

In addition, Johnson said that Mitchell’s campaign attempted to smear her name in a radio advertisement.

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“It was very disheartening and ugly to hear a radio ad that was completely untrue,” she said. “I am pleased with my re-election and now want to focus on the work ahead of me. It’s now time to move forward.”

***By Bernie Dotson***  
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