



press release

Contact: Diane Steinert
steinert@wneo.org
330-677-4549

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday's "NOW" news program to discuss religious influence on politics in Ohio

KENT, Ohio — April 26, 2006 — Ohio will be in the national news on Friday, April 28, when "NOW," the Emmy-winning weekly news program, probes the debate about religious influence on the Ohio gubernatorial primary. The program will air on PBS 45 & 49 at 8:30 p.m.

Host David Brancaccio leads the discussion as to how much the wall between church and state is being stretched in Ohio by church leaders. So-called "patriot pastors" are mobilizing to deliver one-sided messages about social policy, secular laws and even political candidates before the state's May 2 gubernatorial primary.

"NOW" takes a closer look at the Ohio Restoration Project, a campaign being criticized for using Evangelical Christianity as a vehicle for political advocacy, and for its strong support of conservative gubernatorial candidate J. Kenneth Blackwell. "When it came time to find a leader, we found one, Ken Blackwell, who said yes, marriage is defined by the Bible as one man and a woman, and I will stand with you," says Russell Johnson, not a professional politician but a senior pastor at Ohio's Fairfield Christian Church.

Such strong support for a single candidate violates IRS rules, say some 30 religious leaders who have filed multiple complaints against two Ohio mega-churches for misusing their influence. With the election just around the corner, "NOW" describes how the Buckeye State is once again bracing for a political storm of biblical proportions.

About PBS 45 & 49

PBS 45 & 49 is owned and operated by Northeastern Educational Television of Ohio, Inc., a private, nonprofit corporation. A trusted community resource, PBS 45 & 49 uses the power of non-commercial television and related services to enrich the lives of people through high-quality programming and educational services that teach, illuminate and inspire.

###

**PBS
45 & 49**

Northeastern
Educational Television of
Ohio, Inc.

**1750 Campus
Center Drive**

P. O. Box 5191

Kent, Ohio

44240-5191

Phone
330.677.4549

Fax
330.678.0688

E-mail
questions@wneo.org

Web Site
www.pbs4549.org