

## **Moderator Skews Debate by Breaking Rules in All Rounds**

ATLANTA GA – On Tuesday, the Atlanta Press Club produced a fascinating gubernatorial [debate](#) where ethics and extreme positions of the leading candidates were constantly under attack. But the debate between Brian Kemp, Stacey Abrams and Ted Metz was marred with increasing chaos as moderator Lisa Rayam of Fox5-TV violated well established [APC debate rules](#) in all three rounds.

A fire alarm interrupted the first round for five minutes as Libertarian candidate Ted Metz answered a question from the panel. Although panelists balanced their questions to candidates perfectly, moderator Lisa Rayam **violated published APC debate rules** by giving Abrams and Metz improper rebuttals to a question Kemp received. **Rayam invoked a “moderator privilege” that the rules clearly reserve only for the third round** where panelists ask questions more randomly.

In the chaotic second round, each candidate had a standard opportunity to ask each other candidate a 30 second question, allow them one minute to answer and then make a 30 second rebuttal. But Rayam **invoked “moderator privilege” again in violation of APC rules** and improperly allowed Abrams to rebut both questions between Kemp and Metz. Rayam even attempted to take away Kemp’s rebuttal for his own question to Metz until Kemp objected. Later, when Kemp insisted she apply her same improper standard equally Rayam balked before relenting.

In the third round, Rayam inserted herself into the debate as a panelist **in violation of APC rules that have no provision for moderators asking questions**. She used 9 of the 23 minutes exclusively while panelists who were assigned to ask questions sat **idle**. When not asking questions she gave only Abrams and Metz rebuttals.

Rayam’s prejudiced performance continues a trend starting in the 2016 Presidential and Vice Presidential debates where biased moderators skewed or failed to control debates as [previously posted](#) on VoterGA social media.

APC has a superb history of informative debates, fair moderation and clear rules but organizers may need **a firmer stance to control moderator bias** in the future. Several viewers on social media noticed Rayam demonstrated her political bias but were unaware of her rules violations. If social media viewers can determine which candidate a moderator is supporting, more impartial moderators are sorely needed. The next debate on Sunday, November 4<sup>th</sup> will be sponsored by WSB-TV.