

Suspended PBS host Tavis Smiley to moderate town hall in L.A. on sexual harassment in the workplace

 [latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-st-tavis-smiley-panel-20180127-story.html](https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-st-tavis-smiley-panel-20180127-story.html)

By Jessica Gelt



Tavis Smiley will moderate a town-hall event about sexual harassment. Last year, PBS suspended distribution of Smiley's talk show after allegations of sexual misconduct by the host. (Rich Fury / Invision/Associated Press)

Tavis Smiley, the PBS talk show host suspended last December after an investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct by employees, is scheduled to moderate a public town hall event titled "[The Conversation: Women, Men and the Workplace](#)" at Nate Holden Performing Arts Center in Los Angeles on Jan. 29.

The panel, which is set for a five-city tour including stops in Indianapolis, Chicago, New Orleans and Washington, was organized by Smiley's company, [Smiley Group](#), which describes itself as "a communications corporation established in support of human rights and related empowerment issues."

Smiley has fiercely defended his reputation after allegations of misconduct surfaced. He was accused of having multiple sexual relationships with his subordinates, some of whom said they feared for their jobs if they did not comply, and of creating a hostile work environment.

PBS hired an outside law firm to conduct an investigation, after which it decided to indefinitely suspend distribution of "Tavis Smiley," the half-hour talk show that had aired on the network since 2004.

Smiley went on the offensive, posting a strong rebuttal on Facebook. He appeared on ABC's "Good Morning America" Dec. 18 to dispute the allegations.

In the interview, Smiley said he never "groped, coerced or exposed myself inappropriately" in his 30-year career. He said he chose to appear on the morning news show to "make sure we don't lose all sense of nuance and proportionality," when it comes to relationships between men and women in the workplace.

His "Tavis Smiley" program was produced by his company, not by PBS, he noted, adding that his employee handbook did not prohibit relationships between co-workers because, "I don't know where your heart's going to lead you." He admitted that he had had "consensual" sexual relationships with employees.

At the end of the interview, Smiley was asked if he regretted any of his actions. "Absolutely," he said, recounting a time that he interviewed a woman for a job and told her afterward that she was so smart and gorgeous that, "I'd rather date you than have you work for me."

Meanwhile, on Feb. 2, PBS will launch a five-part town hall series about sexual harassment titled "[#MeToo, Now What?](#)"

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