



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on May 15, 2011

Huckabee's Out, Others Still on Fence

For those who'd pinned their political hopes on the prospect of seeing Mike Huckabee taking charge of the White House in 2013, the former Arkansas Governor's announcement on his Fox News program Saturday night might be relegated to the "Stuff happens" category. Huckabee removed a "known unknown" about his future when the popular TV host and radio commentator [announced](#) he is not a candidate for President.



"All the factors say go, but my heart says no," Huckabee said at the end of his 30-minute broadcast. While Huckabee's shows are taped, he saved the last 10 minutes of Saturday's program to make his announcement in a live telecast. An ordained minister whose conservative social beliefs made him popular in many evangelical circles, Huckabee was the surprise winner of the Iowa Caucuses in the 2008 campaign. While some polls had shown him as a frontrunner among likely Republican candidates for 2012, the former Governor put an end — for the time being at least — to talk of his presidential prospects.

"I can't know or predict the future," he said in his announcement, "but I know for now my answer is clear and firm: I will not seek the Republican nomination for President this year." Huckabee had announced days earlier that he would announce his decision on the Saturday night show, which served to heighten interest and, in all likelihood, ratings. He kept his decision a tightly held secret, one he did not share even with his closest aides, Fox News reported.

"I haven't even told my executive producer of the show tonight what the decision is," Huckabee said on the channel's *Fox and Friends* program. He obviously enjoyed the suspense the announcement of a forthcoming announcement had created, as predictions of whether he would run or not run abounded in both the print and electronic media.

"That's kind of refreshing because for the last several months they've all known," he said. "They've either known for sure that I was or for sure that I wasn't, when even I wasn't sure. Now that I'm sure they admit they don't know."

Ed Rollins, a former aide to President Ronald Reagan and the national chairman of Huckabee's 2008 campaign, said he got the hint when Huckabee hadn't called him in a week. "He's not going to run," Rollins told Fox News before the announcement. "About a week ago he broke off communications,



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which tells me he's not going to run."

While the conventional wisdom is that a political figure who seeks to maximize his media exposure and travels the country making speeches is laying the groundwork for another campaign, Huckabee's announcement suggested that, at least in his case, the opposite is true.

"I had not done much toward a race because my life was filled with work that I truly love here at Fox News, doing radio commentaries on my daily *Huckabee Report* on 600 radio stations, traveling the country for speaking engagements, and helping good conservative, pro-life candidates who were running for office," he said.

Huckabee's pro-life stand regarding abortion and his opposition to same-sex marriage, along with his background as a conservative Baptist minister, endeared him to many of the party's social conservatives. His withdrawal from the contest may open the door a bit wider to other potential candidates with similar views, like 2008 vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin and Minnesota Rep. Michelle Bachmann. Neither Palin nor Bachmann has announced a decision on a presidential bid. Some Republicans say the GOP should deemphasize the social-issues agenda and focus on jobs and what they see as the Obama administration's mishandling of the economy. Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels, often mentioned as a potential presidential candidate, has called for the party to observe a truce on moral issues, angering some conservatives. But Daniels, who is pro-life, said that to tackle the huge economic problems, "We're going to have to get together people who disagree on other things."

Some critics on the Right, however, have challenged the Indiana Governor's credentials as a fiscal conservative. Daniels was the Director of the Office of Management and Budget for the first two and half years of the George W. Bush administration, when annual deficits soared into the hundreds of billions, then record highs. As OMB Director, Daniels [predicted](#) the Iraq War, expected to be of short duration, would cost between \$50 billion and \$60 billion. The war is now in its ninth year and recent estimates have put the cost so far at or above \$1 trillion.

Daniels, who [said](#) last December he would decide by this spring whether he would enter the presidential fray, said on Friday he was still undecided. Asked if he could wait until the end of summer before deciding, he [said](#), "I have no idea."

Photo: Mike Huckabee



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