



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on June 23, 2023

Trump-critical Former Congressman Will Hurd Enters Crowded GOP Field

The GOP primary field continues to grow.

The latest contender for the Republican nomination for president, former Texas Congressman Will Hurd, is an unabashed Trump critic who once served in the CIA.

Hurd has little national profile, though he served three terms in the House of Representatives through January 2021 and was the only black Republican in that chamber during his final two years. He has already visited Iowa and New Hampshire in recent months.



AP Images
Will Hurd

The former congressman is positioning himself as an alternative to the Trump-style of politics that has come to dominate the party. As opposed to Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who wants to depict himself as being to the right of Trump, Hurd is taking the stance of a moderate who would bring both sides of the political aisle together.

“America is better together,” he [said](#) upon announcing his presidential campaign Thursday, per the Associated Press. “And way more unites us than divides us.”

Speaking to NBC, Hurd argued for the need to “not be afraid of Donald Trump,” maintaining that “we also have to articulate a different vision.”

Hurd’s decision to get back into the political fray comes after more than two years out of public office. He chose not to seek reelection to Congress in 2020, opting instead to “pursue opportunities outside the halls of Congress to solve problems at the nexus between technology and national security,” a goal in line with his focus on cybersecurity while in the House.

Last year, Hurd did a tour in promotion of his book, *American Reboot: An Idealist’s Guide to Getting Big Things Done*.

While in Congress, Hurd’s district was over 70 percent Hispanic and encompassed more than 800 miles of the Texas-Mexico border, stretching from the San Antonio outskirts to El Paso. As a congressman, he gained some attention for driving from San Antonio to Washington, D.C., in a rental car with Beto O’Rourke when a snowstorm resulted in canceled flights to the nation’s capital. He was also known for his pro-business stance and willingness to engage in bipartisanship.

Before serving in Congress, Hurd was a clandestine officer with the CIA, stationed in Pakistan. As part of his work, he learned to speak the local language of Urdu.

In his announcement video for his presidential campaign, Hurd said: “Our enemies plot, create chaos,



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and threaten the American Dream. At home, illegal immigration and fentanyl stream into our country. Inflation, still out of control. Crime and homelessness growing in our cities. President Biden can't solve these problems — or won't. And if we nominate a lawless, selfish, failed politician like Donald Trump — who lost the House, the Senate, and the White House — we all know Joe Biden will win again."

AP noted Hurd's strong critiques of Trump, particularly with regard to the recent classified-documents scandal that led to the indictment of the 45th president:

Hurd said Thursday that he would not pardon Trump if the former president is convicted in the federal documents case, and he called many of the other Republican White House candidates who rushed to say they would "insane" to make that promise so early in the case.

Hurd said the classification of the documents Trump is accused of mishandling meant they included "information that, if it got into the wrong hands, would lead to a loss of life."

"And the fact that Donald Trump willingly kept that material, and he wants to be leader of the free world, is unacceptable to me," Hurd told [*CBS Mornings*]. "It spits in the face of the thousands of men and women who, every single day and every single night, put themselves in harm's way in order to keep us safe."

Besides Hurd and Trump, other candidates already in the race include Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, former Vice President Mike Pence, Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina, former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley, former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum, businessman Vivek Ramaswamy, radio host Larry Elder, and Miami Mayor Francis Suarez.

Having such a crowded array of candidates creates an interesting and ironic situation. Although a handful of the candidates in the race — Hurd, Hutchison, Christie, Pence — have thrown their hats in the ring with the ostensible aim of giving Republican voters an alternative to Trumpism, their presence in the primary only increases Trump's odds of claiming the nomination, as he has a steady base within the party, whereas the other candidates are carving up the anti-Trump voter base among themselves.

In a winner-take-all primary system, this will boost Trump's odds of pulling ahead of the crowd in various state contests.

It's notable that DeSantis, the candidate who is running not *against* Trumpism, but on the argument of being more Trumpian than Trump himself, has the most support after the 45th president.

It shows that, despite claims by Republicans such as Hurd that the GOP should return to a more centered and moderate stance, the reality is that there is little demand among Republican voters for that brand of watered down establishment conservatism.



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