



## Trump: Will Moderate Presidential Debate; May Run Himself; Doesn't Want To

Trump is also teaming up with Newsmax to moderate a GOP presidential debate in Iowa December 27. But how moderate, or immoderate, would his moderating job be if he is considering running for President himself?

To clarify his role in the debate, he [issued the following statement](#) Monday through Newsmax, saying he had no intention of running:



I have been deeply flattered that so many people have asked me to run for President.

First, when I was considering a Republican bid, and I led in national polls. Since then, some have even suggested I run as a third party candidate.

Let me be clear: I do not want to run as a third party candidate.

My priority, my number one priority, is to defeat Barack Obama in 2012.

I want to support and endorse the Republican candidate for president....

Almost every major candidate has come to my office, met privately with me and has sought my endorsement.

I have told them what I have said publicly. I will support the Republican candidate best able to defeat Barack Obama and the one who shares the values of most Americans: a strong belief in the free enterprise system and an unwavering commitment to a strong America.

To this end, I have agreed to moderate The Newsmax ION Television 2012 Presidential Debate. Millions of Americans will tune in. This will give me and America a fantastic opportunity to vet these candidates....

My sole priority is to accomplish this mission.

The above statement appeared at Newsmax.com under the title, "[Trump: I'm Not Running for President, I'm Backing GOP Candidate.](#)"

That's pretty clear. But also on Monday, [while promoting his new book](#) on *Today's* "Matt Lauer Monday," Trump said once again he would consider running. If "the wrong candidate is nominated to run" and "it's a candidate that's not going to win and not very good," then he would "certainly think about running as an independent."

There are indications that the December 27 Iowa debate may not work out well for Trump and Newsmax. Although Newt Gingrich has accepted debate invitation ("[How could you turn down The Donald](#)"), Ron Paul and Jon Huntsman have [declined](#). Paul campaign chairman Jesse Benton explained: "The selection of a reality television personality [Donald Trump] to host a presidential debate that



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voters nationwide will be watching is beneath the office of the Presidency and flies in the face of that office's history and dignity."

Trump fired back: "Few people take Ron Paul seriously and many of his views and presentation make him a clown-like candidate. I am glad he and Jon Huntsman, who has inconsequential poll numbers or a chance of winning, will not be attending the debate and wasting the time of the viewers who are trying very hard to make a very important decision."

With Trump's "variability" on the issue of his running, the conflict of interest as moderator of the debate is blatantly obvious. Karl Rove [said](#) on *Fox News*, "What the heck are the Republican candidates doing showing up at a debate with a guy who says, 'I may run for president next year as an independent?' The Republican National Committee chairman ought to step in and say we strongly discourage every candidate from appearing." Republican strategist Mike Murphy echoed Rove: "GOP candidates would be foolish to show up at Trump's clown circus/debate. Walk away."

If Trump goes on to "moderate" the Iowa debate as planned, it will, no doubt be memorable, being moderated by a TV reality show host who's apparently interested in nothing more than getting good ratings for himself. Observers say candidates Paul and Huntsman made the right decision to stay far, far away from this circus.

*Photo of Donald Trump: AP Images*



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