

CAPITOL STREET

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2024 GOP Candidates on Healthcare

1st Presidential Debate Weds, Aug 23 @ 9pm ET

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The first Republican debate of the presidential race is set to take place in Milwaukee, WI tonight, August 23 at 9 pm ET. Below you will find the Republican candidates participating and what we might hear on healthcare. Former President Trump announced that he will not participate but noted that he will watch the event to see who he “might” select as VP candidate.

»» Our Take & Next Up

The first GOP Presidential debate takes place this eve Weds, Aug 23 at 9 pm ET ([here](#)) and we expect healthcare to be discussed. Healthcare always takes center stage when it comes to Presidential campaigning given it represents 20% of GDP and is a “kitchen table” voter issue. From Bernie Sanders promoting Medicare for All to Donald Trump’s commitment to lower drug prices/eliminate middleman, candidates’ debate and policy platforms tend to move the markets over time. The second Republican debate is set to take place on September 27 in Simi Valley, CA. No Democratic Presidential debate is scheduled as of yet. Iowa Republican Caucuses begin on January 15, 2024, and many candidates are already campaigning there.

»» Key Points

Who can participate? Presidential candidates must (1) hit at least 3% in two national polls, or 3% in one national poll and 3% in two polls conducted from separate early nominating states (IA, NH, SC, and NV) and (2) need at least 50,000 unique donors, with 200 unique donors from 20 different states or territories.

Ron DeSantis (FL Gov, campaign website [here](#))

- **PBM:** DeSantis is anti-PBM. He introduced a legislative proposal to reign in PBMs and drive transparency ([here](#)) in January 2023 and signed legislation to prohibit spread pricing and claw backs in July 2022 ([here](#)). The law starts in 2024.
- **Medicaid:** Opposes FL ACA Medicaid expansion.
- **Medicare:** DeSantis calls for protecting Medicare, opposes Medicare for All.
- **COVID-19:** DeSantis led a state investigation on “crimes and wrongdoing” related to COVID vaccines during the PHE ([here](#) and [here](#)). He resisted vaccine and mask mandates, suing the Biden administration over requirements for federal

employees in October 2021 ([here](#)).

- Public Health: Anti-CDC and generally anti-public health.
- Abortion: DeSantis signed legislation in April that bans most abortions in FL after 6 weeks of pregnancy. The law has limited exceptions, including for rape and incest, and for certain medical emergencies.
- Gender affirming care (Medicaid): His administration has moved to limit and deny health care for transgender youth by blocking Medicaid funding for gender-affirming care and calling on the FL Board of Medicine to prohibit puberty blockers for individuals under 18 ([here](#)).

Mike Pence (IN, Former VP to Trump, Former Gov, campaign website [here](#))

- Medicaid: Federal spending on insurance subsidies and low-income services should be given to the states in the form of flexible block grants.
- COVID-19: Pence was an advocate for COVID-19 vaccine development during the Trump Administration, but he has never supported a mandate.
- Gender affirming care: Pence has spoken out against transgender healthcare, stating that he is in favor of banning gender affirming care for minors ([here](#)).
- Abortion: Pence supports a national ban on abortion and wants the abortion pill to be taken off the market.
- Anti-Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG): Pence called for states to rein in the push for employee pension funds to use ESG principles in investing.

Chris Christie (NJ, Former Gov, campaign website [here](#)). Christie announced his candidacy for the 2016 Republican nomination back in June 2015, but suspended his candidacy 6 months later.

- Medicaid: As governor, Christie backed Medicaid expansion stating, “Let me be clear: I am no fan of the ACA...I fought against it and believe, in the long run, it will not achieve what it promises. However, it is now the law of the land” ([here](#)).
- ACA: Christie supports repealing and replacing the ACA. Criticized Trump on his inability to repeal the ACA.
- Hospital Transparency: As governor, Christie signed legislation to require the Commissioner of Health to undertake a review of state hospital financial reporting requirements ([here](#)).
- Gender affirming care: Unlike others, Christie opposes bans on gender-affirming care for transgender youth.
- Abortion: Christie is pro-life, but he is the most moderate on abortion issues.

Nikki Haley (SC, Former Gov & UN Ambassador, campaign website [here](#))

- ACA: Haley has opposed the ACA state-based exchange.
- Medicaid: South Carolina remains a state without expanded Medicaid. Haley calls for more state flexibility in Medicaid, without expansion.
- Medicare: Haley defended Paul Ryan’s 2011 budget plan that would have turned Medicare into a voucher/premium support system ([here](#)).
- Healthcare Transparency: Haley is an advocate for transparency between doctors and patients and doctors and insurance companies.
- Drug Addiction: Haley announced that she would end relations with China until Fentanyl crisis is addressed.
- Abortion: Haley opposes abortion rights. As governor of SC, Haley signed into law a ban on most abortions after 20 weeks, with no exceptions for rape or incest.

Tim Scott (SC, Sen, campaign website [here](#))

- Healthcare Transparency: Scott is an outspoken advocate for transparency stating that “transparency and competition were key for improving American health care.” Scott states “We spend about \$850 B through Medicare, but we have very little understanding and accountability on how all those dollars are being spent” ([here](#)).
- Medicaid/VBC: Medicaid needs to “pay for outcomes, and not just transactions” ([here](#)). He is a supporter of increasing value-based payments in Medicaid.

- ACA/Medicare: Scott is in favor of repealing the ACA and replacing it with an alternative that includes medical tort system reform and Medicare reform.
- Innovation: Scott is pro bio and manufacturing innovation (positive for biotech).
- Abortion: Scott supports a 20-week abortion ban ([here](#)), but avoided specifics when asked whether he supports a six-week abortion man. He said ([here](#)) that he would sign “the most conservative, pro-life legislation that they can get through Congress” should he become President.

Doug Burgum (ND, Gov, campaign website [here](#)). Burgum is a former software entrepreneur and president of Great Plains Software, which he later sold to Microsoft for \$1.1 B in 2001.

- Drug Price Transparency: As governor, in 2021, Burgum signed House Bill 1032 into law enacting drug price transparency measures.
- Gender affirming care: Burgum signed a bill heavily limiting transgender healthcare ([here](#)) and vetoed a bill designed to increase healthcare choices for patients ([here](#)).
- Abortion: In April, Burgum signed into law a near-total ban on abortion that permits the procedure in cases of rape and incest only in the first 6 weeks of pregnancy. The law also makes an exception in the case of a serious physical health risk to a mother.

Vivek Ramaswamy (OH, Businessman, founder of biopharmaceutical company Roivant Sciences, campaign website [here](#))

- FDA/Drug Approval: Ramaswamy stated that he would look to gut the FDA, which he referred to as being corrupt. He believes that countless FDA regulations and actions are hypocritical, harmful, and unconstitutional.
- Anti-Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG): Ramaswamy is anti-ESG arguing that focusing on such things goes against companies’ fiduciary duty and allows the biggest firms – without input from investors – to bring about economy-wide cultural changes. He has his own firm, Strive Asset Management, and hopes it becomes the go-to alternative for GOP states. He is hoping to rescind Biden’s ESG rule for retirement funds and “get politics out of corporate America and capital markets.”
- Veterans: Ramaswamy supports legalization of cannabis and psychedelics for veterans/those who suffer from PTSD.
- Abortion: Ramaswamy opposes a federal ban on abortion but he does support state-level six-week abortion bans with exceptions.

Asa Hutchinson (AK, Former Gov, campaign website [here](#))

- COVID-19: During the COVID-19 pandemic, Hutchinson signed a bill into law that prohibited state and local officials from enacting mask mandates. Hutchinson later stated that he regretted signing that bill.
- Medicaid: As governor, Hutchinson implemented work requirements for Medicaid enrollees in 2019, which ended Medicaid coverage for 4,600 more Arkansans.
- Abortion: Hutchinson stated that as president he would sign a federal abortion ban but would support exceptions. As governor in 2021, he signed a near-total abortion ban into law that did not include exceptions for rape or incest.

Donald Trump (Former President) stated last week that he would opt out of the first Republican primary debate. He also stated that he would not sign a “loyalty pledge” from the RNC, which asks all the primary losers to support the eventual nominee, another requirement to be a participant in the debate.

- Medicare: Upheld “defender of Medicare” standpoint during the debt-ceiling crisis, going against the views of other GOP presidential contenders like DeSantis and Pence. When he was president, Trump’s annual budgets included proposals to cut Medicare spending, but targeted provider payments and not benefits.
- Drug Pricing: As president, Trump signed an Executive Order declaring that the US government would pay the same price for pharmaceuticals as other foreign countries (MFN/IPI). Joe Biden later rescinded this order.
- ACA: Trump attempted repealing and replacing the ACA in 2017. It passed the House but collapsed in the Senate (the late Sen John McCain was a key No vote). GOP Congress then repealed the individual mandate via the Tax Cut and Jobs Act

(TCJA). In addition, under Trump, states could implement work/school requirements for Medicaid beneficiaries. Trump stopped paying cost-sharing reduction subsidies to insurers in 2017, issued a rule that allowed short-term plans to last 364 days and to be renewable for three years.

- Drug Addiction: Trump has stated that he will expand federal support for faith-based counseling, treatment, and recovery programs, permanently designate fentanyl as a federally controlled substance, as well as additional actions.
- Gender-affirming care: Trump stated that if re-elected, he will punish doctors who provide gender-affirming care to minors.

Other Republican candidates including Will Hurd (Former TX Congressman), Francis Suarez (Miami Mayor), Larry Elder (Radio host, columnist), and Perry Johnson (Businessman) did not meet the requirements to participate in the debate this Wednesday.

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