

And Then There Were Four (GOP Candidates)

Wednesday afternoon, the Republican presidential field appeared to have narrowed to four candidates.

Retired neurosurgeon Dr. Ben Carson's campaign released a statement shortly after 2 p.m. EST. In it, he says the results of Super Tuesday I proved he no longer had a viable path to the GOP nomination.

"I have decided not to attend the Fox News GOP Presidential Debate tomorrow night in Detroit," he said. "Even though I will not be in my hometown of Detroit on Thursday, I remain deeply committed to my home nation, America. I do not see a political path forward in light of last evening's Super Tuesday primary results."

Carson said, however, his "grassroots movement on behalf of 'We the People'" would continue. He said he remains committed to "Saving America for Future Generations," echoing one of his campaign themes.

"Along with millions of patriots who have supported my campaign for president, I remain committed to Saving America for Future Generations," he said. "We must not depart from our goals to restore what God and our Founders intended for this exceptional nation."

Carson said he appreciated the support—financial and otherwise—"from all corners of America," and that his decision to drop out was not necessitated by a lack of funds. He said his decision was based on "what is in the best interests of the American people."

He is scheduled to speak Friday at the Conservative Political Action Conference in Washington, D.C. During that speech, he

has said he will discuss in further detail his future plans. If it was his intent to announce he was suspending his campaign, Wednesday's statement wasn't enough. Friday's speech may include the language that officially suspends the campaign in the eyes of the Federal Election Commission. The statement, however, very likely signaled the end of a campaign that saw the peaks of political euphoria, the valleys of electoral despair, and everything in between.

The biggest unanswered question, however, is which alternative candidate his supporters will now rally behind. Carson didn't mention any other candidates, nor did he suggest there might be an endorsement coming. Exit polling in the states that have voted so far show his supporters are split fairly evenly between the three front-running GOP contenders, all of whom will be in attendance at CPAC over the weekend. He also has eight delegates bound to him for the first ballot at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland. If a brokered convention occurs, those delegates could become important to the eventual nominee.