

Did Ted Cruz Make Donald Trump an Offer He Can't Refuse?

Wednesday, presidential candidate U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) invited the Republican presidential front-runner, businessman Donald Trump, to a one-on-one debate held before Monday night's first-in-the-nation Iowa Republican Caucus.

In a personal letter from Cruz to Trump, the former offered to hold the debate during his previously scheduled campaign rally at Western Iowa Tech Community College in Sioux City, scheduled for 8 p.m. Central Time on Saturday. He also suggested the following talk radio hosts to serve as moderator: Mark Levin, Sean Hannity or Rush Limbaugh. Or he would welcome a more open "town hall" format.

The full text of the letter follows:

Dear Donald,

We owe it to the men and women of Iowa to ensure that they hear jointly and directly from the two leading Republican candidates so that they may contrast our positions on the critical issues we face as a nation as they make their final choice leading up to Monday's caucuses.

Accordingly, please accept this invitation to join me at an in-person, two-hour Town Hall event at Western Iowa Tech Community College in Sioux City this Saturday, January 30th at 8:00 p.m. Central. This venue is already reserved and I would propose that our campaigns evenly divide available seating/ticketing. Our teams can jointly work on the logistical details.

Additionally, I propose one of the following three individuals

serve as a Town Hall facilitator: Mark Levin, Sean Hannity or Rush Limbaugh. If none of these proposed individuals are acceptable to you, I suggest that instead we alternate in fielding direct questions from the audience.

I look forward to your timely response.

Ted

Cruz has been eager to get more debate time with Trump, who is skipping Thursday night's FOX News debate over concerns about moderator Megyn Kelly's anti-Trump bias. He is instead hosting a fundraiser for veterans' charities at Drake University in Des Moines that will be broadcast on FOX News' chief rival, CNN, at the same time as the debate.

During a campaign stop in West Des Moines on Wednesday evening, Cruz continued to work to sweeten his offer to Trump. His offer now includes control over half of the venue's tickets, so that Trump can invite his own supporters.

"And I'll tell you what, Donald, you can invite half the people and control half the tickets, we'll invite half the people and half the tickets, and each of us will alternate, asking questions from the men and women of Iowa who are going to vote in the caucus on Monday night," he said. "So we have a venue, we have a time. All we're missing is a candidate."

Two pro-Cruz super PACs, Keep the Promise I and Keep the Promise II, issued a joint statement that they would each contribute toward a \$1.5 million donation to a charity committed to helping veterans if Trump accepts the offer.