

Marco Rubio: Donald Trump vs. Ted Cruz Is 'Interesting Sideshow'

As the war of words intensifies between Republican presidential front-runners Donald Trump and Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio tries find a path to the front of the pack.

Prior to a campaign stop in Iowa on Wednesday afternoon, Rubio was asked about Trump's decision to drop out of Thursday night's FOX News Republican Presidential Debate. Rather than single out Trump, however, he went after Cruz, as well:

"I think this whole thing between Donald and Ted Cruz is theatrics and an interesting sideshow. But this is about the future of America. I'm focused on the future of America. I'm focused on defeating Hillary Clinton and ensuring that we don't have another four years like the last seven years. So if other people want to focus on Ted Cruz talking about mono e mono debates. Again, it's an interesting sideshow, interesting theatrics, but it has nothing to do with the future of the United States of America."

With Trump firmly entrenched as the anti-establishment "outsider" candidate and Cruz established as the choice of committed Christians, Rubio finds a difficult pathway to the front in the crowded establishment lane. Thursday on MSNBC's *Morning Joe* program, a top Rubio strategist said their campaign is aiming for a second-place finish in Monday night's Iowa Republican Caucus.

The Rubio campaign also released a new ad in Iowa on Thursday aimed at reinforcing what he told FOX News on Wednesday. The 30-second spot, titled "Eight Years," capitalizes on the "Three F's" of conservative politics: faith, freedom and family.

In it, he says:

"I believe you can't have a strong America without strong families. I believe in the fundamental freedoms that make us great. And I believe in God; that God has blessed America.

"I'm Marco Rubio. I approved this message because it's time for a president who will put their left hand on the Bible and their right hand in the air, and keep their promise to uphold the Constitution. It's been eight years since we have had a president willing to do that. I will."