

Will Donald Trump's Alternative Event Eclipse the FOX News Debate?

Donald Trump, after saying he would drop out of Thursday night's FOX News Presidential Debate, announced he would instead host his own event to raise money for veterans' charities.

On ABC's *Good Morning America* Thursday, Trump's campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, said he expected FOX News to take a hit in terms of viewership without the national front-runner on stage. He also suggested the campaign was interested in televising their own event in direct competition with the debate.

"You and I both know the only reason their ratings are as high as they were on the first debate is because Donald Trump was on the stage," he told host George Stephanopoulos. "My guess is that people who bought advertising time thinking that Donald Trump was going to be on the stage are going to be very disappointed when nobody decides to watch that GOP debate."

The first debate drew nearly 24 million viewers, making it the most-watched nonsporting event in cable television history. Lewandowski suggested Thursday night's debate, without Trump, would only draw 2 million or fewer sets of eyes.

Although it was briefly teased that CNN had interest in televising the debate, it appears the event will only be available to those who watch a livestream video via social media. Meanwhile, several "Boycott the Debate" groups have begun to appear on Facebook, and several "hashtags" have been started along the same lines.

Those who will be in Des Moines, Iowa, Thursday evening may

attend the event, which begins at 7 p.m. Central Time with a “pre-event.” The full event begins one hour later. Doors will open to the public at 5 p.m. Central Time.