

June 10, 2015

Mr. Roger Ailes, President  
Fox News Channel  
1211 Avenue of the Americas, 2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10036

Mr. Reince Priebus, Chairman  
Republican National Committee  
310 First Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Mr. Ailes and Chairman Priebus,

We are writing to express concern over the recent announcement by Fox News to limit the number of Republican candidates to ten individuals in the first televised presidential debate on August 6, 2015. We urge you to reconsider the criteria and to design a debate that will allow voters to hear from a more diverse and inclusive group of candidates who have filed to run for president.

As you know, the First in the Nation New Hampshire Primary plays a pivotal role in selecting our nominees for president. Historically, it has been the responsibility of early primary and caucus states to closely examine and winnow the field of candidates, and it is not in the electorate's interest to have TV debate criteria supplant this solemn duty. To do so would undermine the very nature of our process and the valuable service that states like New Hampshire provide to voters across the country.

It is understandable that a large field presents logistical and broadcast challenges, and that Fox News is seeking to provide a forum in which candidates can be provided enough time to substantively communicate on the issues. However, the proposed limitations are unnecessarily narrow and risk eliminating potentially viable candidates based on unreliable national polling that is rarely predictive of primary election outcomes. Any metric used to select the top ten candidates based on public polling this early in the nominating process would make it impossible to ensure fairness. Indeed, the margin between the tenth candidate and those that don't qualify will almost certainly be statistically insignificant.

What is more, denying candidates an opportunity to showcase their talents and experience in the first televised debate would artificially distort the political process, stifle democracy and competition, and induce voters to consider only those candidates pre-selected by virtue of their name ID rather than their potential as candidates. The first televised debate of the 2016 election cycle should place all candidates on even footing and allow each to make their case directly to the voters and your viewers. Anything less would prematurely suppress the candidate field,

and arbitrarily elevate candidates who benefit from preliminary notoriety and fundraising.

It is our firm view that Fox News should consider new criteria that would, for example:

- Divide the debate into two panels to appear back-to-back, either on the same night or consecutive nights;
- From the top six candidates in public polls, randomly draw three to appear during the first session and three to appear in the second session;
- Randomly draw the remaining candidates and split them evenly between the two panels.

The field of Republican candidates is perhaps the deepest we've seen in history. It should be embraced as a positive sign of civic engagement and political leadership for the nation.

The New Hampshire Primary, as well as the contests in Iowa, South Carolina, and Nevada, exists to afford every candidate – regardless of money and polling – a level playing field and the opportunity to personally share their message and experience with as many voters as possible. At times, the New Hampshire Primary has proven both difficult and resuscitative for front-runners, and instructive and stimulating for fledgling candidacies. This is not only appropriate, but also necessary to ensure that the Republican Party ultimately selects the best nominee possible.

We strongly encourage you to revise your criteria and present a format for your debate that embraces these principles, and puts voters' interests first.

Sincerely,

Hon. Craig Benson  
Former Governor

Hon. Chris Sununu  
Executive Councilor

Hon. Jeb Bradley  
Senate Majority Leader

Hon. Sharon Carson  
State Senator

Hon. Russell Prescott  
State Senator

Hon. Andy Sanborn  
State Senator

Hon. Gene Chandler  
Former Speaker of the House

Hon. Stephen Merrill  
Former Governor

Hon. Chuck Morse  
Senate President

Hon. Regina Birdsell  
State Senator

Hon. Jerry Little  
State Senator

Hon. John Reagan  
State Senator

Hon. Nancy Stiles  
State Senator

Hon. David Hess  
State Representative

Hon. Will Infantine  
State Representative

Hon. Laurie Sanborn  
State Representative

Hon. Franklin W. Sterling, Jr.  
State Representative

Peter Angerhofer  
Former State Senate Candidate

Rich Ashooh  
Former Congressional Candidate

Beverly Bruce  
Former RNC Delegate

Paul Chevalier  
Former Alternate RNC Delegate

Hon. Chuck Douglas  
Former Member of Congress

Hon. Tom Eaton  
Former Senate President

Alan Glassman  
Belknap County Republican Chair

Sheriff Scott Hilliard  
Former RNC Delegate

Dan Innis  
NH Republican Party Finance Chair

Jane Lane  
NH Republican Party Secretary

Jim MacEachern  
Derry Republican Committee Chair

Shannon McGinley  
Conservative Activist

Hon. Bob Odell  
Former State Senator

Hon. Doug Scamman  
Former Speaker of the House

Gene Schneider  
Republican Party Organizer

James Sununu  
Republican Activist

Robb Thomson  
Former RNC Delegate

Hon. Ray Wiczorek  
Former Executive Councilor and  
Mayor of Manchester

Hon. Harold B. Parker  
State Representative

Hon. Adam Schroadter  
State Representative

Hon. Ken Merrifield  
Mayor of Franklin

Charlie Arlinghaus  
Former RNC Regional Political Director

Hon. Bill Bartlett Jr.  
Former State Senate President

Jamie Burnett  
Republican Activist

Fergus Cullen  
Former NH Republican Party Chair

Hon. Ed Dupont  
Former Senate President

Hon. Marilinda Garcia  
Former Congressional Candidate

Hon. Ruth Griffin  
Former Executive Councilor

Michele Holton  
Republican Party Organizer

Ovide Lamontagne  
Former Republican Gubernatorial Nominee

John Lyons  
Former Alternate RNC Delegate

Wayne McDonald  
Former NH Republican Party Chair

Jayne Millerick  
Former NH Republican Party Chair

Renee Plummer  
Former RNC Delegate

Hon. Stella Scamman  
Former State Representative

John Stabile  
Former NH Republican Party Chair

Hon. Donna Sytek  
Former Speaker of the House

Tom Thomson  
Conservative Activist

Christopher Wolfe  
Former RNC Delegate