

GUIDE TO THE GOP DEBATE

Time: 4-6 p.m. | Where: Ford Community & Performing Arts Center, Dearborn | Watch: CNBC at 4 p.m.; MSNBC rebroadcast at 9 p.m.



SAMUEL DALE BROWNBACK

RUDOLPH WILLIAM GIULIANI

MICHAEL DALE HUCKABEE

DUNCAN LEE HUNTER

JOHN SIDNEY MCCAIN

RONALD ERNEST PAUL

WILLARD MITT ROMNEY

THOMAS GERARD TANCREDO

FRED DALTON THOMPSON

60-SECOND BIOGRAPHY

Born: Sept. 12, 1956, in Parker, Kan.
Personal: Roman Catholic; married to Mary; five children
Education: Kansas State University; law degree from University of Kansas
Career: U.S. senator 1996-present; U.S. representative 1995-96; Kansas agriculture secretary; private law practice; broadcaster
Campaign Web site: brownback.com

Born: May 28, 1944, in Brooklyn, N.Y.
Personal: Roman Catholic; married to Judith Nathan; one daughter, one son, one stepdaughter
Education: Bishop Loughlin Memorial High School (Brooklyn); Manhattan College; New York University School of Law
Career: New York mayor 1994-2001; private attorney; U.S. Attorney's Office; associate deputy attorney general; associate attorney general
Campaign Web site: joinrudidy2008.com

Born: Aug. 24, 1955 in Hope, Ark.
Personal: Southern Baptist; married to Janet; three children
Education: Ouachita Baptist University (Arkadelphia, Ark.), magna cum laude; Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (Fort Worth, Tex.)
Career: Arkansas governor 1996-2007; lieutenant governor 1993-96; pastor of churches in Arkadelphia, Texarkana, and Pine Bluff, Ark.
Campaign Web site: mikehuckabee.com

Born: May 31, 1948, in Riverside, Calif.
Personal: Baptist; married to Lynne; two sons, one a Marine veteran of Iraq; and four grandchildren
Education: Rubidoux High School, Riverside, Calif.; bachelor's and law degrees from Western State University
Career: U.S. representative 1981-present; practiced law in Southern California. Ranking Republican on House Armed Services Committee
Campaign Web site: gohunter08.com

Born: Aug. 29, 1936, in Panama Canal Zone
Personal: Baptist; married to Cindy; seven children and four grandchildren
Education: Episcopal High School (Alexandria, Va.); United States Naval Academy
Career: U.S. senator (Arizona) 1987-present; U.S. representative; U.S. Navy (Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Purple Heart and Distinguished Flying Cross); prisoner of war in North Vietnam 1967-73
Campaign Web site: johnmccain.com

Born: Aug. 20, 1935, in Pittsburgh, Pa.
Personal: Baptist; married to Carolyn; five children, 17 grandchildren
Education: Dormont (Pa.) High School; Gettysburg College; Duke University School of Medicine
Career: U.S. representative 1978-present; obstetrician/gynecologist; Air Force flight surgeon; serves on House Financial Services and Foreign Affairs Committees
Campaign Web site: ron-paul2008.com

Born: March 12, 1947, in Detroit
Personal: Mormon; married to Ann; five sons, 10 grandchildren; son of Michigan Gov. George Romney
Education: Cranbrook School in Bloomfield Hills; Stanford University; Brigham Young University; Harvard Law School and Harvard Business School
Career: Massachusetts governor, 2003-06; businessman; president and CEO of the 2002 Olympic Winter Games
Campaign Web site: mittromney.com

Born: Dec. 20, 1945, in Denver
Personal: Evangelical Presbyterian; married to Jackie; two children and five grandchildren
Education: University of Northern Colorado
Career: U.S. representative 1999-present; president of the Independence Institute, a conservative, Colorado-based think tank; U.S. Department of Education regional representative; Colorado state representative; teacher
Campaign Web site: teamtancredo.org

Born: Aug. 19, 1942, in Sheffield, Ala.
Personal: Church of Christ; married to Jeri; four surviving children, one deceased; five grandchildren
Education: Lawrence County (Tenn.) High School; Florence State College (Ala.); Memphis State University; Vanderbilt University
Career: Film and television actor ("Law and Order"); radio analyst; U.S. senator from Tennessee (1995-2002); lobbyist; attorney
Campaign Web site: fred08.com

WHERE THEY STAND: ECONOMY, TAXES

Supports a federal flat tax that "simplifies tax preparation, applies a low tax rate to all Americans, and respects the special financial burden carried by American families raising children"; signed Americans for Tax Reform's no-new-taxes pledge. He has opposed increases to federal mileage standards for cars, but more recently said he could accept some increases if the auto companies found them acceptable. Economic advisers include Cato Institute scholar William Shipman.

Would end the inheritance tax; lower business taxes; make permanent current tax provisions such as marriage penalty relief and child tax credits; wants to "tear down the walls to free trade and create new markets for American-made products." Has called for cuts of 5 percent to 20 percent from each federal department, but identified few specific cuts or eliminations. Economic advisers include flat-tax advocate Steven Forbes and Stanford economist Michael Boskin, top adviser to the first President Bush.

Proposes replacing the income tax with a consumption tax on the purchase of new goods, reimbursing taxpayers for the taxes they pay up to the poverty line - meaning the poor will pay no federal tax. Has been among the most vocal Republican candidates in calling for tougher trade enforcement; supports "free trade, but it has to be fair trade." Says China and other countries are taking advantage of currency rules and other practices that cost U.S. jobs.

Advocates overhaul of the alternative minimum tax and overall cuts and simplification of the tax code; opposed international trade agreements such as NAFTA and CAFTA; believes free trade policies adversely impact the U.S. manufacturing base and contribute to the imbalance of trade. Says government should cut wasteful and inefficient spending and eliminate programs that duplicate one another, but offers few specifics on what programs he would cut or how much.

Advocates "intelligently formulated tax cuts and sensible tax reform," lower government spending, an end to congressional pork-barrel spending, and paying down the national debt. In 2002, sponsored legislation with Sen. John Kerry that would have required automakers to increase fuel efficiency standards; Michigan lawmakers beat back that plan. Has called for increased worker retraining efforts to help those displaced by trade or technology to find new jobs.

Advocates massive cuts in taxes and federal spending, proposing abolition of much of the federal government. He would disband the Federal Reserve, which manages the nation's money supply and tries to regulate economic growth and inflation. Has called for a return to the gold standard - requiring the federal government to issue only as much money as is backed by its gold reserves. Says he would disband the IRS and cut government enough that no income taxes were required.

Advocates tax relief for "middle-income Americans"; seeks repeal of the capital gains tax for those earning under \$200,000 a year and the inheritance tax; pledges to oppose new taxes; promises to control government spending. Wants to lower tax rates for corporations, which he says hurt U.S. companies in global competition. Would overhaul worker training programs and boost math and science education to give workers needed skills.

Supports a national sales tax or a flat rate income tax to replace the current graduated tax. Simplifying the tax system, he says, would dramatically reduce the costs of compliance, make American companies more competitive, and put billions back into the economy by encouraging investment. Opposes "fast track authority" that gives the president expanded power to negotiate foreign trade deals. Says the only way to rein in federal spending is to tackle entitlement programs such as Medicare and Social Security.

Advocates "a new tax code that gets the government out of our citizens' pocketbooks" and "dissolution of the IRS as we know it." Told the Des Moines Register that he is "not prepared to sign on to any particular" tax plan, but says U.S. tax laws put American manufacturers at an international disadvantage. Also says trading partners such as China are manipulating the value of their currency to make their products cheaper than U.S. goods.

MICHIGAN EDGE

Endorsed by Domino's Pizza founder Thomas Monaghan, a fellow conservative Catholic.

Endorsed by U.S. Rep. Candice Miller, R-Harrison Township, as well as a list of "nearly 40 elected officials, First Responders, Republican community leaders and others" unveiled Monday.

None. Missed last month's Mackinac GOP conference, citing lack of funds.

None. But he did attend last month's gathering of influential Republicans on Mackinac Island.

Won 2000 GOP primary; endorsed by Rep. Fred Upton, party leaders Chuck Job and Holly Hughes; has scaled back Michigan operation due to fundraising troubles.

Early medical training was at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit.

Grew up in Oakland County; solid Michigan fundraising and organization; endorsements from dozens of state Republicans, including Reps. Joe Knollenberg, Dave Camp, Pete Hoekstra, Vern Ehlers.

None. Like Huckabee, Tancredo skipped last month's confab on Mackinac Island.

Former Michigan U.S. Sen. Spencer Abraham is national campaign co-chairman; endorsed by Rep. Thad McCotter; made first Michigan campaign stop last month. No paid staff here.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR TODAY

Brownback's background in agriculture makes him the candidate most likely to discuss that subject, one of Michigan's biggest industries. He also is likely to play up his support of a national sales tax.

Look for him to highlight his 23 New York City tax cuts and his role in eliminating a \$2.3 billion budget deficit and in cutting a 10 percent unemployment rate in half. Expect plenty of Democrat-bashing, aimed at Gov. Jennifer Granholm and his fellow New Yorker, U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton.

Huckabee has been the most vocal Republican candidate on trade issues, saying American workers are hurt by unfair policies from trading partners. Look for him to promote his national "Fair Tax" sales tax - a centerpiece of his campaign. Expect mention of his call for more preventive medicine, too.

Hunter has tried to make his criticism of free trade a national security issue, saying loss of manufacturing jobs to overseas competition endangers the defense base. He may try to sell Michigan voters on the idea he can bring more defense jobs to the state.

McCain will almost certainly bring up his 2000 Michigan win as evidence he understands this state's struggles. And he'll talk about a long record in the Senate of fighting wasteful spending in the Senate, as well as invoke Ronald Reagan prominently. "Freedom" - from higher taxes - will figure prominently.

Today's debate gives him a chance to outline domestic differences, including his belief that the North American Free Trade Agreement is aimed at dissolving the borders with Canada and Mexico to "create a single nation."

Romney is likely to tout his status as the only major candidate to sign Americans For Tax Reform's no-new-taxes pledge; he'll continue attacking Giuliani's record on taxes; may cite his father's experience as governor and an auto exec as unique qualifications for addressing Michigan's problems.

Like Huckabee, Tancredo is a "Fair Tax" endorser and can be expected to beat that drum. He is known for his staunch opposition to illegal immigration, which he calls a threat to U.S. workers and the economy. He's also less enthusiastic about free trade than other Republicans.

In addition to the low-tax, small-government mantra, Thompson is the only top-tier contender likely to talk about tougher enforcement of international trade rules. In his first debate after joining the race, he'll be the most closely watched.