



Christ's needle of favorability has not risen and Trump's has not fallen.

It is unlikely Christ will change his strategy and presumably still look forward to stepping out when the first Republican National Committee sanctioned candidates' debate takes place on August 23 in Milwaukee — if, that is, he meets the criteria to participate and if Trump follows through on his threat to boycott the event.

Christ stands to lose a great deal if he fails to make the debate cut, while Trump, confident that his lead in the polls is so overwhelming that the nomination belongs to him, has nothing to lose by refusing to attract an audience for competitors who will send the evening attack on him.

A debate without Trump and the anticipated verbal reworks from Christ will be a meaningless exercise held before a rapidly shrinking audience.

A back and forth exchange between Haley and, say, former vice president Mike Pence over the intricacies of Medicaid funding will not make for compelling television. The clicking sound of remote control channel-changing will be heard all over America.

The pressure to leave the race will intensify on those — including Christ — who fall short of the debate eligibility as the Republican establishment attempts to cull the field and avoid the 2016 experience when Trump secured the nomination after his competitors entered the vote.

The immediate and significant impact of an absence from the debate stage will be felt in fundraising efforts. Money will dry up for the non-participants, and an erosion of organization and advertising strategies and ordered momentum shed hope for a turnaround.

There is a growing restiveness within the party establishment over the continued failure of

