

Jeb Bush Officially Announces He's Running For President In 2016

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Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush (R) officially announced he's running for president, an office formerly held by his father and his brother.

Bush formally announced his 2016 campaign Monday at Miami Dade College in Miami, Florida.

"Our country is on a very bad course and the question is, 'What are we going to do about it?' The question for me is, 'What am I going to do about it?'" Bush said. "And I've decided I'm a candidate for president of the United States of America."

Bush filed paperwork to run for president with the Federal Elections Commission earlier Monday. In his remarks at Miami Dade, Bush pledged to make the United States an "economic superpower like no other."

"So many challenges could be overcome if we just get this economy growing at full strength," he said. "There is not a reason in the world why we cannot grow at a rate of four percent a year."

Describing himself as a "reforming governor," Bush touted his leadership experience while diminishing the records of his opponents coming from the U.S. Senate (as well as onetime-senator President Barack Obama).

"There's no passing off responsibility when you're a governor, no blending into the legislative crowd or filing an amendment and calling that success," he said. "As our whole nation has learned since 2008, executive experience is another term for preparation, and there is no substitute for that. We are not going to clean up the mess in Washington by electing the people who either helped create it or have proven incapable of fixing it."

Bush also touched on foreign policy, condemning the current administration for leading the country "running us straight in the direction of the greatest risk of all -- military inferiority." He also pledged to "rebuild vital friendships" such as the United States' relationship with Israel, and criticized Obama's Cuba policy.

"We don't need a glorified tourist to go to Havana in support of a failed Cuba," he said. "We need an American president to go to Havana in solidarity with a free Cuban people, and I am ready to be that president."

Toward the end of his speech, Bush was interrupted by a group of pro-immigration protesters wearing shirts that said "legal status is not enough."

"The next president of the United States will pass meaningful immigration reform," Bush said in response to the heckling. "So that will be solved, not by executive order."

"I will take nothing and no one for granted," Bush concluded his remarks. "I will run with heart and I will run to win."

The former governor has long hinted at his 2016 plans. In a Dec. 16 Facebook note, Bush said he had decided to "actively explore the possibility" of a presidential run, announcing plans to form a leadership political action committee. Before that, he visited key states like South Carolina and announcing he'd release roughly 250,000 emails from his time in office as Florida's governor. He began staffing up for the race months ahead of his

announcement, and one week ago announced a shake-up of key staffers -- all while maintaining that he had not yet decided on running.

Bush served as Florida governor from 1999 to 2007. He was born and raised in Texas, and moved to Florida in the early 1980s. He held his first elected office there in 1987, when he became Florida's secretary of commerce.

Bush is the brother of former President George W. Bush and son of former President George H.W. Bush. His mother, former first lady Barbara Bush, spoke out several times about her son's potential 2016 aspirations, saying in an April 2013 interview with NBC's "Today," "We've had enough Bushes" in the White House.

"I would hope that someone else would run, although there's no question in my mind that Jeb is the best qualified person to run for president, but I hope he won't, because I think he'll get all my enemies, all his brother's, all -- and there are other families," Barbara Bush told CSPAN in January 2014. "I refuse to accept that this great country isn't raising other wonderful people."

Bloomberg reported in October Barbara Bush's stance on a potential Jeb Bush candidacy had since shifted to "neutral."

Bush has appeared to downplay his family's legacy in his nascent presidential bid. One day ahead of his formal announcement, Bush tweeted out a campaign logo notably missing his last name: