



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on October 30, 2014

Jeb Bush, Taxes, and the 2016 Presidential Race

With the approaching mid-term elections, voters should get ready for the launching of the 2016 presidential campaign pretty much the next day. With that, some comments that former Florida Governor Jeb Bush (shown) — an as yet undeclared but likely candidate for the presidential race — made at a 2012 House Budget Committee hearing on taxes will certainly be a hot topic for discussion among the Republican Party grassroots.



“Jeb stabbed Republicans in the back just when they were unified in insisting on major spending cuts with no tax increases,” Grover Norquist of Americans for Tax Reform told the *Washington Times*.

Norquist was referencing Bush’s comments that he could accept a budget deal in which taxes were raised by \$1 for every \$10 in spending cuts that the Democrats would agree to. Norquist was enraged, particularly because the Democrats had not even offered any such deal.

In 1982, President Ronald Reagan agreed to a tax increase of \$1 for every \$3 in spending cuts. Of course, the Democrats never got around to the promised spending cuts, but the taxpayers did get stuck with the higher tax bill.

Even more relevant to Jeb Bush was the pledge that his father made at the Republican National Convention in 1988, in which Reagan’s vice president, George H. W. Bush, promised he would never raise taxes in order to “balance the budget,” if he were elected president. In fact, in his acceptance speech for the Republican Party nomination, the elder Bush made sure the voters knew he was not going to raise taxes, even if the Democrats repeatedly insisted that he do so. Looking straight at a national television audience, Bush said he would tell the Democrats, “Read my lips: no new taxes.”

That pledge, and the fact that he was the vice president of a popular president, enabled Bush to easily defeat the Democrat candidate, Governor Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts.

When then-House Speaker Tom Foley and then-Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, both Democrats, pushed a tax increase at the ratio of \$1 in taxes for every \$2 in spending cuts, Bush caved. Of course, the Democrats once again reneged on the spending cuts, and Bush went on to lose the 1992 presidential election to the Democratic nominee, Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton.

After two terms of Clinton, Jeb’s brother, George W. Bush, narrowly defeated Democrat nominee Vice President Al Gore in 2000 for the presidency. (Jeb was governor of Florida at the time of the famous Florida recount.) While George W. Bush was successful in cutting tax rates, he led a federal government spending spree the likes of which the nation had not seen since the days of Lyndon Johnson and the Great Society’s massive expansion of the welfare state.

Because of this Bush family history, Jeb Bush’s refusal to rule out that he would favor tax increases by signing Norquist’s famous no tax pledge, along with his 2012 statement to the House Budget committee, the Republican Party looks upon him with suspicion.

And it is not just his Bush family name. And it is not just taxes.



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While Jeb Bush is no doubt a darling of many in the Republican establishment that gave us not only his father and brother, but also the ill-fated campaigns of Robert Dole, John McCain, and Mitt Romney, Republican activists have concerns with Bush on other issues, as well.

Jeb Bush is clearly out of step with the Republican base on the issue of immigration. Not only is he for “comprehensive immigration reform” — seen by the activists as simply a euphemism for “amnesty” — but he also defends the breaking of U.S. immigration law by these illegal aliens as “an act of love.” Bush contends that these illegals crossed the border “for their “families.” One might recall the damage inflicted upon the presidential campaign of Texas Governor Rick Perry in 2012, when he declared that those who oppose in-state tuition for illegal aliens just don’t “have a heart.”

Another issue that links Jeb with his unpopular brother is that of education, or more specifically, the federal take-over of public education. It was Jeb’s brother, President George W. Bush, who rammed through what is now the wildly unpopular No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. NCLB was a significant increase in federal control of public education, historically and constitutionally not a federal function. Had a Democrat president asked for a similar law, it is probable that the Republican-controlled Congress would have balked; however, because NCLB came from a Republican president, they voted for it.

If anything, Jeb Bush is even more determined than his brother to increase the federal role in public education — this time through the Common Core State Standards.

While proponents of Common Core argue it is not a federally created program, few are buying that. As the *Washington Post* has stated, “While most Republicans had probably barely heard of Common Core a year or two ago, it has quickly become a symbolic issue of deep importance, representing government overreach and Obama/Swedish-style social engineering, and possibly a takeover of American sovereignty by the U.N.”

Common Core supporters typically claim that the standards did not originate with the federal government, but rather were “state initiated” through the National Governors’ Association (NGA). This implies that the federal government is simply adopting what the states, on their own, developed. This is somewhat duplicitous, because NGA is a private organization, funded by forces that are pushing Common Core.

So, in the end, Jeb Bush will be the candidate of the establishment not simply because he is yet another Bush, but because of his political views — which are to the Left of those Republicans who work in the trenches of the party, and generally favor more conservative positions, such as low tax rates, limited government, and keeping the federal government out of state and local matters.

While opposition to Common Core has become a typical Republican tenet, to go along with opposition to taxes, Jeb Bush actually leads two organizations dedicated to the implementation of Common Core.



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