



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on May 6, 2015

## Huckabee: I'll Conquer Jihad, Fix "Dysfunctional" Gov't, Push Fair Tax

Combining cultural conservatism and economic populism, former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee (shown) kicked off his campaign for the GOP presidential nomination in his hometown of Hope, Arkansas, Tuesday, promising to take America ["from Hope to higher ground."](#) Along the way he proposes to fix a "dysfunctional" government in Washington, conquer jihadism, and, in what is likely to be his most controversial position, fight for the enactment of a national sales tax called ["the Fair Tax."](#)



"As president, I'll work to pass the Fair Tax, which would no longer penalize people's work, their savings, their investments, or their good stewardship," Huckabee declared. "And it would be the end of big government bailouts and, most importantly, we finally rid ourselves of the biggest bully in America, the IRS. The IRS would disappear and April 15 would be just another beautiful spring day," he told the cheering crowd of about 1,600, including lifelong friends, as well as political supporters, some of whom were "caravanned" in from Iowa, *Politico* reported.

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For many of those gathered at the community center next to the University of Arkansas Community College at Hope, it was the second time they had come to help launch a Huckabee presidential campaign. Huckabee ran for president the first time in 2008, when he won the Republican vote in the Iowa caucuses, the lead-off event in the competition for the party's presidential nomination. He won in seven other states before Arizona Senator John McCain secured the nomination.

His campaign speech Tuesday was long on biography, emphasizing his Arkansas roots, humble beginning, and personal ties with many in the state. A former Baptist pastor, he recalled his baptism and personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as his Savior at the age of 10. He also cited his 10-year record (July 1996-January 2007) as governor.

"I governed in a state that was the most lopsided and partisan in the country — no Republican governor had more Democrats and fewer Republicans," he said. "I challenged the deeply entrenched political machine that ran this state. It was tough sledding, but I learned how to govern and how to lead, and even in that environment we passed 94 tax cuts, rebuilt our road system, saw dramatic improvements in student test scores, and fought the corruption of the good ol' boy system so working class people would be given a fair shake."

Critics of the former governor contend he is not telling "the whole story" about his record in office. The anti-tax group Club for Growth, which opposed Huckabee the last time he ran for president, has already purchased [\\$100,000 worth of ads](#) in Iowa and the early primary state of South Carolina, charging that Huckabee as governor "raised taxes. He raised them often and he raised them a lot." Despite the



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candidate's boast of 94 tax cuts, Factcheck.Org said during the 2008 campaign that Arkansas had 21 tax increases on Huckabee's watch, worth \$505.1 million.

Huckabee responded at that time by saying he had to accept tax increases to balance the state budget, as required by law. His campaign sent the following statement to PolitiFact in 2007:

Unable to resort to deficit spending — as other candidates are able to do — the Arkansas Legislature was forced to raise taxes to pay for infrastructure repair, conservation efforts, court-mandated education expenditures, and unfunded federal mandates.

In Tuesday's speech, Huckabee lashed out against "unbalanced" trade deals and "black-robed and unelected judges" who usurp the power to "make law," and he proposed changes to Social Security and Medicaid, and also welfare programs he said prolong rather than end poverty.

"I don't judge the success of government by how many people are on assistance, but by how many people have good jobs and don't need government assistance," he said. "And we don't create good jobs for Americans by entering into unbalanced trade deals that forego Congressional scrutiny, and looking the other way as the law is ignored so we can import low wage labor, undercut American workers, and drive wages lower than the Dead Sea." Huckabee stressed his opposition to altering the terms of decades-old entitlement programs for America's retirees.

"You were forced to pay for Social Security and Medicare for 50 years," he said. "The government grabs money from our paychecks and says it will be waiting for us when we turn 65. If Congress wants to take away someone's retirement, let them end their own congressional pensions — not your Social Security. As president, I promise you will get what you paid for!" At a time of rising opposition to Common Core education standards, Huckabee revived an unfulfilled Republican promise from the Reagan era: the abolition of the U.S. Department of Education.

"There is no Constitutional authority to dictate education from the federal government. Why even have a federal Department of Education?" he asked. "Education policy should be set by states, local school boards, and best of all, by the moms and dads of the children." Washington has "supersized the federal bureaucracy, but we've downsized the military and left our borders open and uncontrolled," Huckabee said as he called for a rejection of amnesty, while stressing the need for "taking control of our own borders. But we ought to get on our knees every night and thank God we still live in a country people are trying to break into, instead of one they are trying to break out of," he added.

With his oft-repeated "from Hope to higher ground" slogan, Huckabee recalled Barack Obama's promises of "hope and change" when the incumbent was also a candidate for president in 2008. "But eight years later, our debt has more than doubled, America's leadership in the world has evaporated, and the country is more polarized than ever in my lifetime," Huckabee observed, charging that "93 million Americans don't have jobs, and many who do have seen the full time job with benefits they once had become two part time jobs with no benefits."

Promising a vigorous response to threats from abroad, Huckabee cited that as another responsibility unmet by Obama. "But when I hear the current president say he wants Christians to get off their high horse so we can make nice with radical jihadists, I wonder if he could watch a western from the Fifties and be able to figure out who the good guys and the bad guys are," said Huckabee. "As president, I promise you that we will no longer merely try to contain jihadism, we will conquer it!" He also stressed a hardline stand against Iran's nuclear program, promising that "Israel will know — as will the world — that we are their trusted friend, and the Ayatollahs of Iran will know that hell will freeze over before



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they ever get a nuclear weapon!”

With former Florida Governor Jeb Bush considered a leading, though yet undeclared, GOP candidate, and Hillary Clinton the anticipated Democratic nominee, Huckabee declared: “I don’t have a global foundation or a taxpayer paycheck to live off of. I don’t come from a family dynasty, but a working family. I grew up blue collar and not blue blood.”

And with declared candidates Ted Cruz, Rand Paul, and Marco Rubio holding seats in the Senate while campaigning for president, Huckabee said candidates should not be campaigning for one job while being paid for another. “And if someone is elected to an office, then give the taxpayers what they’re paying for and what you said you wanted,” he asserted without mentioning any names. “If you live off the government payroll and want to run for an office other than the one you’re elected to, then have the integrity and decency to resign the one you don’t want and pursue the one you decided you’d rather have.”

The former governor claimed the government in Washington is dysfunctional because it has become “the Roach Motel: people go in but they never come out. As president I’ll fight for term limits on all 3 branches of government. That would help return us to the Founders’ dream that serving the public would be a temporary duty — not a lucrative career with generous pensions and paychecks not available to the people who pay for them.”

Claiming the nation has “lost our way morally,” Huckabee decried the court-ordered legalization of abortion and “the slaughter of over 55 million babies in the name of choice.” He also opposed the altering of marriage laws to include same-sex “marriages,” an issue now before the U.S. Supreme Court. “The Supreme Court is not the Supreme Being,” he said, “and they can’t overturn the laws of nature or of nature’s God.”

Photo of Mike Huckabee: Gage Skidmore



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