



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on April 13, 2015

Rubio's Candidacy Challenges Dynasties of Bushes, Clintons, Obama

On Monday morning an advisor to Republican Florida Senator Marco Rubio (shown on left) [told some of his donors](#) to expect his announcement Monday night that he would formally declare his candidacy for the Republican Party's nomination for president in 2016. He also told those donors that Rubio is "uniquely qualified" to lead the nation.



The contrast between Rubio and Hillary Clinton, the presumptive Democrat nominee, couldn't be greater. She's 67; he'll turn 44 next month. She's a tired warhorse hauling enough political baggage to stuff a 14-foot U-Haul trailer. Rubio has stumbled on some issues, but has regained his balance. Hillary lost a heartbreaker in 2008 to an upstart, while Rubio came from 20 points behind a popular Florida governor in 2010 to take his current Senate seat.

Hillary's voting record places her squarely in the progressive/socialist camp, while Rubio scores 100 with the American Conservative Union and 80 in the much more tightly-rated Freedom Index, sponsored by The John Birch Society.

Her campaign touts her vast experience, while Rubio will no doubt look to the future, with his popular 100 Innovative Ideas for Florida's Future that he used to great advantage in his race against Florida Governor Charlie Crist.

His story is compelling; hers is radical. He is quick on his feet, and in a face-to-face confrontation with Hillary, would likely win in a walk.

If he gets that far.

His victory over Crist was no fluke. He studied his opponent, concentrated on his weaknesses, finessed him in the primaries, and finally forced Crist to re-register as an Independent. The final numbers in 2010 were telling: Coming from a 20-point deficit, he won election to the Senate with 49 percent of the vote compared to 30 percent for Crist — nearly a 40-point swing.

Rubio has stumbled. In his attempts to appeal to the large Cuban population in Florida, he embellished his family's history, claiming that his parents were forced to leave Cuba when Castro came to power. In October 2011, the *St. Petersburg Times* and the *Washington Post* outed Rubio's embellishments, noting that his family had actually left Cuba in 1956, not 1959, while Fulgencio Batista was dictator.

Rubio was able to turn the gaffe to his advantage, stating:



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The real essence of my family's story is not about the date my parents first entered the United States. Or whether they traveled back and forth between the two nations. Or even the date they left Fidel Castro's Cuba forever and permanently settled here.

The essence of my family story is why they came to America in the first place, and why they had to stay.

It was for freedom, and that's the theme of Rubio's campaign: restoring the American dream. He is calling it "a new American century," an implicit but clear contrast to the old century dominated by the likes of Clintons, Bushes, and Obama.

Another Rubio gaffe occurred in January 2013, when he proposed a "path to citizenship" for illegals which involved a multi-step plan including fines, back taxes, background checks, and a lengthy probationary period. This was an affront to the Republican establishment, which declared that Rubio's plan was simply glorified amnesty. Once again, Rubio bounced back, claiming that any plan to deal with the illegal immigration issue was premature; that securing the border was the first priority.

He is persuaded that Islamist terrorists pose the greatest threat to the United States, claiming that they intend to impose their beliefs on the world. Accordingly, he voted for extending the "roving wiretaps provision" of the PATRIOT Act.

His grasp of the Constitution isn't as tight as some would wish. Last June he had the opportunity to head off funding for adult-education programs and other work-force related federal programs. Instead, he voted to extend and expand those programs, which earned him a "bad vote" rating from the Freedom Index "because there is no constitutional authorization for federal work-force programs ... such programs are best handled by the private sector."

At the moment polls are showing Rubio's popularity among likely voters. In January, Zogby Analytics placed him second among all potential Republican candidates in an online poll, while in a *NBC/Wall Street Journal* poll conducted just a month ago, Rubio beat out both Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker and former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee.

His advisors appear to have a firm grasp of reality. One of them told *National Journal*:

Jeb [Bush] is the clear front-runner, Walker is a not quite very close second, and we're a strong third.

Our guy has to have the patience to let Walker stumble, as people with no national experience usually do, and be agile enough to take advantage of the opening.

He also has to have money. The fact that he used his articulate speaking abilities to impress big-buck donors Paul Singer and the Koch brothers during recent presentations is encouraging to his campaign.

His big advantage over Hillary is her baggage: her long list of brushes with political death, which she barely survived, plus her current entanglements with Benghazi and her private e-mail controversy. Rubio is counting on his conservative record, his ability to move audiences with his rhetoric, and some luck, to find himself face to face with Hillary Clinton at the late stages of the 2016 campaign. He is also banking on the increasing number of voters tired of not only the Bush and Clinton dynasties but the Republican establishment in general.

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