



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on September 29, 2014

“Values Voters” Scorn Hillary, Boost Cruz

The split between the GOP establishment and the “religious right” appears as wide as ever, but there remains one candidate with the ability to unite the Grand Old Party: Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Clinton, the acknowledged frontrunner for the Democratic nomination, has yet to announce her anticipated run for president in 2016. She was, nonetheless, a major [topic of conversation](#) during the past weekend at the annual Values Voters Summit in Washington, D.C., where conservative potential presidential contenders took turns in rallying the faithful, and establishment favorites Jeb Bush, the former governor of Florida, and New Jersey Governor Chris Christie were not invited. Ted Cruz, the junior senator from Texas won the summit’s straw poll for the second year in a row, with 25 percent of the vote, while political newcomer Ben Carson, a neurosurgeon who has wowed conservative audiences on the lecture circuit, came in second at 20 percent. Former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee, who contended for the party’s nomination in 2008, placed third at 12 percent. Carson came in first in the poll of the summiteers’ choice for vice president. The Maryland resident has said there is a “string likelihood” he will enter the race for the GOP presidential nomination.



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None of the hopefuls has made a formal statement of candidacy, but Huckabee, who sat out the 2012 contest, has been leading in the early polls in Iowa, where he won in the Republican caucuses in the lead-off campaign event in 2008. He reminded voters at the summit of an ad run by Clinton in her presidential primary campaign against then-Senator Barack Obama in 2008. The ad showed sleeping children and asked viewers who they wanted to have answering the phone at the White House when a crisis might occur in the wee hours of the morning.

“I think we know who we don’t want to answer it,” said Huckabee, drawing laughter and applause from the crowd. He then focused on the heavily armed terrorist attack on the U.S. outpost in Benghazi, Libya, in 2012, when Clinton was Secretary of State. Republicans have criticized the Obama



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administration's response, contending the State Department and the White House were slow to respond to the assault and had initially mischaracterized it as spontaneous response to an anti-Muslim video on the Internet. The U.S. ambassador to Libya and three other Americans were killed in the attack.

"On September 11 two years ago the phone did ring and I guess it went to voicemail because when the desperate calls for help came from Benghazi, Libya, nobody answered that call," Huckabee said. "And today the phone's still ringing. The phone is ringing in Syria where ISIS has set up shop."

The wife of former president Bill Clinton was the junior senator from New York for eight years before losing to Obama in the 2008 contest for the Democratic presidential nomination. She served as Obama's secretary of state in his first term, leaving the office in 2013. She has long been the target of political conservatives who see her as a Democrat who is well to the left of her husband in advocating collectivist approaches to family and societal issues. A former lawyer for the Children's Defense Fund, she once compared marriage to life on an Indian reservation. During her White House years, she authored a book on child-rearing entitled *It Takes a Village*. While she contended with Obama for the party's nomination, the two debated over who had the better plan for a program of national healthcare. Both are vigorous defenders of abortion "rights" and "gay marriage," two positions that draw strong opposition from social and religious conservatives. In his speech at the summit Friday, Cruz fired away at the "ObamaCare" program, enacted in 2010 and called for a Republican takeover of the U.S. Senate and an increase in the Republican majority of the U.S. House this fall.

Nearly all Republicans running for federal office this year are promising to work to "repeal and replace" ObamaCare. The "contraceptive mandate" regulation issued under the law has been a rallying point for abortion opponents in particular, since it requires that employee health insurance plans include, free of charge, sterilization and contraception, including drugs known as abortifacients, which terminate a pregnancy after conception. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and a number of evangelical Christian individuals and groups have opposed the provision, saying it violates the right of conscience for employers opposed to abortion and/or contraception on moral and religious grounds. In a 5-4 ruling issued June 30, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of a challenge to the regulation from two employers who contend they run their businesses according to Christian principles: Hobby Lobby, a chain of craft stores, and Conestoga Wood Specialties, a maker of wood cabinets. The court majority ruled that "closely held" for-profit corporations run on religious principles may be exempt from the contraceptive mandate under provisions of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. About 50 other challenges to the law are pending, according to the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which represented Hobby Lobby.

Many are from non-profit organizations, including religious-affiliated schools, hospitals, and charitable organizations covered by the mandate. Litigants include the Little Sisters of the Poor, a Denver-based Roman Catholic charity that runs homes for the aged in the United States and 30 other countries. Cruz told voters at the summit that Clinton should "spend a day debating" the Little Sisters.

Representative Michelle Bachmann of Minnesota, one of the Republican presidential hopefuls in 2012, urged the Values Voters to remember something they are not likely to forget. Clinton, she said, represents everything they have opposed on the Obama agenda, and more. "Never forget she will be Barack Obama's third and fourth term as president of the United States," Bachmann warned.



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