

Volume 25, Number 4, April 2016

## US politics

# The 2016 presidential election

*Clare Stansfield*

### **Which of the Republican candidates will be nominated to run for president in November 2016?**

US presidential campaigns have a long build up, with candidates campaigning for the nomination of their parties over the course of several months. The Democrats and the Republicans follow similar nomination processes. By 7 June 2016, we should know which two rival candidates will be running for election on 8 November 2016.

To secure the nomination of their respective parties, the presidential candidates face different types of contests in different states. These contests can be categorised as primaries — where a state has an election to choose their presidential candidate — or caucuses, where meetings take place to select the candidate.

## The Republican Party

In July 2015 there were 17 declared candidates. Five withdrew before primaries started and so far six have withdrawn during the nomination cycle. Out of the six remaining candidates, two are current senators, two are governors and the remaining two have no prior political experience.

So, what qualities will Republican voters be looking for in their candidate? Past Republican presidents include:

- George W. Bush, president during 9/11 and the subsequent invasion of Iraq
- George H. Bush, president during the first Iraq War
- Ronald Reagan, former actor, president at the end of the Cold War, worked closely with Margaret Thatcher

For more information about past US presidents, follow this link to the official White House website:

[www.tinyurl.com/pkxjvuk](http://www.tinyurl.com/pkxjvuk)

Characteristics that normally form the basis of a party nomination are:

- electability
- popular policy agenda
- persuasive speaking style (oratory)
- political experience
- appeal to party members

**Student task:** Use the following summaries and wider research to complete the candidate comparison cards below, giving a score out of 10 for each category.

In pairs, compare the scores you have given each candidate. Who do you think should win the nomination? If candidates have withdrawn by the time you complete this activity, then from your scores, can you work out why they didn't gain enough support?

<b>Jeb Bush</b>	<b>Ben Carson</b>
State:	State:
Electability:	Electability:
Policy agenda:	Policy agenda:
Oratory:	Oratory:
Political experience:	Political experience:
Appeal:	Appeal:

<b>Ted Cruz</b>	<b>John Kasich</b>
State:	State:
Electability:	Electability:
Policy agenda:	Policy agenda:
Oratory:	Oratory:
Political experience:	Political experience:
Appeal:	Appeal:

<b>Marco Rubio</b>	<b>Donald Trump</b>
State:	State:
Electability:	Electability:
Policy agenda:	Policy agenda:
Oratory:	Oratory:
Political experience:	Political experience:
Appeal:	Appeal:

## The contenders

### Jeb Bush

Jeb Bush (*b.* 11 May 1953) is currently the governor of Florida and comes from a family steeped in American presidential history. He started his working life in commercial real estate but entered politics by volunteering for his father's campaigns in the 1980s. Bush is a firm believer in gun rights, posting a recent picture of a gun on Instagram with the caption 'America'. He would like to increase military spending and has supported the military record of his brother George W. Bush. Jeb Bush is pro-life and a supporter of the death penalty. He has argued strongly against Donald Trump's suggestion that American Muslims be tracked on a database, stating that this would lead to segregation and internment.

#### *Key quotes*

'Well, I think lower taxes and less regulation would actually promote growth.'

'I don't think a party can aspire to be the majority party if it's the old white guy party.'

[www.tinyurl.com/q8oltku](http://www.tinyurl.com/q8oltku)

### Ben Carson

Ben Carson (*b.* 18 September 1951) is also from Florida. He has no previous political experience but was a director of paediatric neurosurgery. He was a highly successful and well-known surgeon, retiring in 2013. Carson is a member of the Church of the Seventh Day Adventists. He is pro-life and although he opposes same-sex marriages, he recognises civil unions for same-sex couples. He has also proposed transgender bathrooms, although this was to prevent other users from being made to feel uncomfortable. He has suggested that the Holocaust resulted from the lack of guns held by Jews in Nazi Germany.

#### *Key quotes*

'Through hard work, perseverance and a faith in God, you can live your dreams.'

'God has opened many doors of opportunity throughout my lifetime, but I believe the greatest of those was allowing me to be born in the United States of America.'

[www.tinyurl.com/mqjhmkg](http://www.tinyurl.com/mqjhmkg)

### Ted Cruz

Ted Cruz (*b.* 22 December 1970) has been the Texas senator for 3 years. Cruz is Hispanic and studied law. He was a policy advisor to George W. Bush before being appointed as Texas solicitor general. Cruz returned to private practice before beginning his career in politics. He is pro-life and opposes same-sex marriage. He is a gun-rights supporter and remains in favour of the death penalty. He favours a reduction in taxation and is highly critical of the current thaw in relations between American and Cuba.

### Key quotes

'We are witnessing a great awakening. Millions of Texans, millions of Americans are rising up to reclaim our country, to defend our liberty and to restore the constitution.'

'Voters are hungry for principled, conservative fighters — because the threat to our liberties from Washington has never been greater.'

[www.tinyurl.com/hrtkx4c](http://www.tinyurl.com/hrtkx4c)

### John Kasich

John Kasich (*b.*13 May 1952) is the governor of Ohio and stood for president in 2000. As well as his political background, Kasich has worked as a commentator on Fox News and as an investment banker. He has written three books that have sold incredibly well including *Every Other Monday*, about his participation in a Bible discussion group. He firmly opposes abortion and the legalisation of marijuana. Kasich accepts that climate change is real and he aims to eliminate income tax. He also opposes same-sex marriages.

### Key quotes

'Every time I go to Washington, I break out in a cold sweat. So I try not to spend too much time there.'

'Affirmative action has a negative effect on our society when it means counting us like beans and dividing us into separate piles.'

[www.tinyurl.com/zcwakzv](http://www.tinyurl.com/zcwakzv)

### Marco Rubio

Marco Rubio (*b.*28 May 1971) is the senator for Florida and the youngest of the Republican candidates. Rubio's background is as an attorney (lawyer) and he is a Cuban American. His parents left Cuba in the 1950s. He accrued \$100,000 of student loans, which he only finished repaying in 2012. Rubio wants to increase spending on the defence budget and has pledged to repeal Obamacare. He argues for stronger US borders but would offer legal status to those who had previously entered the country illegally. He is pro-life and believes marriage is between a man and a woman only.

### Key quotes

'This is the only country in the world where today's employee is tomorrow's employer.'

'The second truism that we must understand is that poverty does not create our social problems, our social problems create our poverty.'

[www.tinyurl.com/z5rtxp5](http://www.tinyurl.com/z5rtxp5)

## Donald Trump

Donald Trump (b.14 June 1946) is from New York and has no previous political experience, although he also stood for president in 2000 and is chairman of the Trump Organization. He has a personal net worth of \$4.5 billion. Trump founded Trump Entertainment Resorts, which includes hotels, golf courses and casinos. Trump has also been host of the American version of *The Apprentice*. He is a pro-life candidate, thinks global warming is a hoax, and has concerns about illegal immigrants, believing that US border security needs to be much tighter.

### *Key quotes*

'That's one of the nice things. I mean, part of the beauty of me is that I'm very rich. So if I need \$600 million, I can put \$600 million myself. That's a huge advantage over the other candidates.'

'You have to think anyway so why not think big?'

[www.tinyurl.com/pan8xr4](http://www.tinyurl.com/pan8xr4)

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