

Ohio Gov. Kasich Brings The Republican Field To 16

BY JULIE CARR SMYTH
Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Saying “big ideas change the world,” Ohio Gov. John Kasich declared his candidacy for the Republican nomination Tuesday.

Kasich, 63, launched his campaign at Ohio State University before a crowd of 2,000. The event marked the entry of a strong-willed and sometimes abrasive governor into a nomination race that now has 16 notable Republicans.

“I am here to ask you for your prayers, for your support, for your efforts because I have decided to run for president,” Kasich said in a scattered 43-minute speech packed with family anecdotes, historical references and calls for national renewal.

A veteran congressman as well as governor, Kasich told voters he is the only GOP candidate with experience in three broad areas of political leadership — the federal budget, national security and state government. He also spent nearly a decade at the Lehman Brothers financial services firm.

“I have the experience and the testing,” he said, “the testing which shapes you and prepares you for the most important job in the world, and I believe I know how to work and help restore this great United States.”

As budget chairman in the House, he became an architect of a deal in 1997 that balanced the federal budget.



DAVID BECKER/ZUMA PRESS/TNS
Ohio Gov. John Kasich looks on before he speaks at the Clark County Republican Party headquarters on June 11 in Las Vegas. On July 21, Kasich announced his bid for the Republican presidential nomination.

Now in his second term in swing-state Ohio, he's helped erase a budget deficit projected at nearly \$8 billion when he entered office, boost Ohio's rainy-day fund to a historic high and seen private-sector employment rebound to its pre-recession level.

Kasich worked toward his goals with budget cutting, privatization of parts of Ohio's government and other, often business-style innovations. “We didn't really have to slash things,” Kasich said of the budget squeeze. “We just had to use a 21st century formula.”

Unions, which turned back an effort by Kasich and fellow Republicans to limit public workers' collective bargaining rights, say Kasich's successes have come at a cost to local governments and schools, and say new Ohio jobs lack the pay

and benefits of the ones they replaced.

As a marching band kept up a spritely cadence before Kasich spoke, scores of demonstrators gathered across the street to protest his cuts to the budget and to school districts specifically, as well as his closing of centers for people with development disabilities.

“Unless you are part of the 1 percent, Kasich is not your friend,” said Melissa Svigelj, 42, an educator from suburban Cleveland.

Among his supporters, Margo Bishop, 77, of Gahanna, Ohio, said she values his candor: “I think he's speaking out, and even if I don't agree all the time, ... at least he's saying something.”

Kasich embraces conservative ideals but bucks his party on occasion and disdains the Republican sport of bashing Democrat

Hillary Rodham Clinton. Visiting the early voting state of New Hampshire on Tuesday following his announcement, Kasich said his political career has taught him that the two parties must work together to get things done.

“I realized that purpose was more important than party,” Kasich said. “In my political career my whole vision is: How do we make changes and improve things for the people that we serve?”

His entry nearly rounds out an unusually diverse Republican lineup with two Hispanics, an African-American, one woman and several younger candidates alongside older white men. So many are running that it's unclear Kasich will qualify for the GOP's first debate in his home state in just two weeks, when only the top 10 candidates in national polling will be on stage.

Kasich's post-announcement trip to New Hampshire runs through Thursday, and he'll take questions from voters at five town hall-style events.

Tuesday evening, Kasich said his record shows he knows how to make change rather than just talk about it.

“I know how it works, I know how you turn the dials,” he said. “I know how you get in there and build a team of people who can change this country.”

Kasich's allies at the political organization New Day for America reported raising \$11.5 million on his behalf before his entry into the race.

Court Overturns Some Blagojevich Senate-Seat Convictions

BY MICHAEL TARM
Associated Press

CHICAGO — A federal appeals court Tuesday overturned some of the most sensational convictions that sent former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich off to a lengthy stint in prison, ruling that the Democrat did not break the law when he sought to secure a Cabinet position in President Barack Obama's administration in exchange for appointing an Obama adviser to the president's former U.S. Senate seat.

The 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago also ordered the resentencing of Blagojevich, offering the 58-year-old a ray of hope that he could end up serving less than his original 14-year term.

The three appellate judges dismissed five of 18 corruption counts against Blagojevich, while affirming 13 counts. In a blow to the defense, the panelists also suggested the original sentence wasn't necessarily extreme, even when factoring in the newly tossed convictions.

Speaking outside the Blagojevich family home in Chicago, his wife, Patti, told reporters her husband had expressed disappointment the court didn't hand him a clear legal victory.

“He's disappointed, of course,” she said, the couple's 18-year-old daughter at her side. She added more optimistically, “Possibly this is a step in the right direction of getting Rod home to his family.”

Several onlookers stood nearby, including a small child holding up a sign that read, “Free Blagojevich.”

The court's unanimous ruling addressed a key question: Where is the line between legal and illegal political wheeling and dealing? The panel's answer:

When it came to Blagojevich's attempt to land a Cabinet seat, he did not cross the line. His attempts to trade the Senate seat for campaign cash, however, were illegal, the court concluded.

Blagojevich floated the idea of a Cabinet job in exchange for appointing Obama adviser Valerie Jarrett to Obama's vacant Senate seat. After Blagojevich's arrest, the seat went to Roland Burris, who served less than two years before a successor was elected.

In its ruling, the appeals court pointed to allegations that President Dwight Eisenhower named Earl Warren to the U.S. Supreme Court after Warren offered Eisenhower key political support during the 1952 campaign. The judges said that under the logic used to charge Blagojevich, Eisenhower and Warren might have been convicted.

“If the prosecutor is right, and a swap of political favors involving a job for one of the politicians is a felony, then ... both the President of the United States and the Chief Justice of the United States should have gone to prison,” the ruling says.

Still, the ruling was by no means a resounding win for Blagojevich.

The appellate judges upheld allegations that he sought to sell the Senate seat, saying the evidence against him was strong. Blagojevich had argued he didn't break the law because he never stated explicitly that he was willing to trade an appointment for campaign cash. The panel balked at the notion that crimes are crimes only if they are overtly stated.

“Few politicians say, on or off the record, ‘I will exchange official act X for payment Y,’” the opinion says. “Similarly persons who conspire to rob banks or distribute drugs do not propose or sign

contracts in the statutory language.”

Defense attorney Leonard Goodman sharply criticized the court for not quashing more counts. He said he would urge his client to challenge the panel's finding, possibly by asking the full appeals court to rehear the case.

“My advice to him is that we fight on,” he said. “It is not justice in my view.”

As for prosecutors, they could choose to retry Blagojevich on the dropped counts, though prosecutors often decline to retry a case if most counts are upheld. A spokesman for the U.S. attorney's office declined to comment on the ruling.

The two-term governor proclaimed his innocence for years — on television and on the stand at his decisive retrial in 2011, where a sometimes-tearful Blagojevich said he was a flawed man but no criminal.

Eleven of the counts jurors convicted him on dealt with allegations that he tried to swap an appointment to the Senate seat for campaign cash or a job. Other pay-to-play schemes he was convicted of included the attempted shakedown of the Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago for a campaign contribution.

After his December 2008 arrest, Blagojevich became the butt of jokes on late-night TV, including for his well-coiffed hair and his foul-mouthed rants on FBI wiretaps. The most notorious excerpt was one where he crows about the Senate seat: “I've got this thing and it's f— golden. And I'm just not giving it up for f— nothing.”

Blagojevich began serving his sentence at a prison near Denver on March 15, 2012, and has served more than three years so far. Before the appeal, his estimated release date was 2024; he would be 67.

Shooter's Uncle Detained In Jordan

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (AP) — An uncle of the man who killed four Marines and a sailor in Tennessee has been in custody in Jordan since a day after the attacks on two military sites, a lawyer said Tuesday.

Abed al-Kader Ahmad al-Khateeb told The Associated Press that he was barred from seeing his client and that family members were also prevented from visiting the detainee. Computers and cellphones were taken from the man's home, but he has not been charged with anything, the attorney said.

Al-Khateeb identified his client as Asaad Ibrahim Asaad Haj Ali, a maternal uncle of the Chattanooga attacker, Muhammad Youssef Abdulazeez.

A Jordanian official said Tuesday that he is sure the uncle and “other relevant people” in Jordan were being questioned, but he would not elaborate and or confirm that the uncle was detained. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the case with the media.

Abdulazeez spent several months in Jordan last year under a mutual agreement with his parents to help him get away from drugs, alcohol and a group of friends they considered to be a bad influence, according to a person close to his family. That person also spoke on condition of anonymity, out of concern it would have business repercussions.

Congress Pursues Immigration Changes

WASHINGTON (AP) — Urged on by anguished testimony from the father of a murder victim, Congress plunged into a heated debate over immigration on Tuesday as GOP lawmakers vowed to shut down funding for so-called sanctuary cities like San Francisco that shield immigrants from deportation by federal authorities.

Immigrant advocates denounced the approach, accusing Republicans of following presidential candidate Donald Trump in demonizing Latinos.

But after 32-year-old Kathryn Steinle was shot this month, allegedly by an immigrant with a criminal record and without legal status, even some Democrats were calling for action to address the ineffective tangle of federal and local laws and policies that left the man on the street.

“We feel strongly that some legislation should be discussed, enacted or changed to take these undocumented immigrant felons off our streets for good,” said Kathryn Steinle's father, Jim Steinle, who was with his daughter when she was killed while strolling in daylight along a popular San Francisco pier. “We feel if Kate's law saves one daughter, one son, a mother, a father, Kate's death won't be in vain.”

Testifying before a somber Senate Judiciary Committee, Jim Steinle described his daughter as friendly, happy, adventurous and full of laughter and love. Shot at random before his eyes as they walked arm in arm, she had time only to utter the words “Help me, Dad.”

Mayors At Vatican On Climate Change

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Mayors from around the world declared Tuesday that climate change is real, man-made and must be stopped as a matter of moral imperative, gathering at the Vatican to announce new measures to fight global warming and bask in Pope Francis' ecological star power.

The Vatican invited the 60 mayors to a two-day conference to keep up pressure on world leaders ahead of U.N. climate negotiations in Paris later this year. The meeting also aimed to promote Francis' environment encyclical, which denounced what he calls a fossil fuel-based world economy that exploits the poor and destroys the Earth.

One by one, the mayors lined up to sign a final declaration stating that “human-induced climate change is a scientific reality and its effective control is a moral imperative for humanity.”

Francis told the gathering that he had “a lot of hope” that the Paris negotiations would succeed, but also warned the mayors: “You are the conscience of humanity.”

Experts have long said that cities are key to reducing global warming since urban areas account for nearly three-quarters of human emissions. Mayor after mayor made an individual plea Tuesday for the world to change its ways.

Bombing Shows Turkey Is A Target For IS

ISTANBUL (AP) — Officials have raised concerns that a deadly bombing in southeastern Turkey is part of a campaign of retaliation by the Islamic State group for a recent crackdown on its operations in the country.

If they are right, Turkey would be a particularly vulnerable target for the extremists.

The country shares a 1,250-kilometer (775-mile) border with Iraq and Syria, putting it nearby to strongholds of the self-proclaimed Islamic State. And, as recent arrests show, the extremist group already has established its reach into Turkey.

In an intensified crackdown, Turkish officials say they have detained more than 500 people suspected of working with IS in the last six months. An operation this month netted 21 terrorism suspects in an investigation of recruitment networks in multiple parts of the country, the officials said.

The moves suggest an attempt to dismantle an entrenched presence inside Turkey. And authorities fear that Monday's bombing in the town of Suruc that killed 32 people and wounded nearly 100 is a warning by the extremists against such a campaign.

Cosby Lawyers Want Settlement Sealed

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Bill Cosby's lawyers argued on Tuesday that his admission to using quaaludes in the 1970s doesn't mean he drugged and sexually assaulted women.

The comments came as the lawyers asked a court to preserve the confidentiality of Cosby's 2006 settlement in a sexual-battery lawsuit, which the accuser wants unsealed.

Cosby's lawyers instead attacked the weekend release of his deposition by a court reporting service and said the deposition and other filings unsealed this month have led to erroneous reports that brand Cosby a rapist.

“The media immediately pounced, inaccurately labeling the released testimony as defendant's ‘confession’ of ‘drugging’ women and assaulting them,” Cosby lawyers Patrick O'Connor and George Gowen wrote. “Reading the media accounts, one would conclude that defendant has admitted to rape. And yet defendant admitted to nothing more than being one of the many people who introduced quaaludes into their consensual sex life in the 1970's.”



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