GWB Touts Brother As Campaign Focuses On Rubio

BY JULIE BYKOWICZ Associated Press

HOUSTON — Former President George W. Bush on Monday assured top donors to his brother's presidential campaign that Jeb Bush will be a "fierce competitor" in the 2016 race for the White House and argued his experience as Florida's governor will ultimately win over voters.

The idea that "experience matters" was the theme of an on-stage conversation between the two brothers at a private event for donors to Bush's campaign. That theme came through most strongly as Jeb Bush's staff outlined how they plan to go after Florida Sen. Marco Rubio,

who the campaign views as Bush's top competition for the Republican nomination.

"Put it in the campaign slogan, 'A proven leader," George W. Bush told about 175 of Jeb Bush's most loyal donors on the second day of the two-day event, according to an audio recording of the meeting.

"He knows how to manage an administration," the former president said. "I happen to believe eventually the American people will say, 'Who has the experience necessary to be president? Who's run a state, for example?"

The donor event arrived at a crucial moment for Bush, a oncedominant GOP candidate who is lagging in preference polls to a pair of political novices with no experience in elected office, retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson and billionaire real estate mogul Donald Trump.

With fewer than 100 days until voting begins, Bush's campaign is betting that a large swath of Republican voters will ultimately seek out a seasoned politician as their choice for the party's nominee — especially given the GOP's widespread dissatisfaction with President Barack Obama, who was elected during his first term in the Senate.

'We are pitching our path to victory. We addressed all the key opponents, including Marco, and will contrast Jeb's leadership skills with

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theirs," Jack Oliver, Bush's campaign finance co-chairman, told The Associated Press. "Our supporters want someone who is willing to fight for victory and that's what the team presented

A hard-hitting strategy presentation at the meeting focused intensely on Rubio and illustrated how Bush and his team plan to show differences between the two Floridians.

It included a slide that read "Marco is a GOP Obama," according to documents provided by the campaign. In the presentation from Bush's campaign manager, Danny Diaz described Rubio and Obama as having "strikingly similar profiles," that include being lawyers, university

lecturers and former state legislators with "few legislative accomplishments.

Diaz also compared Bush and Rubio's fundraising and available cash, ignoring all of the other candidates in the GOP race.

Bush's campaign announced last week it was making sharp spending cuts, mainly to employee wages, so he can intensify the organization's focus on the first two states to vote, Iowa and New Hampshire. The cuts were calculated based on his and Rubio's available cash, so as to ensure Bush would have enough to make it to the start of voting in February, campaign aides said.



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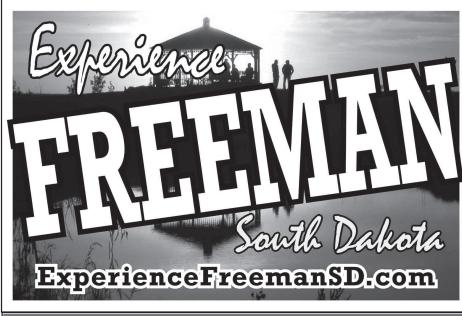






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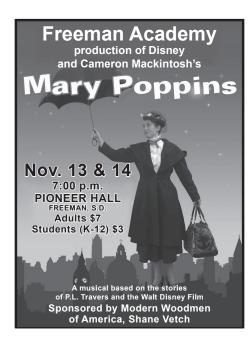














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Saturday, Nov. 7 Freeman Fire Department Dance Meal - 5-7 p.m.; Dance 9 p.m.-1 a.m., Freeman Community Center

Friday, Nov. 27
"Elijah" presented by the Swiss Choral Society, Salem Mennonite Church, 28103 443rd Ave., Freeman, 7:30 p.m.



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