

Marco Rubio says political leaders from both parties are 'out of touch'

By SERGIO BUSTOS, Associated Press



Republican presidential candidate Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla. speaks during a town hall campaign stop, Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2015, in Derry, N.H. (AP Photo/Jim Cole)

PORTSMOUTH, N.H. (AP) — Republican presidential candidate Marco Rubio said Wednesday that the Democrats' presidential debate showcased old government solutions and suggested that his older rivals with names like Bush and Clinton are out of touch with most Americans.

"If it wasn't in high-definition, I would have thought it was something from 1985," Rubio joked Wednesday during a swing through early-voting New Hampshire.

Rubio frequently mentions the generational divide because, at 44, he is among the youngest in the GOP field, and part of the influential Latino bloc of voters that the GOP is struggling to attract ahead of the 2016 elections. Most of his toughest competitors for president are white, and older.

"We will not change direction if all we do is keep electing the same kind of people," he said during an early morning stop in chilly Portsmouth, New Hampshire, before dozens of mostly supporters. "This has to be an election in which both the Republican party and the United States turns the page, and allows a new generation of leadership and new ideas."

His critique is aimed at the members of political dynasties: his former mentor, Jeb Bush — son and brother of presidents — and Democratic frontrunner Hillary Rodham Clinton, a former senator and secretary of state who is married to former President Bill Clinton. Clinton and four rivals for their party's presidential nomination on Tuesday sparred for support from liberal Democrats in part by touting a big role for government on such matters as Wall Street regulation, college tuition affordability and tax breaks for the wealthy.

Rubio's parents came to the United States in 1956 from Cuba and raised four children here. His father worked as a hotel bartender, while his mother worked in a factory and stocked shelves at Kmart.

During a private meet-and-greet Monday with prospective donors in south Florida, Rubio said he wants to unite the GOP and bring new voters to join the party, according to Jorge Luis Lopez, a prominent attorney and lobbyist who hosted the event at his Coconut Grove home. He said Rubio's personal story and campaign platform appeals to young voters, Hispanics and Jewish-Americans.

"He's very comfortable in not getting into the sideshows with (Donald) Trump and even Jeb, because he trusts voters, trusts conservatives to see him as the right choice," said Lopez.

Campaigning in New Hampshire, Wednesday, the Cuban-American senator from Florida said Democrats and Republicans do not understand what it's like anymore "to live paycheck to paycheck," make college loan payments or scrape the money together to launch a small business.

Saying the gap is widening between Americans and the people who serve them in government, Rubio said the blame for the schism is shared among leaders of both major political parties.

Trailing Republican billionaire Donald Trump in national and New Hampshire polls, Rubio and his aides say his campaign is prepared for a long fight and remains focused on its message of preserving and expanding the American Dream.

Rubio repeatedly says that ideal is fading because failed government policies do not help people prosper in a fast-changing economy.

"If we keep doing what we are doing now, we are going to be the first Americans in the proud history of this great nation that leave our children worse off than ourselves," he said.

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