

Jeb Bush

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Jeb Bush to announce presidential bid June 15 in Miami



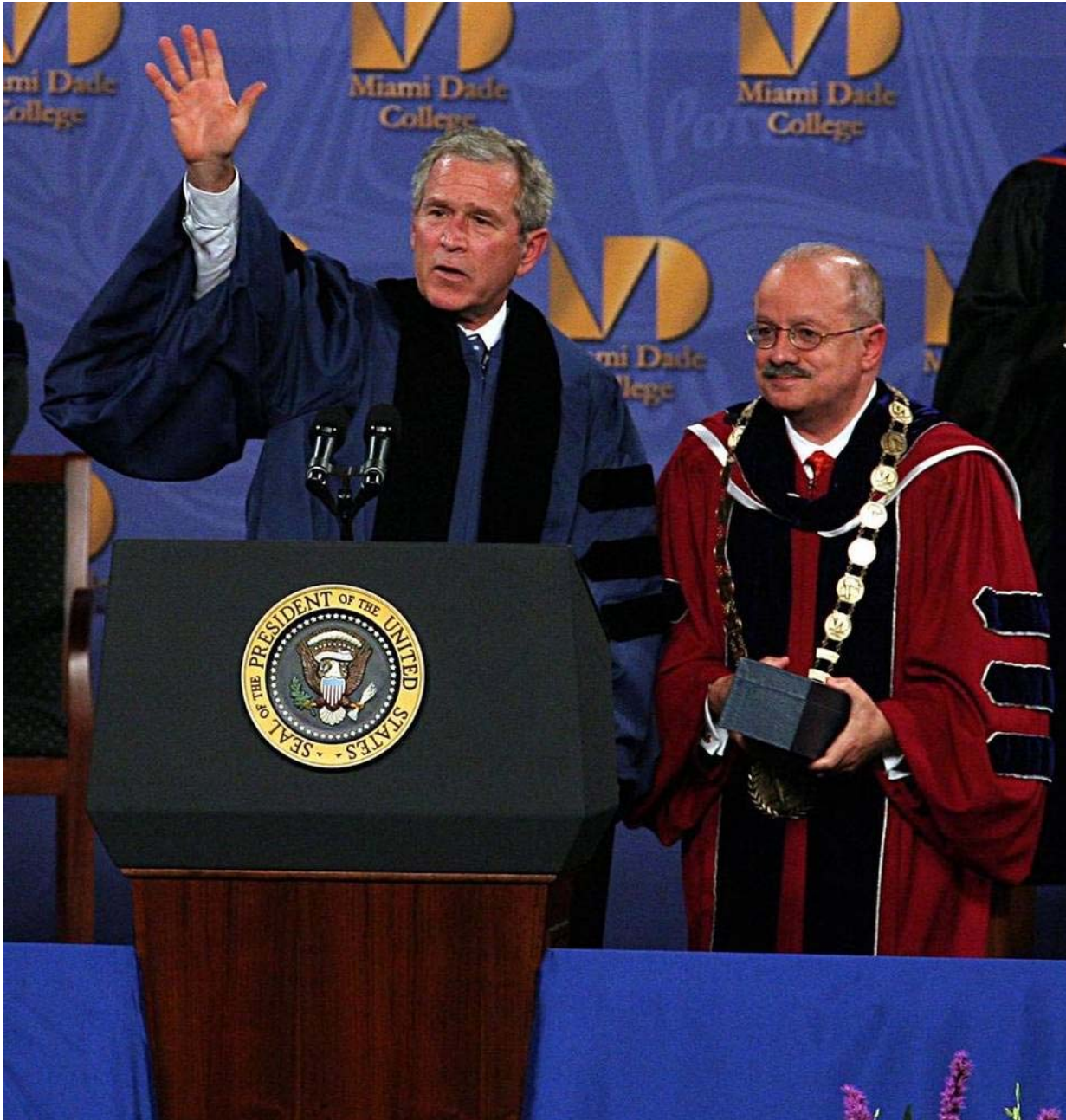
Jeb Bush spoke to a crush of reporters Tuesday at Disney's Yacht and Beach Club Convention Center during a forum hosted by Florida Gov. Rick Scott for leading Republican presidential candidates and would-be candidates. **JOE RAEDLE GETTY IMAGES**

BY PATRICIA MAZZEI AND ALEX LEARY

Herald/Times Staff Writers

Nearly six months after saying he was "actively" exploring the idea of running for president, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush will officially enter the race June 15 in Miami.

“Governor Bush is thankful for the support and encouragement he has received from so many Americans during the last several months and looks forward to announcing his decision,” spokeswoman Kristy Campbell told the Miami Herald and Tampa Bay Times.



President George W. Bush waves to graduates after finishing his Miami Dade College commencement speech in 2007 at the university's Kendall campus. Standing next to him is MDC President Eduardo Padrón. | PEDRO PORTAL EL NUEVO HERALD

Bush, 62, picked Miami Dade College, the largest institution of higher education in the country, as his announcement location in a nod to his passion for

education policy and a campaign theme of expanding economic opportunities for people who, in his words, want to “rise up.” The college’s mission is to give every student who wants a college degree a chance to get one.

More information about the 3 p.m. event at the college’s Kendall campus is at jebannouncement.com.

The announcement will follow a weeklong trip for Bush to Europe that begins Monday, giving him a close look at foreign policy issues that have been a central focus of the presidential contest so far.

Despite having a famous last name and raising what is expected to be a breathtaking amount of money, Bush has struggled to break out of a growing pack of GOP contenders.

The group includes fellow Floridian Marco Rubio, who is pitching himself as a fresh face against “[outdated](#)” politicians, a line seemingly directed at Democrat Hillary Clinton but also at Bush, who was governor from 1999-2007.

Rubio ignored conventional thought that he would stand down for Bush, a mentor, and [jumped in the race](#) April 13. In the weeks since, Rubio has gained momentum in the polls and attracted the support of wealthy backers.

Bush startled the political world on Dec. 16 when he [announced](#) on Facebook that he was “actively” considering a run for president. In recent months, he has been traveling the country extensively, giving speeches focused on improving educational and work opportunities for Americans.

But his all-but-official status has attracted growing criticism from campaign finance watchdogs, newspaper editorial boards and other candidates. It also has caused some clumsy moments.

On CBS News’ *Face the Nation* on Sunday, Bush [said](#), “I would like to run,” as if something was holding him back. A while before that, in Nevada, he [accidentally said](#) he was running — then corrected himself.

The decision to wait so long has a major financial upside, as Bush has been free to work directly with the Right to Rise Super PAC, started by his allies, and raise unlimited money. Watchdogs [have filed](#) several complaints with the Federal Election Commission and the Justice Department.

Asked on *Face the Nation* whether he was violating the law, Bush said: “I would never do that.”

As a declared candidate, Bush’s interaction with the committee will be limited. People giving directly to his presidential campaign are tapped out at \$2,700.

Still, the Super PAC has amassed tens of millions of dollars already, and its staff has become deeply familiar with Bush’s objectives. He could push some traditional functions of a campaign to the Super PAC, which will continue to raise large sums.

On Monday, Bush departs for Germany, Estonia and Poland, key U.S. allies. Bush likely will use the trip to draw a contrast to President Barack Obama, whom many Republicans see as weak on foreign policy. Poland has been pushing for the United States to get more involved in curbing Russia’s meddling in Ukraine.

Bush also will “discuss policies to promote growth, innovation and technologies to address the changing global economic environment and ways to foster prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic,” according to a [Reuters story](#) previewing the visit.

Back in Miami, the bilingual Bush will make his presidential announcement at a diverse college that boasts more than 165,000 students and has gotten used to hosting politicians. President George W. Bush delivered the Kendall campus commencement in 2007. He [introduced](#) his younger brother, who was in the audience, as always “*mi hermano*” — always my brother.

The Kendall campus is in the heart of Miami-Dade County’s largely Cuban-American suburbs. It’s the university’s second-oldest campus, built in 1967 on 185 acres of land and housing 13 buildings for a variety of academic programs ranging from architecture to business to science.

Bush made K-12 education central to his tenure in Tallahassee, and he has spent his years out of office pushing for higher standards — including the contentious Common Core — and expanded access to charter schools across the country.

Rubio chose to make his presidential announcement at a Miami Dade College institution with Cuban significance, too — downtown Miami’s Freedom Tower. The iconic Biscayne Boulevard building is where Cuban exiles were first

welcomed into the United States, beginning in 1964. Today, it houses the school's Museum of Art and Design.

For Bush, the choice strikes a far more populist tone than, say, the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, where he [plays golf](#) regularly and has had his private business office for years.

His campaign [headquarters](#) also are in a decidedly unflashy part of town, a sturdy West Miami-Dade County office building near the working-class and largely Hispanic neighborhoods of Sweetwater and Fontainebleau.

After his announcement, Bush will embark on a tour of early primary states.