

5 Faith Facts Every Christian Voter Should Know About Jim Gilmore

James Gilmore III, former governor of Virginia, briefly chairman of the Republican Party and unsuccessful candidate for the U.S. Senate in 2008, jumped into the 2016 presidential race Friday (July 31).

Gilmore, who is president of the Free Congress Foundation, a conservative research group, likely won't make it to the Aug. 6 televised debate on Fox News, but he spelled out his bona fides by announcing his run at the web site of another voice of conservatism -- Breitbart News.

Here are five faith facts on James-who-prefers-Jim Gilmore.

1. He's a lifelong United Methodist (possibly the only trait he shares with Hillary Clinton).

Gilmore's mother, Margaret Evelyn Kandle, was Methodist church secretary, and his father, James Stuart Gilmore Jr., was a union butcher at a grocery chain according to profiles at NPR and Newsmax. He's always listed his church as River Road United Methodist Church in Richmond, his birthplace. He told USA Today in 2007 he attended as often as his travel schedule allowed.

2. Obama can't even pray properly in Gilmore's eyes.

He blasted the president's 2015 prayer breakfast speech after

Obama cited the Crusades, the Inquisition, slavery and Jim Crow as “terrible deeds in the name of Christ.” Gilmore told The Washington Post, those words were “the most offensive I’ve ever heard a president make in my lifetime. He has offended every believing Christian in the United States. This goes further to the point that Mr. Obama does not believe in America or the values we all share.”

3. He’s focused on the economy and national security. No mention of testy social issues.

The campaign web site, , details his plans to bolster the economy and offers a video of him declaring his candidacy. It attacks what he calls “the Obama-Clinton” administration at length, but God is only mentioned with the politically obligatory God-bless-America end line.

But he has taken positions on abortion and gay rights in the past.

Back in 2007, when he also made a brief run for the presidency, Charmaine Yoest of Americans United for Life cheered, saying Gilmore as governor had “surrounded himself with pro-life, economic and social conservatives. And implemented pro-life, pro-family recommendations.”

The Advocate introduced his 2016 run with a headline: “Another Antigay Republican Enters Presidential” editors said Gilmore had not responded to emails asking if he still opposed gay marriage and civil unions.

4. He’s the Gilmore in the Brown v.

Gilmore Supreme Court case on school moments of silence.

As governor, he backed and signed a law adding a mandatory moment of silence in Virginia public schools. Gov. Gilmore saw no constitutional infringement in setting aside a minute for “meditation, prayer or reflection” at the start of every school day. The law was challenged by the American Civil Liberties Union, but high court upheld it.

5. Gilmore equates conservative Christian values with American values.

The Washington Times, in endorsing Gilmore’s 2008 Senate bid, cited his rebuke of Democratic opponent Mark Warner on values. Gilmore hammered Warner for asserting that four groups – the Christian Coalition, the National Rifle Association, home-schoolers and antiabortion activists – were “threatening to what it means to be an American”. To no avail. Warner handily defeated Gilmore, winning a seat in the U.S. Senate.

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