

# Ben Carson Slams 'Slick' Politicians in Presidential Bid

Retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson slammed "slick politicians" in both parties as he launched his bid on Monday for the 2016 Republican nomination for president, casting himself as a problem-solver whose experience sets him apart from the field.

Carson, a favorite of conservative activists, said the upcoming elections should bring in leaders with "common sense" to enact policies like reversing President Barack Obama's 2010 health care overhaul and revamping the U.S. tax code.

Carson said in a speech in Detroit, his hometown.

"Politicians do what is politically expedient, and I want to do what's right," he said.

Carson, who is 63 and the only black person currently seeking the nomination in either the Republican or Democratic parties, is a political neophyte. In polls of the Republican Party's wide field of likely candidates, he currently gets about 4.8 percent of the vote, according to Reuters/Ipsos polls.

That is well behind the leader, former Florida Governor Jeb Bush, who has not formally declared his candidacy but is widely expected to do so in coming months.

Carson came from a poor family, raised by a single mother. He rose to be director of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore at age 33 and successfully separated twins conjoined at the head. He became a conservative icon after the 2013 National Prayer Breakfast, where he called the United States a nation in decay and criticized policies enacted by Obama, who sat nearby.

That willingness to talk tough has also gotten Carson in trouble. He once called Obama a “psychopath” and has made comments on gay marriage that infuriated the left.

On Monday, Carson focused on the economy and played up his outsider status, saying politicians are too focused on getting re-elected to make real changes.

He spoke of the hard work and sacrifices his mother made to emphasize his argument that safety-net programs cause government dependency instead of encouraging people to help themselves.

Carson also said his background as a surgeon and running a program that awards scholarships to students showed his ability to solve tough problems.

“I can name a lot of people in politics who have been there all their lives. You probably wouldn’t want them to polish your shoe,” he said. “We need to be smart enough to think for ourselves.”

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