

Former NY Governor Pataki Makes Presidential Bid

Former New York Governor George Pataki entered the race for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination on Thursday, positioning himself as a Washington outsider and moderate who won three terms in a heavily Democratic state.

Pataki, 69, enters a crowded field that includes a number of staunch conservatives who hope to attract the support from the Republican base of presidential primary voters.

In his announcement, Pataki appeared to eye a different audience, reflecting his appeal to Democratic “blue” voters.

“I was a Republican governor in a very deep blue state, the state of New York,” he said in a video titled “Pataki for President,” posted on his website.

Pataki served as governor from 1995 to 2006 and has flirted with running for U.S. Senate or the presidency in past years. He stressed the importance of unifying the country, recalling how Americans worked together to overcome the trauma of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

His long-shot bid could bring a moderate voice to the Republican field that includes conservative favorites U.S. Senator Ted Cruz and former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee.

More recently, he has criticized “religious freedom” bills that conservative candidates backed and called it “inappropriate” when Republican lawmakers wrote to Iranian leaders in a move largely seen as undermining Democratic President Barack Obama.

Pataki presented himself as a Washington outsider and invoked a conservative theme on the outsized power of government.

“Washington has grown too big, too powerful, too expensive and too intrusive,” he said. “This is exactly what the founding fathers feared. It is time to stand up, protect our freedom and take back this government.”

Pataki launched a fundraising super-PAC in January and has made appearances in New Hampshire and Florida, important states in the presidential nominating contests.

Pataki was a first-term state senator in New York when he narrowly beat incumbent Democrat Mario Cuomo in the 1994 governor’s election.

After leaving the governor’s office in 2007, he was a delegate to the United Nations and started a business development firm focused on energy companies.

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