

Jeb Bush Urges Republicans to Do More Than Oppose Obama

Republicans need to take advantage of their majority in the U.S. Congress to pass bills rather than simply opposing Democratic President Barack Obama's priorities, potential presidential candidate Jeb Bush said.

Republicans last month trounced Democrats to win control of the Senate and extend their majority in the House, as exit polls showed Americans were fed up with partisan gridlock in Washington.

"Republicans need to show they're not just against things, that they're for a bunch of things," said Bush, 61, a former two-term governor of Florida who is considering entering the Republican presidential nomination race for 2016.

"We have to show that we can, in an adult-like way, lead," he said at a Wall Street Journal conference, pointing to issues such as the Keystone XL oil pipeline and a possible lifting of the ban on crude oil exports.

Bush spoke as some Republicans are weighing shutting down the government in an attempt to stop Obama from taking executive action on immigration policy. Obama last month decided to unilaterally ease the threat of deportation for some 4.7 million undocumented immigrants.

Bush said Obama overstepped the bounds of his authority but that Republicans should focus less on what the president does and more on building consensus in Congress for their own proposals.

He urged an immigration system that accepts newcomers based on the United States' economic needs, rather than on the familial ties of those already in the United States—similar to the approach used in Canada.

“It’s also probably the easiest way to get to sustained economic growth, which is what we desperately need,” he said of his immigration approach.

Bush said he would decide in “short order” whether he would run for president in 2016, adding he was still weighing whether the sacrifice his family would have to make would be worth it.

“It’s the same decision-making process that I’ve always had, which is ... do I have the skills to do it in a way that tries to lift people’s spirits, and not get sucked into the vortex,” he said.

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