

John Kasich Just Hired a Strategist Who Has Waged War on Conservative Christians

John Kasich just named the man who will craft his presidential campaign's strategy – and Christian conservatives should be concerned. The Ohio governor has hired John Weaver as chief campaign strategist for his still-unofficial (wink, wink) presidential campaign. Weaver has ping-ponged between political parties for more than a decade, supporting liberal Republicans as well as Democrats. In addition to having a poor personal reputation and dubious electoral record – his last major victory was in 2000 – Weaver's candidates have decided to openly attack pro-life, pro-family Christians. He led John McCain's presidential campaigns in 2000, when McCain called Pat Robertson and the late Jerry Falwell "agents of intolerance" and "corrupting influences on religion and politics." He went on to lose the Virginia primary by nine percentage points. McCain bowed out of the race, and Weaver left the GOP, working to elect Democrats to Congress in 2002. Then he worked for McCain's 2008 presidential campaign but left in 2007. In the last presidential primary, he worked for Jon Huntsman, the Utah governor and Obama administration appointee who regularly trashed conservatives. After the 2012 elections, Huntsman described the Republican Party as "devoid of a soul" and insisted that lobbying for gay "marriage" is really a "conservative cause." Both candidates followed Weaver's strategy: Attack your own party – especially its Christians grassroots – try to look good for the liberal media, and hope "centrists" will vote for you in the general election. In the last three presidential campaigns, Weaver's record is 0-3. The good news is, unlike McCain and Huntsman, Kasich is outspoken about his faith. The bad news is, he has used his faith to criticize those who disagree with him in the

past. Kasich justified his decision to expand ObamaCare's Medicaid eligibility, which has cost his state billions of dollars, by citing the Gospel of Matthew. "Now, if you ever read Matthew 25, I think, 'I wanna feed the hungry and clothe the naked,'" he said, dismissing his critics as "narrow ideologues." "He's really calling into question the character and the motivation of those who disagree with him on the Medicaid expansion, pretty much literally saying that you're going to rot in Hell if you didn't agree," Manhattan Institute senior fellow Avik Roy told *The Columbus Dispatch*. "I would say that it's highly probable that many conservative Christians will be offended that they're not good Christians if they don't support a massive expansion of government health care. I would say that's almost disqualifying in a Republican primary." Are we in for more sermonettes on the glories of government expansion in the 2016 primaries? Kasich is by no means a liberal. He has outstanding ties to the state's pro-life movement. He has defunded Planned Parenthood and tried to reinvigorate the state's economy. His record earned him a landslide re-election last November. But with Kasich eager to get noticed in the crowded Republican primary field and John Weaver calling the campaign's shots, things could get ugly for the party's grassroots faithful. At a minimum, naming Weaver as his top campaign adviser could give Christians the impression they are less than welcome in his campaign, and that a Kasich presidency would be filled with staffers such as Weaver, who are hostile to them. Ed Morrissey of the conservative blog wrote in 2012, "The next Republican who hires John Weaver should be considered to have conducted an act of self-identification as unelectable and unsupportable." If he is wise, John Kasich will dump Weaver's advice, and Weaver, as soon as possible.