

Mike Huckabee Says He Knows How to Fight the Clinton Machine

Republican Mike Huckabee, a former Baptist pastor and unabashed culture warrior, enters the race for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination on Tuesday facing competition for the support of social conservatives who backed him in 2008.

The ex-governor of Arkansas, 59, became a national figure by staging an upset win in Iowa's kickoff nominating contest during his 2008 presidential bid.

This time around other Republicans with national recognition have emerged as rivals for the role of leading crusader on social issues such as abortion rights and gay marriage.

Polls show Huckabee's support among Republican voters is only in the single digits. Huckabee's expected announcement is at 11 am (EDT).

"I do think that this time he is going to have a lot more competition for the votes. I think that Ted Cruz and Rick Santorum are both really jockeying for that hardcore evangelical vote," said Sam Clovis, a social conservative activist in Iowa.

Cruz, a senator from Texas, declared his candidacy in March. Santorum, the former Pennsylvania senator, won Iowa in 2012.

Huckabee says he has some experience that his rivals lack: How to fight Democratic favorite Hillary Clinton. He encountered the remnants of the Democratic Clinton political machine during a decade as Arkansas governor, a job that Bill Clinton had held before moving to the White House in 1993.

"I hear some people say we're going to have to have someone who knows how to fight. I'll tell you what, if you battled the political machine that I battled, you know how to fight," Huckabee told Republican activists in New Hampshire last month.

Huckabee will make his announcement in Hope, Arkansas, which both he and Bill Clinton call their hometown.

Huckabee is perhaps the Republican presidential hopeful who speaks most clearly about the economy to working Americans.

"I put America and its workers first. Too many in the political class put Wall Street and Washington elites first. They aren't fighting for American workers," Huckabee wrote in an op-ed in Iowa's Des Moines Register in March.

He is at his most strident when combating what he sees as immorality.

He attacked one of the entertainment world's most famous couples, Beyonce and Jay Z, in his new book "God, Guns, Grits, and Gravy."

In the book, Huckabee asked whether rapper Jay Z was "arguably crossing the line from husband to pimp by exploiting his wife as a sex object?" He also wrote sarcastically that bisexuals should be able to have more than one spouse.

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