

What the Polls Reveal About Romney's Chance as GOP Candidate

Republican Mitt Romney is to give an update to his supporters on Friday on whether he should run for president a third time in 2016 amid signs he has yet to convince some financial backers as to why he should take the plunge again.

A former staffer, who asked to remain unidentified, said a conference call with Romney was expected to be held at mid-morning on Friday, and that he might give a signal as to which way he was leaning.

Romney for the past three weeks has been seeking traction for another presidential run after he was defeated by Democratic President Barack Obama in 2012.

On Wednesday, he visited Mississippi State University in Starkville, Mississippi, and in a closely watched speech, he emphasized a commitment to tackle poverty in America, a correction from his 2012 candidacy when he was dragged down by his wealthy image.

Some of the people who raised money for Romney, seeing no dramatic change from 2012 as yet, are so far inclined to move on to other potential candidates like former Florida Governor Jeb Bush.

This is presenting Romney with a dilemma should he decide to leap into the fray again against what is expected to be a crowded field.

The problem is many of Romney's supporters believed him when he vowed many times over the last two years that he would not run again, and they started looking elsewhere.

Theresa Kostrzewa, a Raleigh, North Carolina, Republican who raised money for Romney in 2012, said she had wanted to hear a statement from Romney that he had learned from his mistakes in 2012 and would run a different campaign.

“What I think right now is his time has come and gone,” she told Reuters. “I think he missed the boat.”

Renee Schulte, an Iowa Republican who has been a Romney supporter since 2006 and raised money for him in 2012, said she has been a “true blue believer” in Romney and still thinks he would be a great president if elected.

But she doesn’t see a path to victory.

“I’ve asked questions about what would be different, and I’m still waiting for answers,” she told Reuters. “What’s different?”

In another troubling sign, David Kochel, a Republican strategist in Iowa who backed Romney in the past, was named on Thursday as a senior strategist for Bush. A Bush aide said Kochel is in line for a senior role in Bush’s campaign should he run.

Internal discussions among Romney’s advisers have focused on the need for Romney to present himself in a more approachable way, more like the Romney seen in a favorable documentary released after his defeat in 2012, a former Romney adviser said.

Romney and his team have been heartened by polls showing him leading the field in the early days of the 2016 race. Applause broke out at Mississippi State University on Wednesday night when Romney told a packed auditorium he was considering a run.

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