

Will Huntsman Split the Establishment GOP Vote?

✖ Former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman has entered the 2012 Republican presidential nomination race.

President Obama appointed Huntsman to serve as United States Ambassador to China in May 2009. The U.S. Senate unanimously confirmed his nomination. He has lived in Asia three times and speaks fluent Mandarin Chinese.

"I enter this race with a different perspective than others. I've recently had the honor of serving as U.S. Ambassador to China," Huntsman says. "That view of America from 10,000 miles away is a picture of liberty, opportunity and justice; people secure in their rights and in love with their freedom, who've done more good for more people than any other nation in history. Perhaps our strength at home has waned, but that perspective from afar has helped me see a path back to greatness."

While Huntsman has high hopes against the likes of Mitt Romney and Tim Pawlenty, Richard Viguerie, chairman of , says his only base is his father's successful business career, including lots of business contacts and friends.

"Regularly I see politicians announce for a public office without in any way having a visible base of support. Perhaps the most important law of politics is that you must have a base to win an election," Viguerie says.

"Sometimes a base can be that you are your party's anointed candidate, your ethnicity, your race, your ideology and, as is becoming more and more common, your checkbook. Huntsman's one and only base is his daddy's checkbook, as well as his business and personal contacts. *Forbes* magazine says Daddy Huntsman is worth \$1.3 billion."

As Viguerie sees it, a Huntsman candidacy would have made a lot more sense in the 1960s and '70s, but the times they have changed—today's GOP is more ideologically conservative than at any time since the 1920s.

“Conservatives should welcome the Huntsman's candidacy as it will split the establishment GOP money and vote,” Viguerie says, “making it easier for a principled, small-government, constitutional conservative to win the presidential nomination.”

Huntsman's public service career began as a White House staff assistant to President Ronald Reagan and has since included appointments as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Asia, U.S. Ambassador to Singapore and Deputy U.S. Trade Representative.