

Despite Rivalry, Bush Promises to Support Trump if He Wins

Jeb Bush said on Thursday he would back fellow Republican presidential hopeful Donald Trump if the businessman-turned-politician wins the party's nomination for the 2016 presidential election and Hillary Clinton is the Democratic nominee.

Asked if he would support Trump as Republican nominee over Clinton in the November 2016 contest, Bush said, "I would, of course."

"We need to be unified. We need to win," Bush, the former Florida governor, said in an interview on ABC's "Good Morning America" television program, one day after Trump told the same show he would back Bush over Clinton.

Bush and Trump have been engaged in public attacks on each another as they vie for the party's nomination.

Trump has spent weeks taunting Bush, one of his closest rivals in public opinion polls in the large Republican field. The real estate mogul and television personality has mocked Bush as "low-energy," and this week criticized him for answering a question in Spanish.

The Bush campaign initially had avoided engaging in a war of words with Trump. But on Wednesday, Bush's advisers signaled a new effort to fight back with campaign ads and social media efforts.

On Thursday, Bush took issue with Trump's tactics and called on his rival to tone down his attacks. Trump has made controversial remarks about immigration and Latinos. Bush,

whose wife was born in Mexico, told ABC that diversity adds vitality to the country.

“I think Donald Trump trying to insult his way to the presidency is not going to work. People want an uplifting, hopeful message,” he said.

Bush added that Trump should “figure out a way to lessen the divisive language, the hurtful language and talk about the aspirations of the American people, rather than trying to prey on their fears.”

Reuters/Ipsos polling shows Trump with support among nearly 31 percent of self-identified Republicans as of Sept. 1, with Bush garnering support among nearly 12 percent, behind former neurosurgeon Ben Carson.

(Reporting by Susan Heavey; Editing by Jeffrey Benkoe)

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