

Mike Huckabee



Michael Dale "Mike" Huckabee (born August 24, 1955) is an American politician, Christian minister, author, and commentator who served as the 44th Governor of Arkansas from 1996 to 2007.[4] He is a candidate for U.S. president in the 2016 election and was a candidate in the 2008 United States Republican presidential primaries. He won the 2008 Iowa Republican caucuses and finished second in delegate count and third in both popular vote and number of states won, behind nominee John McCain and Mitt Romney.[5]

Beginning in 2008, Huckabee hosted the Fox News Channel talk show Huckabee, ending the show in January 2015 in order to explore a potential bid for the presidency.[6] From April 2012 through December 2013, he hosted a daily radio program, The Mike Huckabee Show, on weekday afternoons for Cumulus Media Networks.[7] Huckabee is the author of several best-selling books, an ordained Southern Baptist minister noted for his evangelical views,[8] a musician, and a public speaker. He is also a political commentator on The Huckabee Report.[9]

Huckabee announced his candidacy for the Republican nomination in the 2016 presidential election,[10] in Hope, Arkansas on May 5, 2015.[10] It is his second run for the U.S. presidency.

Early life

Huckabee was born on August 24, 1955 in Hope, Arkansas,[11] son of Dorsey Wiles Huckabee and his wife Mae (Elder) Huckabee, conservative Southern Democrats. Huckabee is of English ancestry, with roots in America dating to the colonial era.[12][13] He has cited his working-class upbringing as the reason for his political views;[14] his father worked as a fireman and mechanic, and his mother worked as a clerk at a gas company.[15]

Develop

His first job, when he was 14, was at a radio station where he read the news and weather.[16] He was elected Governor of Arkansas by his chapter of the American Legion-sponsored Boys State program in 1972.[11] He was student council vice president at Hope High School during the 1971–72 school year. He was student council president at Hope High School during the 1972–1973 school year.[17] He has one sister, Mrs. Pat Harris, a middle school teacher.[18]

Huckabee married his wife, Janet (McCain), on May 25, 1974.[18] He graduated magna cum laude from Ouachita Baptist University, completing his bachelor's degree in Religion in two-and-a-half years before attending Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He dropped out of the seminary after one year in order to take a job in Christian broadcasting.[19][20][21]

Pastoral career

At age 21, Huckabee was a staffer for televangelist James Robison.[17] Robison commented, "His convictions shape his character and his character will shape his policies. His whole life has been shaped by moral absolutes." [17] Prior to his political career, he served as pastor at Immanuel Baptist Church in Pine Bluff, Arkansas from 1980 to 1986, and the Beech Street Baptist Church in Texarkana from 1986 to 1992.

Huckabee started 24-hour television stations in both Pine Bluff and Texarkana, where he produced documentaries and hosted a program called Positive Alternatives.[11] He encouraged the all-white Immanuel Baptist Church to accept black members in the mid-1980s.[17][22] Years later, Huckabee wrote about the insights he gained as a minister:

My experience dealing every day with real people who were genuinely affected by policies created by government gave me a deep understanding of the fragility of the human spirit and vulnerability of so many families who struggled from week to week. I was in the ICU at 2 a.m. with families faced with the decision to disconnect a respirator on their loved one; I counseled fifteen-year-old pregnant girls who were afraid to tell their parents about their condition; I spent hours hearing the grief of women who had been physically and emotionally clobbered by an abusive husband; I saw the anguish in the faces of an elderly couple when their declining health forced them to sell their home, give up their independence, and move into a long-term-care facility; I listened to countless young couples pour out their souls as they struggled to get their marriages into survival mode when confronted with overextended debt...[23]

In 1989, Huckabee ran against Ronnie Floyd of Springdale for the presidency of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. Huckabee won and served as president from 1989 to 1991.[24]

Political career

Lieutenant Governor of Arkansas, 1993–1996

In Huckabee's first political race in 1992, he lost to incumbent Democratic Senator Dale Bumpers, receiving 40 percent of the vote in the general election.[25] In the same election, Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton became president, making Lieutenant Governor Jim Guy Tucker the new Governor. In 1993, Republican state chairman Asa Hutchinson urged Huckabee to run in the special election for lieutenant governor held on July 27. Realizing his loss came among key conservative Democrats, Huckabee ran a decidedly conservative campaign. In the subsequent general election, he defeated Nate Coulter, who had been Bumpers' campaign manager the previous year,[26] 51–49 percent.[11] Huckabee became the second Republican since Reconstruction to serve as Arkansas lieutenant governor, the first having been Maurice Britt from 1967 to 1971.

In his autobiography *From Hope to Higher Ground*, Huckabee recalled the chilly reception that he received from the Arkansas Democratic establishment on his election as lieutenant governor: "The doors to my office were spitefully nailed shut from the inside, office furniture and equipment were removed, and the budget spent down to almost nothing prior to our arriving. After fifty-nine days of public outcry, the doors were finally opened for me to occupy the actual office I had been elected to hold two months earlier." [27]

Dick Morris, who had previously worked for Bill Clinton, advised Huckabee on his races in 1993, 1994 and 1998.[28] Huckabee commented that Morris was a "personal friend." [28] A newspaper article reported on Huckabee's 1993 win: "Morris said the mistake Republicans always make is that they are too much of a country club set. What we wanted to do was run a progressive campaign that would appeal to all Arkansans." [28]

Morris elaborated, "So we opened the campaign with ads that characterized Mike as more of a moderate whose values were the same as those of other Arkansans." [28] Consequently, he abandoned his earlier support for the Council of Conservative Citizens (CofCC) when in April 1994 following an adverse media campaign against the CofCC, Huckabee withdrew from a speaking engagement before their national convention. He repeated the accusations made by various media and civil rights organizations such as the Southern Poverty Law Center recalling his past association with the CofCC saying, "I will not participate in any program that has racist overtones. I've spent a lifetime fighting [against] racism and anti-Semitism." [29]

In 1994, Huckabee was re-elected to a full term as lieutenant governor, beating Democratic candidate Charlie Cole Chaffin with nearly 59 percent of the vote.[30] While Lieutenant Governor, Huckabee accepted \$71,500 in speaking fees and traveling expenses from a nonprofit group, Action America. R. J. Reynolds was the group's largest contributor.[22]

In October 1995, David Pryor announced that he was retiring from the United States Senate. Huckabee then announced he was running for the open seat and moved ahead in the polls,[11] but ultimately dropped out of the race to lead the state after incumbent governor Jim Guy Tucker resigned following his fraud and conspiracy convictions.[31]

During his campaign, Huckabee opposed in December then-Governor Tucker's plan for a constitutional convention.[32] The plan was defeated by voters, 80–20 percent, in a special election. In January 1996, Huckabee campaigned in televised ads paid for by the Republican National Committee and the Arkansas Republican Party against a highway referendum. Tucker supported the referendum, which included tax increases and a bond program, to improve 1,300 miles (2,100 km) of highway.[33] On the

referendum, the bond question, which included a sales tax increase and a gas tax increase, lost 87–13 percent. A second question, a five-cent increase on diesel tax, lost 86–14 percent.[33][34] Huckabee also opposed Tucker's plan for school consolidation.[34]

Governor of Arkansas, 1996–2007

Main article: Governorship of Mike Huckabee

In May 1996, Tucker was convicted "on one count of arranging nearly \$3 million in fraudulent loans" as part of the Whitewater scandal. The Arkansas Constitution, like nearly all state constitutions in the United States, does not allow convicted felons to hold office. Tucker thus promised to resign by July 15.[11] Huckabee then announced he would quit the Senate race and instead fill the unexpired term of Tucker.[31] However, Tucker, insisting he had a strong case for appeal,[35] rescinded his resignation as Huckabee was preparing to be sworn in on July 15. Within a few hours, Tucker reinstated his resignation after Huckabee and the legislature threatened to initiate impeachment proceedings against Tucker.[17] Huckabee was then duly sworn in as governor.

In November 1998, Huckabee was elected to a full four-year term by defeating retired Colonel Gene McVay in the primary and Jonesboro attorney Bill Bristow in the general election, becoming the state's third elected Republican Governor since Reconstruction.

In November 2002, Huckabee was reelected to his second four-year term by defeating State Treasurer Jimmie Lou Fisher, garnering 53 percent of the vote. His reelection came despite the defeat in the general election of fellow Republican U.S. Senator Tim Hutchinson. By the end of his term, Huckabee held the third-longest tenure of any Arkansas Governor. Only Democrats Orval Faubus, who served six consecutive two-year terms (1955–1967), and Bill Clinton, who served 11 years, 11 months (1979–1981; 1983–1992), had longer tenures.

During his time as a governor Huckabee supported a net tax increase of \$505 million.[36] According to columnist Margaret Carlson, that money was used to improve roads, health care, and schools in the state.[37]

Clemencies

Main article: Lakewood police officer shooting

As Governor, Huckabee commuted and accepted recommendations for pardon for twice as many sentences as his three predecessors combined; in total: 1,033 prisoners.[38] Twelve had previously been convicted of murder.[39] Though Huckabee pardoned more than his predecessors, the state prison size and number of people executed were greater as well,[40] and Huckabee denied 92% of all clemency requests during his 10.5 years as Governor.[41] Most pardons and commutations were not for prisoners but those whose sentences had ended and were seeking work.[42] Huckabee's pardons and commutations became an issue during the 2008 Republican Primary, with most of the controversy focusing on Wayne Dumond.[43]

Huckabee's handling of clemency petitions received national attention in November 2009 with the case of Maurice Clemmons, who had committed burglary without a weapon at age 16. The Prison Transfer Board unanimously requested a sentence commutation for Clemmons as did the trial judge.[41] Clemmons' 60-year sentence was commuted by Huckabee to 47 years, making him eligible for parole if approved by the parole board. After parole in 2000, Clemmons was arrested for multiple offenses including child molestation and aggravated assault, but was released after prosecutors declined to file charges. After Clemmons murdered four police officers in Lakewood, Washington a two-day manhunt ensued, and Clemmons was shot and killed by a Seattle Police Department officer after refusing police orders to stop charging the officer.[44] In his book about the shooting, *The Other Side of Mercy*, Jonathan Martin of *The Seattle Times* wrote that Huckabee apparently failed to review Clemmons' prison file, which was "thick with acts of violence and absent indications of rehabilitation." [45] Huckabee defended his actions, stating that the recommendation to reduce the sentence was unanimous and supported by the trial judge, that the decision to parole him was made by the parole board, not him, and that Clemmons had been re-arrested and the decision not to file charges then had nothing to do with him.[46][47]

In 2003, Eugene Fields received a six-year prison sentence after his fourth conviction of driving while intoxicated in five years. Gov. Huckabee granted clemency over the objections of the local prosecutor and sheriff, the Arkansas Prosecuting Attorneys Association and Mothers Against Drunk Driving. A spokeswoman for Mr. Huckabee, Charmaine Yoest, said that Mr. Fields' political donations [to the Arkansas Republican Party] and connections played no role in his clemency. About two years after Mr. Fields' sentence was cut to 11 months, he was arrested again for driving while intoxicated as his truck crossed the center line directly into the path of an oncoming police car.[48]

2008 presidential election campaign

Main article: Mike Huckabee presidential campaign, 2008

Huckabee with actor Chuck Norris in Londonderry, New Hampshire (2008)

2008 presidential campaign logo

Huckabee announced his run for the White House on Meet the Press on January 28, 2007.[49]

At the August 11 Iowa Straw Poll, Huckabee took second place with 2,587 votes, roughly 18 percent, splitting the conservative Republican party votes amongst other candidates.[50] Huckabee spent \$57.98 per vote in the Straw Poll, which is the lowest among the top three finishers.[51] Huckabee drew attention with an unconventional ad featuring Chuck Norris.[52] In a later ad Huckabee wished voters a merry Christmas, and said that "what really matters is the celebration of the birth of Christ." [53]

In November 2007, Huckabee drew endorsements from a large number of religious activists, including Billy McCormack, a pastor in Shreveport, Louisiana, and a director and vice president of the Christian Coalition of America, founded in 1988 by a previous presidential candidate, Pat Robertson.[54] He was criticized for using a bookshelf that resembled a cross in a Christmas commercial as a form of signaling to Christians, and laughed them off saying "I will confess this: If you play the spot backwards, it says, 'Paul is dead. Paul is dead.'" [55][56] He also faced a "drumbeat" of questions about the role of faith in his gubernatorial administration and about past statements he made in 1998 about the U.S. being a "Christian nation" in which he said, "I hope we answer the alarm clock and take this nation back for Christ." Huckabee told NBC that his comment was not politically incorrect and was "appropriate to be said to a gathering of Southern Baptists." [57] Huckabee has credited God with some of his political success.[58]

On January 3, 2008, Huckabee won the Iowa Republican caucuses, receiving 34% of the electorate and 17 delegates, compared to the 25% of Mitt Romney who finished second, receiving 12 delegates, Fred Thompson who came in third place and received three delegates, John McCain who came in fourth place and received three delegates and Ron Paul who came in fifth place and received two delegates.

Huckabee at a campaign event in Londonderry, New Hampshire in 2008

On January 8, 2008, Huckabee finished in third place in the New Hampshire primary, behind John McCain in first place, and Mitt Romney who finished second, with Huckabee receiving one more delegate for a total of 18 delegates, gained via elections, and 21 total delegates, versus 30 total (24 via elections) for Romney, and 10 for McCain (all via elections).

On January 15, 2008, Huckabee finished in third place in the Michigan Republican primary, 2008, behind John McCain in second place, Mitt Romney who finished first and ahead of Ron Paul who finished in fourth place.[59]

On January 19, 2008, Huckabee finished in second place in the South Carolina Republican primary, 2008, behind John McCain who finished first and ahead of Fred Thompson who finished third.[60]

On January 29, 2008, Huckabee finished in fourth place in the Florida primary, behind Rudy Giuliani in third, Mitt Romney in second, and John McCain in first place.

On February 5, 2008, Huckabee won the first contest of "Super Tuesday", the West Virginia GOP state convention, but only after the McCain campaign provided their delegates thereby giving Huckabee 52% of the electorate to Mitt Romney's 47%. [61] Backers of rival John McCain said they threw Huckabee their support to prevent Mitt Romney from capturing the winner-take-all GOP state convention vote.[62] Consequently, he also registered victories in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia and Tennessee on Super Tuesday, bringing his delegate count up to 156, compared to 689 for Republican party front-runner John McCain.[63]

On February 9, 2008, Huckabee won the first election following Super Tuesday, by winning 60% of the vote in the Kansas Republican Caucuses.[64] This was also the first contest to be held without Mitt Romney, who was said to be splitting the conservative vote with Huckabee.[65] Huckabee also won the Louisiana Republican Primary with 44% of the vote to John McCain's 43% in second. Although Huckabee won the primary he was not awarded any delegates, because of state party rules that stated a candidate must pass the 50% threshold to receive the state's pledged delegates.[66]

On March 4, 2008, Huckabee withdrew from seeking the candidacy as it became apparent he would lose in Texas, where he had hoped to win, and that John McCain would get the 1,191 delegates required to win the Republican nomination. Huckabee finished the race with an estimated 248 pledged delegates.[citation needed]

Vice Presidency speculation

Even though Huckabee had signed a television contract and a book deal with a pressing deadline, he was mentioned by most to be on then-presumptive Republican presidential nominee John McCain's short list for his vice presidential running mate. The late pundit Tim Russert even referred to Huckabee as "Vice President Huckabee" several times when he appeared on Meet The Press on May 18, 2008.[67] Huckabee was eventually passed over for Sarah Palin.[68]

Former President Bill Clinton has praised Huckabee and stated that he is a rising star in the Republican Party. Clinton and Huckabee have collaborated on initiatives such as the fight against childhood obesity.[69] Former Tennessee Republican Party chairman and Huckabee's former campaign manager Chip Saltsman has called Governor Huckabee, "The most successful failed presidential candidate in the history of our country." [70]

Speculated 2012 presidential campaign

See also: United States presidential election, 2012

In a November 19, 2008, article by the Associated Press, Huckabee addressed the possibility of running for president in 2012. He said, "I'm not ruling anything out for the future, but I'm not making any specific plans".[71]

Amid speculation about a future run for the Presidency, a CNN poll in December 2008 found Huckabee at the top of the list of 2012 GOP contenders, along with former Alaskan Governor Sarah Palin, fellow 2008 presidential candidate Mitt Romney, and former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich.[72]

On December 3, 2008, Cincinnati-based NBC affiliate WLWT asked Huckabee about the prospect of running, to which he said, "I'm pretty sure I'll be out there. Whether it's for myself or somebody else I may decide will be a better standard bearer, that remains to be seen." [73]

A June 2009 CNN/Opinion Research Corporation national poll showed Huckabee as the 2012 presidential co-favorite of the Republican electorate along with Palin and Romney.[74] An October 2009 poll of Republicans by Rasmussen Reports put Huckabee in the lead with 29%, followed by Romney on 24% and Palin on 18%. [75] In a November 2009 Gallup poll, Huckabee was shown as the leading Republican contender for 2012.[76] In November 2010 CNN projected in a poll that Huckabee would defeat Barack Obama in a hypothetical 2012 contest.[77] In a Rasmussen poll taken January 11–14, 2011, Huckabee was even with Obama at 43% each.[78]

On May 14, 2011, Huckabee announced on his FNC show that he would not be a candidate for the GOP presidential nomination in 2012. Despite his high national poll numbers and being seen by many as the front runner, Huckabee declined to run, saying, "All the factors say go, but my heart says no." [79]

2016 presidential campaign

Main article: Mike Huckabee presidential campaign, 2016

See also: [United States presidential election, 2016](#)
[Huckabee speaking at 2014 Conservative Political Action Conference \(CPAC\) in Maryland](#)

Political commentators speculated that Huckabee might be ready for another presidential run in 2016. He was limited by a lack of money in 2008 but with changes to federal election law allowing SuperPACs to pour large sums of money into a race he might be better positioned to stay in the race.[80] Huckabee has in addition earned personal wealth since 2008 on the lecture circuit and his TV and radio shows. He ended his daily radio show in December 2013 which strengthened speculations about a presidential bid.[81][82]

Huckabee indicated in September 2014 that he would make the decision on whether to run early in 2015.[83] In January 2015, Huckabee ended his show on FNC to prepare for his possible run in the 2016 presidential election.[6] On March 30, 2015, Huckabee supporters launched a Super PAC to make preparations for his run for the Presidential ticket in 2016.[84]

On May 5, 2015, Huckabee announced a campaign to seek the Republican nomination for President of the United States in the 2016 election.[85] In his speech, which was delivered in the hometown that he shares with Bill Clinton, Huckabee attacked trade deals that he said drive down U.S. wages, opposed raising the age for Social Security benefits, criticized President Obama for what he said was putting more pressure on Israel than Iran, and made an unusual plea for donations of \$15 or \$25 a month, saying: "I will ask you to give something in the name of your children and grandchildren".[85]

Political positions

Main article: [Political positions of Mike Huckabee](#)

Abortion

Huckabee opposes any public funding for abortion, and believes that abortion should be legal only when the life of the mother is at risk.[86] He believes that it would "most certainly" be a good day for America if *Roe v. Wade* were reversed.[87]

Health care

Huckabee opposed Obama's health care plan, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. He stated that he wants to "give citizens more control over their own health care choices." [88]

Free Trade

In his book *From Hope to Higher Ground*, Huckabee expressed support for free trade, but only if it is "fair trade". He identified excess litigation, excess taxation, and excess regulation as three factors contributing to the loss of American jobs, and has proposed economic sanctions on China.[89]

Huckabee has spoken against Obama's draft Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement, commenting that "this deal is a handout to insiders, interest groups, Obama's allies and Asia".[90]

Race relations

According to a CNN exit poll, Huckabee won 48% of African American votes in his successful 1998 gubernatorial race in Arkansas.[91] Huckabee says that it is important for Republicans such as himself to reach out to black voters, and in 2015 he has ramped up efforts to win those votes.[92]

In 2015, he said on "Meet the Press" that the confederate flag issue was for South Carolinians to decide, "not an issue for a person running for president," and days later he congratulated Gov. Nikki Haley on her decision supporting removal of the flag from the state capitol.[92] Huckabee gave a speech at the 2008 Republican National Convention that included this: "I say with sincerity that I have great respect for Senator Obama's historic achievement to become his party's nominee — not because of his color, but with indifference to it. Party or politics aside, we celebrate this milestone because it elevates our country." [93]

LGBT

Huckabee believes that marriage is between one man and one woman, and he opposes same-sex marriage and civil unions. He outlawed gay marriage in Arkansas, but in 2007 he stated that Americans should respect gay couples. He says that adoptions should be child focused and opposes gay adoptions.[94]

Teaching of Evolution

Huckabee has voiced his support of intelligent design and he has stated that he does not accept the validity of Darwin's theory of evolution. He was quoted in July 2004 on *Arkansans Ask*, his regular show on the Arkansas Educational Television Network: "I think that students also should be given exposure to the theories not only of evolution but to the basis of those who believe in creationism." [95]

Military

In 2007, Huckabee argued for a larger military and an increase in defense spending, writing "Right now, we spend about 3.9 percent of our GDP on defense, compared with about six percent in 1986, under President Ronald Reagan. We need to return to that six percent level."^[96]

Immigration

During his bid for president, Huckabee released a comprehensive nine-point immigration enforcement and border security plan. His plan includes building a border fence, increased border patrol personnel, and increases in visas for skilled workers who enter the country legally. He has previously stated he is opposed to using military resources for border patrol.^[97] Huckabee's plan would also require all 11-12 million^[98] illegal immigrants to register with the federal government and return to their home countries within 120 days. Failure to do so would carry a 10-year ban from entering the US.^[99]

Gun control

Huckabee has voiced his support for self-defense and the Castle Doctrine, and has generally taken an anti-gun control stance. He believes that the concealed carrying of weapons should be allowed.^[94] He has said that whenever he hears people start talking about hunting when referring to the Second Amendment, he realizes they do not know what they are talking about, because the Second Amendment was to allow an armed citizenry the opportunity to protect themselves in case a tyrannical government ever came into power.^[100]

Fiscal policy

As Governor of Arkansas, Huckabee received grades of B in 1998,^{[101][102]} C in 2000,^{[103][104]} C in 2002,^{[105][106]} D in 2004,^{[107][108]} and F in 2006^{[109][110]} from the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, in their biennial Fiscal Policy Report Card on America's Governors.

Public image

Main article: Public image of Mike Huckabee

Honors

Huckabee received two honorary doctoral degrees: a Doctor of Humane Letters, received from John Brown University in 1991, and a Doctor of Laws from Ouachita Baptist University in 1992.^[111]

In 2001, Huckabee was named "Friend of a Taxpayer" by Americans for Tax Reform for his cut in statewide spending.[112]

In 2005, Huckabee was named one of Time‍‍ '?‍s top 5 governors,[113] honored as one of Governing magazine's Public Officials of the Year,[114] and given the American Public Health Association's Distinguished Public Health Legislator of the Year Award.[115] In 2006 he was presented with AARP's Impact Award.[116]

In 2007, Huckabee was given the Music for Life Award by the National Association of Music Merchants for his music education advocacy.[117]

In December 2008, Huckabee became an Honorary Member of Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity.[118]

In July 2010, Huckabee became a fundraiser on behalf of for-profit Victory College in Memphis Tennessee and was designated Chancellor of the Victory University Foundation.[119]

Organizations

Huckabee was made the chair of the Southern Governors' Association in 1999 and served in capacity through 2000. He has chaired the Southern Growth Policies Board, the Southern Regional Education Board, the Southern Technology Council, the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission, and the Education Commission of the States. He is also a member of the Republican Governors Association and former chairman of the National Governors Association. Huckabee is presently the chairman of conservative PACs called the Vertical Politics Institute and Huck PAC.

Huckabee co-hosted Troopathon 2013.[120]

Media career

On June 12, 2008, Fox News announced it was hiring Huckabee as a political commentator and regular contributor to their 2008 American presidential election coverage, in their New York election headquarters.[121]

Huckabee filled in for Paul Harvey in July 2008.[122] A few months later, he signed a deal with ABC Radio Networks (now Cumulus Media Networks) to carry a daily commentary, The Huckabee Report, beginning in January 2009.[123] After Harvey's death his show replaced Harvey's broadcasts.[124] On April 15, 2015, Huckabee announced that The Huckabee Report would be ending May 1, but subscribers could hear similar content which they would pay for.[125]

Huckabee hosted a weekend show, Huckabee, on Fox News Channel, which premiered Saturday, September 27, 2008, at 8 PM EST,[126] and ended on January 3, 2015 so that Huckabee could consider the possibility of running for president.[6]

On April 2, 2012, Huckabee launched a long-form daily talk show on Cumulus Media Networks, who provide the call-in guests. The show, which is targeted at second-tier broadcast stations, features long-form interviews and discussions and airs in the noon to 3 p.m. time slot, directly opposite the market leader in talk radio, The Rush Limbaugh Show.[127] On November 27, 2013, Huckabee announced that the show will have its final broadcast on December 12, 2013, stating that he and Cumulus Media mutually decided not to renew the contract.[128]

In a December 2013 interview, Huckabee stated that he would be launching a news organization in partnership with Christian Media Corp. International.[129]

Praise and controversy

Huckabee received widespread praise for his state's rapid response to Hurricane Katrina. In 2005, Time magazine named him one of the five best governors in the U.S., writing "Huckabee has approached his state's troubles with energy and innovation" and referred to him as "a mature, consensus-building conservative who earns praise from fellow Evangelicals and, occasionally, liberal Democrats." [113] Governing magazine likewise honored Huckabee as one of its 2005 Public Officials of the Year.[114]

According to a CNN exit poll, Huckabee received 48% of the African-American vote in his 1998 election.;[130] but some experts have questioned whether those numbers are a representative sample on how he did on the whole in the election.[131] On January 21, 2008, Mike Huckabee received the endorsement of 50 African-American leaders in Atlanta, Georgia. The endorsers cited Huckabee's record on life, education, minorities, the economy, the prison system, and immigration as Arkansas governor.[132] But, NBC claimed that the endorsement of African-American leaders at the Atlanta Georgia event was thirty-six, and "most of them connected to conservative religious organizations.." [133]

In comments made March 1, 2011, on The Steve Malzberg Show, Huckabee said of President Barack Obama, "I would love to know more. What I know is troubling enough. And one thing that I do know is his having grown up in Kenya, his view of the Brits, for example, is very different than the average American." [134] (This is a reference to the Mau Mau Uprising against the colonial rule of the United Kingdom in 1952; Obama himself has never lived in Kenya.) [135]

In comments made March 4, 2011, on the Michael Medved Show, Huckabee spoke about pregnant, unwed actress Natalie Portman, saying "it's unfortunate we glorify and glamorize the idea of out of wedlock children." [136]

In April 2011, he was criticized for a remark he made, "I almost wish that there would be a simultaneous telecast and all Americans would be forced, at gunpoint, to listen to every David Barton message," in praise of David Barton.[137]

Within hours of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, Huckabee made headlines in the U.S. and abroad for stating on Fox News: "we ask why there is violence in our schools, but we have systematically removed God from our schools," and further asked "Should we be so surprised that schools would become a place of carnage?"[138]

In January 2014, in a luncheon speech at the Republican National Committee's winter meeting, in response to a federal mandate on contraception, Huckabee stated that "Democrats want to insult the women of America by making them believe that they are helpless without Uncle Sugar coming in and providing for them a prescription each month for birth control, they cannot control their libido or their reproductive system without the help of the government." [139]

In September 2014, Huckabee was criticized by Richard Dawkins for saying "fire the ones who refuse to hear not only our hearts, but God's heart." [140]

In January 2015, he was quoted comparing being gay to "drinking and swearing". [141] The following week Jon Stewart criticized Huckabee for his comments on the gay rights issue linking it to the Bible. "It's why Huckabee never mixes fabric in his clothes or trims his beard or sleeps with another man's slave," Stewart said. "It would be wrong." [142]

In September 2015, speaking about his support of Kentucky county clerk Kim Davis to radio host Michael Medved, Huckabee said, "Michael, Dred Scott decision of 1857 still remains to this day the law of the land which says that black people aren't fully human. Does anybody still follow the Dred Scott Supreme Court decision?" [143][144] The decision in Dred Scott v. Sandford had been superseded by the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and nullified by the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

Personal life

Capitol Offense (rock band)

At a church in Virginia, 2008

Huckabee plays the electric bass guitar in his classic-rock cover band, Capitol Offense. [145] The group has played for political events and parties, including entertaining at unofficial inaugural balls in Washington, D.C. in January 2001 and later again in 2005, both organized and promoted by the conservative website Free Republic [146] as well as the 2004 GOP Convention. [147]

Weight loss and health advocacy

When elected governor of Arkansas, Huckabee was obese. In 2003, physicians diagnosed him with type 2 diabetes, and informed him that he would not live more than 10 years if he did not lose weight. Huckabee acknowledges that he has weighed as much as 300 pounds (135 kg). Coupled with the death of former Governor Frank D. White (whose obesity contributed to a fatal heart attack)

his diagnosis prompted Huckabee to begin eating a healthier diet and exercising. He subsequently lost over 110 pounds (50 kg).[148][149] The New York Times called the weight loss so rapid that "it was as if he simply unzipped a fat suit and stepped out." [150]

Although Huckabee has stated that he never smoked nor drank,[18] he declared himself a "recovering foodaholic". Huckabee has publicly recounted his previous burdens as an obese man: the steps of the Arkansas capitol from the entrance of the building up to the Governor's office were so long and steep that he would be out of breath and exhausted by the time he reached the top of the stairs.[151] Huckabee has discussed his weight loss and used health care reform as a major focus of his governorship.[152]

At an August 2007 forum on cancer hosted by Lance Armstrong, Huckabee said he would support a federal smoking ban, but has stated that he believes the issue is best addressed by state and local governments.[153]

Huckabee has completed several marathons: the 2005 Marine Corps Marathon, the 2005 and 2006 Little Rock Marathon, and the 2006 New York City Marathon.[154] The 2005 Little Rock Marathon featured an impromptu challenge between Huckabee and Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack. Huckabee completed the marathon in 4:38:31, defeating Vilsack by 50 minutes. He wrote a book chronicling his weight-loss experience, *Quit Digging Your Grave with a Knife and Fork*. Huckabee was one of 10 recipients of a 2006 AARP Impact Award acknowledging his work as a "health crusader."

In 2009, Huckabee acknowledged that he had gained back a fourth of his weight due to a foot condition that prevented him from running.[155]

Books

Huckabee has written or co-authored several books including *Do The Right Thing: Inside the Movement That's Bringing Common Sense Back to America* (released on November 18, 2008) which became a New York Times Best Seller.[156]

At a book signing in 2011

Character is the Issue: How People With Integrity Can Revolutionize America (1997), a memoir (inspired by the crisis surrounding the incidents prior to his taking office as governor)

Kids Who Kill (1998), a book about juvenile violence (inspired by the Jonesboro massacre, which took place during his tenure as governor)

Living Beyond Your Lifetime (2000), a guide for leaving a personal legacy

Quit Digging Your Grave with a Knife and Fork (2005), a health and exercise inspirational guide (based on his personal health experience) Publisher: Center Street

From Hope to Higher Ground: 12 Steps to Restoring America's Greatness (2007) Publisher: Center Street
"De-Marketing Obesity" in the California Management Review, (with Brian Wansink), 47:4 (Summer 2005), 6–18.
Huckabee also wrote the foreword to My Story Your Story His Story (2006) by Larry Toller
Governor Huckabee also wrote the Foreword for "With Christ in Voting Booth" by David Shedlock
Character Makes a Difference: Where I'm From, Where I've Been, and What I Believe (2007)
Do the Right Thing: Inside the Movement That's Bringing Common Sense Back to America, (2008)
A Simple Christmas: Twelve Stories that Celebrate the True Holiday Spirit (2009)
A Simple Government: Twelve Things We Really Need from Washington (and a Trillion That We Don't!) (2011)
Dear Chandler, Dear Scarlett: A Grandfather's Thoughts on Faith, Family, and the Things That Matter Most (2012)
God, Guns, Grits, and Gravy (2015) - In God, Guns, Grits and Gravy, Huckabee discusses the myriad differences he's seen between those who live in the blue, coastal "bubbles" and the "bubbas" of the red flyover states. Huckabee uses Jay Z and Beyoncé as examples of a "culture of crude." He describes Beyoncé's lyrics as "obnoxious and toxic mental poison." [157]

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