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# Jeb Bush Candidate Announcement Speech Analysis

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Marlisa Barrett

### Jeb Bush's Campaign Announcement Speech

Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush officially announced his presidential bid as a Republican candidate at Miami-Dade College in Miami Florida, on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015. In his announcement speech, Bush positions himself as the strongest candidate on the issue of economic struggles by framing it as the fault of the current President. Bush constructs himself as stubborn and hard-working, and incites emotions of insecurity and excitement from his audience in order to draw them into his campaign.<sup>1</sup>

Bush sets the agenda of his campaign speech on rebuilding the economic structure of America. He states clearly that his “goal as president [is] 4 percent growth, and the 19 million new jobs that come with it.” He wants “growth that lifts up the middle class.” Bush states that he believes in the hard-working people of America and wants to change the economy in order to help them. He also wants to limit government spending. He recalls his leadership as governor of Florida, saying “I also used my veto power to protect our taxpayers from needless spending. And if I am elected president, I'll show Congress how that's done.” Bush doesn't want more government spending, rather, he wants to cut spending and decrease taxes.

Bush frames recent leadership as the root of the economic stress on America. He believes that over the past 8 years, the government has been “responsible for the slowest economic recovery ever, the biggest debt increases ever, a massive tax increase on the middle class.” Bush focuses heavily on the fault of President Obama's work in office over the last two terms, though he never directly mentions the current President's name. Throughout his speech, he never

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<sup>1</sup> This essay applies Medhurst's (2005) conceptual overview of presidential campaign rhetoric – agenda-setting, framing, character construction, and emotional resonance.

mentions any of the positive things the President has done throughout his term and suggests that all of the economic struggles have been caused in the past 8 years even though the country had already been struggling for several years prior to the 2008 election. However, Bush only frames the problem to focus it on the fall in the past 8 years. He leaves out any side of the past 8 years that have benefitted America and instead focuses on the decline, in order to create a tone of helplessness. He says, “our country is on a very bad course.”

Obviously, as a candidate to assume the presidency after Obama, Bush frames himself and the people of the United States as the answer to the problems. He uses examples from his time as governor and relates them to issues in America now, as a way to show how he has the ability to help and reconstruct America. He says, “We made Florida number one in job creation and number one in small business creation.” By creating a positive image of economics during his time as governor, he draws an association between what he did successfully as governor and what he would be able to do in the White House. He also includes the audience in his narrative of economic success by saying “we made.” He uses this narrative again later in the speech, saying “we will make the United States of America an economic superpower like no other.” By doing this, he attempts to draw the audience into his narrative, and give them a sense of importance in his campaign, and eventually, in the time of his presidency.

Bush presents his character as stubborn and hard-working leader who can fix the economy. He wants his audience to see him as someone who will continually work to solve their issues. He states, "We will take command of our future once again in this country" and “I will not accept [a self-serving attitude] as the standard in Washington.” Bush uses powerful language, using phrases like “take command” and “I will not accept” in order to create an image of a strong leader, to gain a trusting relationship with the audience. Also, he looks to be recognized as a

candidate that is not going to be laid back when it comes to his time as president. He declares that “We need a president willing to challenge and disrupt the whole culture in our nation’s capital.” Bush is not afraid to try something new, and he is attempting to convince the country that a completely new approach is what they need. This statement also assumes that he would be that leader. Many of the candidates, especially Republican candidates are very focused on the economy. This proposed one-eighty turn of the economy is a large part of Bush’ platform. He tries to put himself apart from the current leadership in order to show his audience that he will be a different and, ultimately, better leader, especially in the case of the economy.

In order to build support for his leadership on economic recovery, Bush suggests that citizens should feel unsafe under the current leadership, but excited for change through his leadership. He begins his speech saying, “The stakes for America's future are about as great as they come. Our prosperity and our security are in the balance.” Bush is encouraging the idea that the recent history of America’s economic and overall standing is beginning to fall. He sets up the upcoming election as extremely important. He is putting the future of America in the votes of the people. After making them feel unsafe, Bush then discusses his plans for the future, and how his leadership can help them. He claims at the end of his speech ‘I will run to win.’ Now that he has shown them what he could do for the people, he evokes a feeling of excitement, assuring them he can win the election. By using the people’s emotions revolving around the safety of their country, Bush is able to then show them how his leadership would help them the most.

Jeb Bush’s campaign speech is based upon the issue of economic struggles in America. Bush uses framing in order to blame the issues on our current President and construct himself as the hardworking candidate that will fix the issues. Through his speech, he instigates fear of the future in his audience, but also excitement for a future with himself as the leader.

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