Bush in Nashua: DC needs a public servant

By CHRIS GAROFOLO
Staff Writer

In a change of pace from the day-to-day campaign rhetoric, Republican presidential candidate Jeb Bush opted Wednesday morning to toss out his stump speech and offer real-life examples of his leadership skills to demonstrate his commitment to public service and his ability to take charge at the White House.

Bush also used his visit to Rivier University, where he spoke before about 100 people for the President's Circle Leadership Forum, to indirectly jab at GOP frontrunner Donald Trump, the brash New York billionaire, by saying the next president will have to do more than just talk. He spoke passionately about the need for a servant in Washington, D.C., twice noting that the volume of a candidate's voice should not define leadership and strength in a world with big personalities on the stage "saying outrageous things," referring to Trump without mentioning his name.

"Well, I think if you understand leadership truly, it's having a servant's heart. It's having the humility to know what you don't know and to listen first and to learn along the way and then to lead," he said. "We don't need talkers; we don't need people that divide us anymore; we need people that love this country and they're focused on solving problems so that people can rise up again."

Bush, the two-term governor of Florida who has been kickstarting his deep-pocketed campaign after months of sliding in the polls both nationally and in New Hampshire, offered four tales of his leadership record while the chief executive in one of the country's most important swing states.

"Since this is a leadership forum and since the presidency is probably the most important leadership job that exists in the United States, one would hope at least that we would have someone who had leadership skills in the Oval Office," he said. "I've had 32 years in the private sector and eight years as governor, and when you live a life that's pretty active, you learn things."

He told the audience his lessons learned in leadership - be curious and ask the right questions, understand one's limits and seek out the best advice.

"I changed the culture in Tallahassee because others began to do the exact same thing. We turned it away from government being the master and having it all figured out to government being the servant," he said. "We need servants in Washington, D.C., because right now government is too big. It is too inept, and people are struggling to make ends meet, but in Washington everybody's living high on the hog."

He occasionally slipped back into his stump speech while discussing his plans to fix the broken Veterans Affairs Department and his strategy to fight the Islamic State. When asked about the administration of his brother, former President George W. Bush, he defended his sibling and touted his own firm record directing Florida during eight hurricanes and four tropical storms in 16 months that destroyed more than 1 million homes and caused $100...
tropical storms in 16 months that destroyed more than 1 million homes and caused $100 billion in insured losses.

"When there's a problem, leaders say, 'This is under my watch; I will fix it,'" he said. "Running into the fire is something leaders need to do. When there's a problem, you can't say, 'It's my predecessor's fault.' When there's a problem, you can't say, 'The dog ate my homework.'"

Bush currently averages slightly more than 8 percent in the polls here, with fewer than three weeks to the first-in-the-nation primary. Trump, who has been engaged in a verbal spat with Bush for the better part of the last few months, leads by double-digits in most polls on the Republican side.

The Bush campaign, however, has promoted its recent uptick and snagged a solid Nashua endorsement this week in Gary Lambert, who was present for the Wednesday breakfast. Bush will remain in the state for the rest of the week.

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