



# Jeb Bush: Divider, Not Uniter

By Charles Posner and Anna Chu

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Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush (R) announced his candidacy to be the third Bush president last week, nearly 10 years after the end of his two terms as governor and following a major staff shakeup.<sup>1</sup> During and since his time in Tallahassee, Gov. Bush has worked to cultivate an image of himself as a leader whose appeal extends beyond the typical conservative base to the emerging demographic groups that are prevalent in his state, such as Hispanics. Although he will attempt to cast himself as a conservative during the election, he likely will tout his work across party lines on education,<sup>2</sup> his attempts to be moderate on immigration,<sup>3</sup> and his pledge to fight inequality.<sup>4</sup>

Gov. Bush's record and positions, however—including during his time leading the state of Florida—paint a starkly different picture. His tenure was marked by decreased access to public four-year colleges for African American Floridians, and young people of color bore the brunt of his extreme “Stand Your Ground” law.<sup>5</sup> Recently, Gov. Bush said he opposes executive action to fix the broken immigration system, even as movement stalls in Congress and he campaigns to be the country's next executive.<sup>6</sup> The current deferred action programs will inject billions of dollars into the U.S. economy and create jobs, not to mention the beneficial community effects they will bring to 5 million immigrants and their families.<sup>7</sup>

In advance of Gov. Bush's announcement, the Center for American Progress Action Fund analyzed the impact of three of his actions and positions and how they would affect the country.

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## Affirmative action<sup>8</sup>

- After Gov. Bush repealed affirmative action for public higher education institutions in Florida,<sup>9</sup> African American enrollment at Florida universities fell from 15.7 percent in 2000 to 14 percent in 2013—a 10.9 percent decrease.
- In contrast, African American enrollment rates at public universities increased from 10.4 percent to 10.8 percent nationwide over the same time period. This is a 3.5 percent increase.

- If national black enrollment decreased at the same rate as in Florida, 13.9 percent fewer black students would have been enrolled in public universities in 2013—a total of 85,726 fewer black students nationwide. That is five times more than the number of African American students in all California public universities combined.

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## Immigration

- Gov. Bush, who previously indicated support for immigration reform, so strongly opposes President Barack Obama’s executive action that he compared President Obama to a “Latin American dictator.”<sup>10</sup>
- A Center for American Progress analysis shows that the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, program; the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents, or DAPA, program; and the subsequent expansion of the DACA program will grow the U.S. economy by \$230 billion over 10 years.<sup>11</sup>
- Nearly \$10 billion of that gross domestic product growth will occur in Florida, as the programs could help nearly 230,000 immigrants come out of the shadows, work legally, and pay taxes.<sup>12</sup>

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## Stand Your Ground

- Gov. Bush signed the state’s Stand Your Ground provision into law in 2005, the first of its kind in the nation.<sup>13</sup>
- A 2012 *Tampa Bay Times* study of Stand Your Ground cases in Florida found that defendants who invoked the law to justify a homicide were more likely to be successful if they killed a black person: 73 percent of perpetrators who killed a black victim faced no penalty, compared with 59 percent of perpetrators who killed a white victim.<sup>14</sup>
- This means that defendants were 24 percent more likely to win a case if they killed a black person than if they killed a white person.
- Florida’s law paved the way for other states to adopt similar Stand Your Ground laws, which researchers estimate have resulted in an 8 percent increase in homicides in adopting states—or an additional 600 homicides in the nation per year.<sup>15</sup>

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## Endnotes

- 1 Marc Caputo and Alex Isenstadt, "Behind the Jeb Bush campaign shake-up," Politico, June 9, 2015, available at <http://www.politico.com/story/2015/06/jeb-bush-campaign-shake-up-sally-bradshaw-118803.html>.
- 2 Beth Reinhard, "Jeb Bush's Florida Talk on Education Illustrates Strengths, Liabilities," Washington Wire, February 10, 2015, available at <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2015/02/10/jeb-bushs-florida-talk-on-education-illustrates-strengths-liabilities/>.
- 3 Nate Silver, "Like Bush, Many Republicans Are Moderate on Immigration," FiveThirtyEight DataLab, April 12, 2014, available at <http://fivethirtyeight.com/datalab/like-bush-many-republicans-are-moderate-on-immigration/>.
- 4 Benjy Sarlin, "Jeb Bush pitches 'right to rise' in 2016 preview," MSNBC, February 5, 2015, available at <http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/jeb-bush-pitches-right-rise-2016-preview>.
- 5 Cheng Cheng and Mark Hoekstra, "Does Strengthening Self-Defense Law Deter Crime or Escalate Violence?," *Journal of Human Resources* 28 (3) (2013): 1–43.
- 6 Ben Kamisar, "Bush would overturn Obama's executive actions on immigration," The Hill, April 21, 2015, available at <http://thehill.com/blogs/ballot-box/presidential-races/239605-bush-would-overturn-obama-immigration-orders>.
- 7 Silva Mathema, "Assessing the Economic Impacts of Granting Deferred Action Through DACA and DAPA," Center for American Progress, April 2, 2015, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2015/04/02/110045/assessing-the-economic-impacts-of-granting-deferred-action-through-daca-and-dapa/>.
- 8 All affirmative action numbers in this brief come from CAP Action analysis of enrollment figures of public four-year colleges and universities that were selective—having an admissions rate of less than 100 percent—in admitting students in Florida and nationally. See National Center for Education Statistics, "Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System," available at <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/> (last accessed June 2015).
- 9 Peter T. Kilborn, "Jeb Bush Roils Florida on Affirmative Action," *The New York Times*, February 4, 2000, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/02/04/us/jeb-bush-roils-florida-on-affirmative-action.html>.
- 10 Michael C. Bender and David Weigel, "Jeb Bush, Confronted by DREAMer, Compares Obama Orders to Decrees of Latin American Dictator," Bloomberg, March 7, 2015, available at <http://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2015-03-07/jeb-bush-confronted-by-dreamer-compares-obama-orders-to-decrees-of-latin-american-dictator->.
- 11 Mathema, "Assessing the Economic Impacts of Granting Deferred Action Through DACA and DAPA."
- 12 Silva Mathema, "State-by-State Analysis of the Economic Impact of DACA, DAPA, and DACA Expansion," Center for American Progress, June 15, 2015, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2015/06/15/114894/state-by-state-analysis-of-the-economic-impact-of-daca-dapa-and-daca-expansion/>.
- 13 Laura Chapin, "The GOP's 'Stand Your Ground' Problem," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 18, 2014, available at <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/laura-chapin/2014/02/18/jeb-bush-and-the-gop-have-a-stand-your-ground-gun-law-problem>.
- 14 Kris Hundley, Susan Taylor Martin, and Connie Humburg, "Florida 'stand your ground' law yields some shocking outcomes depending on how law is applied," *Tampa Bay Times*, June 1, 2012, available at <http://www.tampabay.com/news/publicsafety/crime/florida-stand-your-ground-law-yields-some-shocking-outcomes-depending-on/1233133>.
- 15 Cheng and Hoekstra, "Does Strengthening Self-Defense Law Deter Crime or Escalate Violence?"