



## Life in Brief

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**Born:** May 28, 1971

**Hometown:** Miami, FL

**Current Residence:** West Miami, FL

**Religion:** Roman Catholic

### Education

- JD, University of Miami, 1996
- BA, Political Science, University of Florida, 1993

### Family

- Married, Jeannette Dousdebés Rubio
- 4 children

### Work History

- U.S. Senator from Florida, 2011-Present
- Political Science Professor, Florida International University, 2008-2010
- Representative, Florida House of Representatives, 2000-2008
  - Speaker of the House, 2005-2008
- Attorney, Broad and Cassel, 2004-unknown
- City Commissioner for West Miami, 1998-2000

### Electoral Overview

- Unsuccessful presidential bid in 2016, Rubio carried Minnesota, Puerto Rico and DC in the primary; after dropping out announced he would run for re-election for Senate after initially withdrawing
- Won Senate seat in 2010 with 49% of the vote, beating out former Gov. Charlie Crist who ran as an independent
- Won re-election as state rep largely unopposed until he left due to term limits

### Committee Assignments

- Chair, Small Business and Entrepreneurship
- Appropriations
- Foreign Relations
- Intelligence
- Aging

## Quick Summary

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**Cuban-American and deeply religious, Rubio was mentored by GOP establishment in Florida and found success early in his career; tries to find independent voice in Trump-led GOP**

- Raised in West Miami, where his parents worked in the hotel industry after immigrating from Cuba as permanent residents
- Became interested in politics while in college; worked on several campaigns and met then Gov. Jeb Bush, who became an early mentor
- Served as a reliable conservative institutionalist in state government and made waves with GOP leadership by working on redistricting and tax priorities
- Elected as Speaker of the Florida House at age 34; pushed for aggressive tax cuts worked on climate change policy like carbon emission caps
- Rode the Tea Party wave into the Senate in 2010, moving to the right to challenge republican Gov. Charlie Crist
- Gained national media attention in 2012 after being on Mitt Romney's short list for VP; Rubio helped craft Romney's immigration policy and introduced Romney at the RNC Convention
- Aggressively campaigned against Trump during the 2016 primaries, but has since been supportive of most of the Trump Administration's policies

## Approach and Motivations

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**Embraces conservative bootstraps mentality, Christian faith, and working class background in his pursuit of his political goals**

- Devout Catholic whose faith informs his strong conservative social policy positions on issues such as abortion and gay marriage
- Credits his parents' sacrifice of fleeing Cuba to work grueling hotel jobs in the US to help provide opportunities for Rubio and his sisters
- Struggles to balance his deeply held beliefs on immigration and foreign policy with Trump Administration's agenda; ultimately votes with party to maintain unity

## Policy Positions and Areas of Focus

**Adheres to traditional conservative platforms, focus on interventionist foreign policy and immigration reform; gaining influence on Small Business Committee**

**Immigration: Advocate for path to citizenship; less vocal during Trump Administration**

- Has advocated for comprehensive immigration reform that views undocumented immigrants as a humanitarian issue rather than a national security issue
- Part of the “Gang of 8” bipartisan group of senators who proposed a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants in 2013; later backed away from the bill claiming that it wouldn’t work after it died in the House
- Opposed Trump’s declaration of a national emergency to fund southern border wall

**Foreign Policy: Supports American interventions, vocal on American-Israeli relations**

- Favored a hawkish approach to Syrian conflict, arguing for military intervention against Assad combined with increasing diplomatic relationships with secular allies
- Introduced controversial amendments to Iran nuclear deal bill that would force Iran to recognize Israel
- Voted in favor of sanctions against Russia that Trump opposed; spoke out against Trump’s tariffs on China saying the US should take more aggressive actions

**Small Business: Fights for deregulation**

- Worked to increase involvement of small business owners in regulatory process, postponed votes on reauthorization of Small Business Act after Democrats resisted deregulation efforts
- Working to prevent SBA loans from being used to support Chinese-owned firms
- Led efforts to secure funding for small business paycheck protection in response to COVID-19 and allocated \$377 billion for small business loans

## Core Communities

**Connected to former GOP leadership, faith groups and wealthy donors**

**Conservative Allies: Connections to conservative establishment**

- Met Jeb Bush while working on Sen. Bob Dole’s 1996 presidential campaign; Bush served as a mentor and ally until they both ran for president in 2016
- Former FL Speaker of the House Johnnie Byrd appointed Rubio to House majority leader after working on redistricting with GOP leadership
- Worked for Former Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL27) and Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL21) while in college
- Current Chief of Staff, Michael Needham, is former CEO of conservative think tank Heritage Action

**Religious Community: Long history of faith-based action**

- Has been a member of Catholic, Mormon, and Baptist churches; currently identifies as Catholic
- Formed Religious Liberty Advisory Board while running for president; included professors of Religious Studies universities such as Baylor, counsel from the Hobby Lobby Supreme Court Case and members of Christian nonprofits like Alliance Defending Freedom

**Norman Braman: Billionaire who financially backed Rubio’s career and shaped policy views**

- Braman, a billionaire auto dealer in Florida and former owner of Philadelphia Eagles, has funded campaigns focused on anti-tax and small government initiatives across Florida
- Met Rubio early in state government career and bonded over football and Israel; after donating \$10,000 to Rubio’s campaign, their families traveled to Israel together
- Braman hired Rubio as a personal lawyer while Rubio was in state government and helped supplement Rubio’s salary as a professor after he stepped down due to term limits
- Later hired Jeanette Rubio as an advisor for the Braman family’s philanthropic foundation

### Relevant Financial Information

Receives majority of campaign funds from national party committees

#### Biggest Industry Donors (career)

- Candidate Committees: \$1.9 million
- Lawyers and Lobbyists: \$1.5 million
- Securities and Investments: \$1.5 million
- Real Estate: \$1 million
- Retired: \$700,000

#### Biggest Corporate Donors (career)

- Geo Group (Boca Raton, FL): \$30,000
- Publix (Lakeland, FL): \$23,500
- Exxon Mobil (Irving, TX): \$21,000
- Reynolds American (Winston-Salem, NC): \$20,500
- Devon Energy (Oklahoma City, OK): \$20,000

#### Biggest Individual Donors (career)

- Pamela M Groff, retired (Pasadena, CA): \$30,000
- Lothar Mayer, retired (Delray Beach, FL): \$28,000
- Michael R Shaughnessy, retired (Gates Mills, OH): \$24,300
- Roberta A Richardson, retired (Cheyenne, WY): \$20,400
- Henry Scanlon, photographer (Ponte Vedra, FL): \$20,300

#### Interest Groups and PACs (career)

- Rubio Victory Committee: \$1.8 million
- US Senate Victory Committee: \$430,000
- Keep the Senate Red: \$280,000
- Legacy Victory Committee: \$185,000
- National Republican Senatorial Committee: \$90,000

### Publications, Media, and Speaking

Prominent national figure for GOP, Rubio engages media at state and national level and engages Hispanic community on Spanish-language outlets

#### Publications: *Has penned op-eds and has written 3 books*

- Books: *American Dreams: Restoring Economic Opportunity for Everyone*, 2015  
*An American Son: A Memoir*, 2012  
*100 Innovative Ideas for Florida's Future*, 2006
- Op-eds: Written for New York Times, the Atlantic, Washington Examiner
- Favorite Topics: Immigration, the economy

#### Media: *National figure, frequently appears on cable news and Hispanic outlets*

- Preferred Outlets: NBC, CNN, FOX, MSNBC, Univision
- Favorite Subjects: immigration, trade, foreign policy
- Social Media Habits: Active on personal, official, and campaign Twitter accounts

#### Speaking: *Engages interest groups on foreign policy, prominent campaigner for GOP*

- Favorite Subjects: Foreign policy, election talking points
- Preferred Audience: Foreign policy groups like Council on Foreign Relations

### Family and Personal Background

Greatly shaped by his family background and faith

#### Immigration Story

- Rubio's parents came to the US in 1956 and were permanent residents until 1975 when they became naturalized citizens
- His maternal grandfather was detained by immigration authorities in 1962 after flying to the US without a visa and was ordered by a judge to be deported; however, the order was not enforced and he was allowed to stay as a parolee and apply for permanent resident status
- Rubio has stated that his parents would not have been allowed to stay in the country under his immigration proposals

#### Wife's philanthropic interests

- Wife has pushed Rubio to support anti-human trafficking bills and has been involved with fundraising for Miami women's shelter Lotus House

#### Faith and church play a large role in Rubio's life

- Rubio's family moved to Las Vegas for 6 years and his parents worked in hotels; while in Utah, Marco, his sister, and his mother were all baptized as Mormon at the urging of their aunt, converted back to Catholicism when they returned to Miami
- Married his wife at the Church of the Little Flower, a Catholic church in Coral Gables, FL
- Started attending Christ Fellowship, a Baptist and evangelical church, and donated \$50,000 between 2003-2008 to the church
- Returned to Catholicism when he became Speaker of the Florida House

### Criticisms and Controversies

Criticized for personal spending in state government, and has come into conflict with Trump

#### Criticisms while in state government around family history and campaign expenses

- Rubio has described himself as the son of exiles who were forced out by Castro's regime; it was later reported that his parents left Cuba in 1956, before Fidel Castro came to power
- While Speaker of the House Rubio routinely used GOP credit card for personal expenses, including a \$134 haircut

#### 2016 Republican primary conflict with Trump

- Trump gave him the nickname "Little Marco" and frequently mocked Rubio's awkward water bottle grab during his 2013 response to the State of the Union
- Rubio aggressively criticized Trump in the primary and tried to match him on insults; Rubio mocked Trump's skin tone and the size of his hands, a move Rubio later said he regretted
- Rubio later endorsed Trump before the RNC convention has since fallen in line with GOP rank and has voted in favor of most of Trump's policies and defended Trump during impeachment

## **COVID-19 Response**

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### **Using his position on Small Business Committee to secure resources**

#### **Actions: *Focus on small businesses and economic reform***

- Led efforts with Susan Collins (R-ME) and Lamar Alexander (R-TN) to secure \$377 billion for small business loans as part of the CARES Act; has been proactive in working on getting more funds for subsequent bills
- Published op-ed in New York Times about the need to prioritize resiliency over efficiency when economic rebuilding begins; points to Chinese economy and decrease in US manufacturing as the reason why the US was unprepared for crisis
- Urged Trump to use federal loans to reduce US Reliance on medical supply chain in early March

#### **Messaging: *Active on social media and national press***

- Rubio has been posting video responses on Twitter to address relief bills and concerns
- Engaging national media to discuss small business relief efforts

#### **Reception: *Received bipartisan support for bill, pushback on rollout***

- Rubio's efforts on the Small Business Committee have been widely supported by both sides of the aisle
- Received some criticism after large restaurant chains were able to successfully get loans and the funds were depleted before some businesses could apply; Rubio has discussed strain on Small Business Administration and has pushed for more money to be allocated for loans in future bills