

LEGISLATOR

US Senator

MARCO RUBIO (R-FL)**IN OFFICE**

Up for re-election in 2016

1st Term

Elected in 2010

SENIORITY RANK

65

Out of 100


CONTACT

 **Email** [Contact Form](http://rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/email-senator-rubio?p=Contact)
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 **DC Office** 284 Russell Senate Office Building

BGOV BIOGRAPHY

By Caitlin Webber and Greg Giroux

Marco Rubio, the Miami-born son of Cuban immigrants, is one of the Republican Party's brightest stars.

Even before he was sworn in for his first Senate term in 2011, speculation swirled that he could be the first Hispanic president, and in April 2015 he announced his candidacy for the Republican nomination for president in 2016.

Rubio's background -- a telegenic Hispanic elected to federal office before he turned 40 -- seems ideal for a party with declining electoral support among young and minority voters. A native Spanish-speaker, he has focused much of his first term on outreach to Hispanics, more than 70 percent of whom voted for Barack Obama for president in 2012. In 2013, Rubio was chosen to give the GOP response to Obama's State of the Union speech -- which he did in both English and Spanish.

In addition to hailing from a large electoral swing state -- Florida has voted for the winner in the last four presidential elections, and by margins of no more than five percentage points -- Rubio has been praised for his communication skills, particularly among younger voters. A fan of rap music, he posts frequently on Twitter, commenting about football and popular culture along with taxes and immigration.

He was elected to the Senate with support from Tea Party activists and has posted a conservative record since his arrival, including a 100 percent score from the American Conservative Union for the 112th Congress. Like all but six of his fellow Republican senators, he has signed the "no-new-taxes" pledge sponsored by the anti-tax advocacy group Americans for Tax Reform.

Immigration Overhaul

Rubio has had to manage the lofty expectations set by his supporters. An overhaul of U.S. immigration policy has been the centerpiece of his legislative agenda, a focus that has tested both his leadership skills and his otherwise sterling conservative credentials.

Hoping to serve as a bridge between conservative Republicans and Hispanics, Rubio played an integral role in the 113th Congress in developing S. 744 -- legislation that would provide an eventual path to citizenship for people in the U.S. illegally. He was a member of the "gang of eight" senators -- four Republicans and four Democrats -- who met privately for months to develop a comprehensive package. His participation drew criticism from some groups that are normally his allies. The Heritage Foundation called the legislation "amnesty" and said the citizenship option would strain welfare and other entitlement programs. The National Review, which calls itself a conservative magazine, ran a cover story under the headline "Rubio's Folly" in May 2013.

Rubio later told supporters that his work on immigration had been a mistake, that U.S. borders must be made secure before anything else can be done on immigration law.

He wants to reduce the size of government, freeze domestic spending at 2008 levels and automatically sunset government programs. He opposes gun control and same-sex marriage. He is opposed to abortion and sponsored legislation that would make it illegal to transport a minor across state lines to have an abortion. VAWA Vote

In 2013 Rubio voted against a renewal of the Violence Against Women Act, saying the measure would undermine a state's ability to direct funding to the most needy victims.

A member of the Foreign Relations and Intelligence committees, he has sponsored measures to cut aid to Egypt until it improves its human rights record and to provide assistance to opposition forces in Syria. He is a staunch foe of the Castro regime in Cuba and a strong supporter of Israel.

Breaking from many members of the Florida delegation, he supports drilling for oil and gas off the coast of Florida.

Rubio has advocated lowering interest rates on student loans, an issue he said he's "intimately familiar with." In December 2012 he announced that he had finally finished paying off the \$150,000 in loans that he took out to attend college and law school.

Early Years

Rubio's parents left Cuba in 1956, before Fidel Castro took power; after arriving in Miami, his father worked as a bartender and his mother was a maid. As a child, Rubio was close to his maternal grandfather, who admired President Ronald Reagan and reviled Castro.

Apart from a few years in Las Vegas, where his parents went for work, Rubio spent most of his childhood in Miami, where he said growing up in an exile community made it "impossible to be apolitical."

He was elected to the West Miami City Commission in 1998. Just over a year later, at age 28, he moved to the Florida House in a special election and served there for almost nine years. During his tenure he was House majority leader and, during his last two years, House speaker -- the youngest person and the first Hispanic to hold that post.

Rubio's congressional website discusses how, in preparation for his term as speaker, Rubio traveled around the state hosting "Idearaisers" to solicit Floridians' input on ways to strengthen the state. The 100 best ideas were compiled into a book, "100 Innovative Ideas for Florida's Future," which served as the basis for his two years as speaker.

Senate Race

After leaving the Florida House due to state legislative term limits, Rubio resumed his law practice -- but not for long. In May 2009 he announced his campaign for the Senate seat being vacated by Republican Mel Martinez, who announced in December 2008 that he wouldn't run for a second term.

Rubio's campaign was regarded as a long-shot bid against the presumptive Republican nominee, Governor Charlie Crist. He was able to tap into the conservative anger that Republicans and Tea Party activists felt toward Obama, whose economic stimulus law Crist had supported. Also helping Rubio was a photograph showing Crist hugging Obama while the president was visiting the state to promote the stimulus.

Building on his 100-ideas-for-Florida theme in his Senate campaign, Rubio offered 80 "Ideas to Reclaim America" on a wide range of topics, including the economy, health care, education and government spending. He also formed a political action committee, Reclaim America, dedicated to "electing conservatives to the United States Senate."

Rubio soared far ahead of Crist, handily defeating him in the Republican primary. Crist decided to seek the seat as an independent; in a three-way race that also included Democratic Representative Kendrick Meeks, Rubio won easily, garnering 49 percent to Crist's 30 percent and Meeks' 20 percent.

In 2012, even though Rubio maintained that he wasn't interested in the post, prominent Republicans -- including former Florida Governor Jeb Bush, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and Karl Rove, President George W. Bush's top political strategist -- urged their party's presidential nominee, Mitt Romney, to select the Florida senator as his running mate. Romney eventually chose House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan of Wisconsin.

BIO FROM REPRESENTATIVE'S WEBSITE

From the Senator's Website

When I launched my campaign for the U.S. Senate in 2009, I was considered a long shot and was predicted to lose big. But we prevailed on a pledge to stand up to Washington's reckless spending and its assault on the free enterprise system. Today, I'm proud to represent Florida in the U.S. Senate where I'm working to fulfill my promise to restore fiscal discipline and give job creators more certainty and confidence to open new businesses or expand existing ones.

My faith in America's promise was shaped early on by my parents who left Cuba in 1956 and, after Fidel Castro solidified his communist grip, were never able to return. In America, my father Mario worked mostly as a bartender, while my mom worked different jobs through the years as a maid, cashier and retail clerk. I was born in Miami and spent my early years there, moved to Las Vegas for several years and eventually returned to Miami, where I live today with my wife Jeanette and our four children.

Regardless of where we lived, it was what I saw within the walls of our home that shaped my life. I saw two hard-working parents devote themselves to ensure that my siblings and I had opportunities they never had. It was America's commitment to limited government and free enterprise that opened doors for me. And it's this same free enterprise system that's under assault today.

Since I've been in the Senate, I have proudly been on the side of job creators and parents whose mission in life is to build a strong and prosperous America their children will be blessed to inherit. I've supported efforts to 'Cut-Cap-and-Balance' our budget; add a strong Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution; save Medicare; repeal ObamaCare; oppose short-sighted budget gimmicks and spending plans; and approve job-creating free trade agreements. And I opposed raising the debt ceiling in the absence of real measures to control our long-term spending problem and provide greater certainty to job creators.

I've also engaged in our national conversation about America's foreign policy and proudly articulated my beliefs about America's national interests in opposing dangerous tyrants, standing with freedom fighters and being a forceful voice for democracy and human rights. In the course of my work, I've especially felt blessed to meet and represent so many patriotic, courageous men and women who put their lives on the line for us every day.

PERSONAL PROFILE

COMMITTEES

[Senate Committee on Foreign Relations](#)

[Senate Select Committee on Intelligence](#)

[Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship](#)

[Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation](#)

[Joint Congressional-Executive Commission on China](#)

CAUCUSES

Birthdate 05/28/1971

Birthplace Maimi, FL

Political Party Republican Party

Marital Status Married

Spouse Jeannette Dousdebes

Residence West Miami, FL

Family 4 children

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Education

University of Florida
Bachelor's Degree 1993

University of Miami
JD 1996

Attorney, Broad & Cassel PA 2000 - 2008
State Representative, (FL)House of Representatives 07-01-2008
Professor, Florida International University 2010 - Present
Senator, Florida, (US)Senate

Religion

Roman Catholic

Present Senator, Florida, (00) Senate