

GOP candidates debate more than Trump this time

JULIE PACE AND STEVE PEOPLES
Associated Press

SIMI VALLEY — Amid the back-and-forth bickering over Donald Trump, the Republican presidential contest took a substantive and serious turn in Wednesday's prime-time debate, with candidates wrangling over immigration, gay marriage and foreign affairs.

The policy shift quieted Trump, the brash billionaire who has roiled the GOP field, for long stretches during the debate that stretched past three hours and it appeared to come as a relief to other candidates who have struggled to break through.

Carly Fiorina, the only woman in the GOP field, was one of the main benefactors, launching an emotional plea for defunding Planned Parenthood, touting her experience in business and taking aim at Trump for derogatory comments he made about her appearance. Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, who came into the debate facing questions about whether he had the grit to take on Trump, also engaged directly with the real estate mogul while still trying to fulfill his promise to run a joyful campaign.

In one exchange that typified the broader battle within the Republican Party, Bush and Trump clashed over the influence of big-money donors who have helped the former governor raise more than \$100 million. Trump, who is largely financing his own campaign, said of campaign contributors: "I understand the game, I've been on the other side my entire life and they have a lot of control over our politicians."

At another point, Bush pressed Trump to apologize for comments he has made about Bush's Mexican-born wife. Trump refused and called Bush "weak on immigration."



Associated Press

Republican presidential candidates, from left, former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum, former New York Gov. George Pataki, Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson, businessman Donald Trump, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, businesswoman Carly Fiorina, Ohio Gov. John Kasich, and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie take the stage during the CNN Republican presidential debate at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum on Wednesday in Simi Valley.

As the contest lasted deep into the night, the candidates were polled on such matters as their choices for a woman to be depicted on the \$10 bill and what their Secret Service code names would be if elected president. Bush drew the biggest applause when he picked "Eveready," then turned to Trump to note it was a "high-energy" name — a nod to Trump's criticism of Bush as a low-energy candidate. They smiled and slapped hands at that.

Trump's unexpected rise and surprising durability is seen as a reflection of voters' frustration with Washington and career politicians. As the son and brother of presidents, Bush more than any other candidate is seen as a representative of the status quo.

Fiorina, the former Hewlett-Packard executive, is also seeking to capitalize on her outsider status. She was making

her first appearance on the main debate stage after a standout performance in an undercard event last month.

Fiorina emphasized how their business backgrounds would help them negotiate with difficult world leaders, including Russia's president.

"Vladimir Putin would get the message," she said.

A third outsider — soft-spoken retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson — entered the debate with high expectations after a recent rise in the polls that determine debate participation. But he largely faded to the background on the crowded debate stage.

Even in a lengthy debate, the 11-candidate field limited the amount of time each participant had to make his case to the American people.

Florida Sen. Marco Rubio sought to take advantage of his moments, reminding voters about his

compelling personal story, including his parents' move to the U.S. from Cuba. He also argued he was most qualified to be commander in chief in a turbulent world.

"You better be able to lead our country on the first day, not six months from now, not a year from now, on the first day in office," he said.

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie also tried to capitalize on his limited time, saying that while he was entertained by Trump and Fiorina trying to one-up each other's business records, "for the 55-year-old construction worker out in that audience tonight who doesn't have a job, who can't fund his child's education — I gotta tell you the truth — they could care less about your careers."

Perhaps more than any other candidate, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker entered the debate needing a breakout performance.

He spoke vigorously about his conservative record as governor but still struggled for attention.

On foreign policy, the candidates were split on whether they would tear up President Barack Obama's nuclear accord if elected. Texas Sen. Ted Cruz argued for walking away from the deal, despite the fact that it was negotiated alongside allies. Ohio Gov. John Kasich took a measured approach, saying anyone who wants to rip up the deal isn't prepared to be president.

In an exchange on gay marriage and religious

government? Still, Huckabee declined to criticize Bush for saying Davis did not have the right to deny gays marriage licenses. Bush said he supports defending the rights of religious people to refuse to endorse gay marriage, but he said someone else in Davis' office should sign the certificates since the Supreme Court ruling is the law of the land.

"I think there needs to be accommodation for someone acting on their faith," he said.

The lengthy debate also veered into discussions on climate change, drug policy and childhood vaccinations. The last resulted in a respectful dispute between Carson, a doctor who cited studies showing no link between vaccines and autism, and Trump, who predicted lower rates of autism if there were "smaller doses over a longer period of time."

Even as Trump faded somewhat in the policy discussions, he was hardly invisible. He praised himself while deriding and scoring his rivals in the opening minutes of the debate at the Reagan Presidential Library in southern California.

Standing at center stage, Trump said he had a "phenomenal temperament" and a record in business that would help him on the world stage. With his signature brashness, he immediately took on his rivals, saying Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul, a vigorous critic, didn't deserve to be on the crowded debate stage.

Trump has become increasingly critical of Fiorina as her standing

Reagan a certain star at GOP debate, whoever else does well

BILL BARROW
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Jeb Bush calls his tax-cut plan "Reagan-inspired." Scott Walker says "the greatest foreign policy president ... was a governor from California." Ted Cruz pitches himself as the leader for a new "Reagan revolution."

Donald Trump makes time for Ronald Reagan, too, alluding to the 40th president's support of Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal as a defense for his own conservative makeover after years of taking liberal positions.

Even if Wednesday night's Republican debate weren't taking place at the Reagan Presidential Library outside Los Angeles, some of the candidates taking part would be likely to mention the GOP hero. And, standing on a stage in front of the giant Boeing 707 that flew as Reagan's Air Force One, comparing themselves to their party icon was even harder to resist.

Yet amid that scramble to claim Reagan's legacy, the 2016 candidates sometimes obscure the actual record of the man who won two landslide elections a generation ago.

Reagan was a champion of cutting taxes, but he also raised them. He called the Soviet Union "the evil empire" but forged a productive relationship with his counterpart in Moscow, Mikhail Gorbachev. He appointed conservative Antonin Scalia to the Supreme Court but also tapped Sandra Day O'Connor and Anthony Kennedy — swing votes who protected abortion rights and helped legalize

same-sex marriage.

"The more you knew Ronald Reagan, the less you want to speak for him. It's the people who didn't know him who find it so easy to say exactly what he would do," says Sal Russo, a Republican strategist and tea party mastermind who worked as Reagan's personal aide during his tenure as California governor in the 1960s and 1970s.

The complexities of Reagan's history went on-air this week when a conservative, pro-immigration group called the National Immigration Forum starting running an ad nationally to chide Trump and others for their positions on illegal immigration.

The ad cited Reagan's farewell address, in which he described the country as "shining city ... God-blessed and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace."

Before taking his place in the Oval Office, Reagan became the face of outsider conservatism when he nearly toppled President Gerald Ford in the 1976 primaries. Russo said it's amusing to see Reagan, "who really rocked the boat" in 1976, become "the lodestar even for Republicans who always support the establishment."

Author Will Bunch said it's "all part of this canonization process" Republicans have employed for more than two decades to build Reagan into a utopian conservative, while avoiding inconvenient details.

"What we hear going into 2016 is often the mythical Reagan, not the real Reagan," argues

the senior writer at the Philadelphia Daily News and the author of a Reagan analysis, "Tear Down This Myth."

Take taxes, for example. For much of Reagan's tenure, several marginal personal income tax brackets had rates higher than today's top rate of 39.6 percent. The national debt roughly tripled during his two terms.

On foreign policy, several 2016 contenders cite Reagan's credo of "peace through strength" as they accuse President Barack Obama of capitulating to U.S. enemies. Walker, for example, has urged Obama to cancel the upcoming visit of China's president and declares that "Iran is not a place we should do business."

Left unmentioned is how Reagan sold arms to Iranians as part of a plan to aid rebel forces in Nicaragua, and Reagan's famous summits with Gorbachev.

Russo, even as he, too, criticizes Obama, said Reagan's philosophy gets twisted. "You have too many candidates who talk about strength so we can go out and win wars," he said. Reagan "had a bitter hatred of communism," Russo said, but "was dreadfully fearful ... of ending the world with a nuclear holocaust."

What's clear is that today's voters endorse Reagan's legacy, however they see it.

In a 2014 Quinnipiac University poll, 35 percent of voters nationally chose Reagan as the best president the United States has had since World War II — well ahead of Bill Clinton (18 percent) and John

Kennedy (15 percent).

Among Republicans, Reagan was the runaway favorite, with 66 percent picking him as the top president in recent history.

That's perhaps why opponents of the GOP White House hopefuls are also sometimes eager to stand the candidates up next to Reagan.

In an online ad posted Wednesday, the super PAC backing Democratic front-runner Hillary Rodham Clinton's campaign spliced some of the GOP contenders' comments into Reagan's famous "Morning in America" TV ad from his 1984 campaign.

After the narrator from the original ad says, "It's morning again in America," the ad cuts to Trump at a podium saying, "Sadly, the American dream is dead."

PUBLIC MEETING
MARE ISLAND NAVAL SHIPYARD
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September 2015 MEETING

The Department of Navy (DON) invites interested members of the public to attend updates and presentations with members of the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) made up of representatives from the local community, Navy, Federal and State regulatory agencies. The DON encourages the public to keep informed about the environmental cleanup at Former Mare Island Naval Shipyard (MINS), Vallejo, California.

September 2015 Featured Topics

Installation Restoration Site 04
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Remediation of the Building 688 Pits Site,
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Time: 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Location: Mare Island Conference Center
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