

Source: [Legal](#) > / . . . / > [News, Most Recent 60 Days \(English, Full Text\)](#) Terms: [cato institute](#) ([Edit Search](#) | [Suggest Terms for My Search](#)) Select for FOCUS™ or Delivery*Jindal presidential star dims *** Once-brilliant future may need polishing until 2016 election The Advocate July 12, 2009 Sunday*Copyright 2009 Capital City Press
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The AdvocateJuly 12, 2009 Sunday
Main Edition**SECTION:** A; Pg. 01**LENGTH:** 978 words**HEADLINE:** Jindal presidential star dims *** Once-brilliant future may need polishing until 2016 election**BYLINE:** MICHELLE MILLHOLLON; CAPITOL NEWS BUREAU**BODY:**

Political insiders in Washington, D.C., are wondering what happened to the blazing rocket that once was Bobby Jindal.

The 38-year-old Republican governor gave a widely panned national address in February and promptly faded from the national political scene.

"Whatever happened to Bobby Jindal? At one point, he was the great hope of the GOP and now we hardly hear a word about him," The Economist magazine recently noted.

However, political watchers warn that it is premature to write the obituary on Jindal's presidential prospects, especially with hopefuls imploding around him.

They said 2012 might not be the year that Jindal runs for the White House but that 2016 could be if the young governor matures into a more-polished politician without the hiccup of embarrassing personal follies.

In 2016, Jindal would turn 45 years old.

"The good news for Jindal is that he hasn't had an affair, apparently, (and) he hasn't had to buy off a former mistress," said Stu Rothenberg, editor and publisher of The Rothenberg Political Report, a nonpartisan newsletter based in Washington, D.C.

"I don't think it's bad for him that a bit of the shine is off the apple," Rothenberg added.

The South Carolina Republican Party last week censured the state's governor, Mark Sanford, for disappearing for a week to visit his mistress in Argentina. Sanford's staff at first said the married governor - once considered a possible 2012 GOP nominee - was hiking the Appalachian Trail.

U.S. Sen. John Ensign, R-Nev., is dealing with the fallout from the revelation that his parents paid nearly \$100,000 to his mistress. The affair likely dashes Ensign's White House dreams.

As for Sarah Palin, opinion is divided on whether her decision to quit as Alaska's governor would hurt or help whatever ambitions the former vice presidential candidate harbors.

Jostling for position in the 2012 presidential race already is under way. Even now a number of names are being mentioned as the possible GOP nominee to challenge President Barack Obama.

Leading the pack are former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney and Palin.

Other names tossed around include former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, former U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty. Jindal rarely rates a mention these days. It was not always that way.

In a straw poll taken at the February Conservative Political Action Conference featuring 1,757 registrants, Jindal finished second as the 2012 likely Republican nominee. Romney was first. Palin tied with Texas Congressman Ron Paul for fourth.

The August issue of Vanity Fair magazine cites "a more recent survey (that) has Palin in a three-way tie with Romney" and Huckabee. The article was written before Palin decided to resign as governor.

After the end of a two-month session of the Louisiana Legislature, Jindal is busying himself with a tour of the state's 64 parishes. The tour's focus is Jindal's push for job creation and economic development.

The national media are taking note of the seemingly state-centered concern of Louisiana's economic development.

"Another focus of the young (Jindal) administration is economic development," The Economist reported. "To that end they are taking steps to show that the state is a good place to do business."

For his part, Jindal said he is focused on running for re-election in 2011 - not on the 2012 presidential race - despite the meltdown of possible rival White House contenders.

"The answer is still the same as it was the last time y'all asked," he told the media Wednesday. "I'm running for re-election."

Political insiders said Jindal might be better primed to run for president in 2016.

"He needs to wait until 2016," said Larry J. Sabato, director of the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia. "The advantage of that is, one presumes, he will be much more polished by then, and everyone will talk about the new, improved, mature Jindal."

Sabato said he hears Jindal's name only occasionally.

He said Jindal's February speech did a better job of killing the "2012 White House buzz than any of his opponents ever could."

Before the speech, Jindal was fast on his way to becoming the darling of the national GOP. U.S. Sen. John McCain is said to have considered Jindal as a running mate before selecting Palin. Jindal appeared on Jay Leno's late night show, spoke to the National Press Club and traveled to the presidential caucus state of Iowa.

Giving the Republican response to Obama's first presidential address was considered a coup. But Jindal drew criticism for delivering what many considered to be a sing-songy, partisan speech. The consensus was that the young governor was not quite ready for prime time.

John Samples with the libertarian **Cato Institute** in Washington, D.C., said the speech is the most recent national sense of Jindal.

"He's young, and 2012 may not be the year for him," Samples said.

Samples said Jindal can overcome the speech by working at being governor and looking ahead to 2016.

Rothenberg said Jindal must do a good job in Louisiana, win re-election and become a better public speaker if he has any hopes of serving in the White House.

State Sen. Robert Adley, R-Benton, sees one sign that Jindal's ambitions center on the White House.

Adley clashed with the Jindal administration during the recent legislative session over a bill concerning public access to records in the Governor's Office.

The legislation, signed last week by the governor, shields documents the governor uses in the deliberative process. Communications among his top staff also are off limits.

"I've tried my best to figure out why they would be opposed to transparency," Adley said. "It doesn't make sense for this governor who's made ethics and transparency his cornerstone. It now is becoming clearer that his reasoning may be that you would be able to determine that public policy is being dictated by his personal ambitions."

GRAPHIC: Color mug: Bobby Jindal

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