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Group Backing Jeb Bush Draws on ‘Jeopardy’ to Attack John Kasich

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Sensing a possible surge by John Kasich in New Hampshire, Right to Rise, the “super PAC” supporting Jeb Bush, has unveiled a game-show-style attack ad against the Ohio governor.

On Screen

A percussive melody chimes in the background as a photograph of Mr. Kasich slides into the frame and a narrator asks, “Where do you line up with John Kasich?” Viewers are then invited to “take the Kasich quiz,” although not in the warm, excitable “Price Is Right” tone that introduces most game shows.

The ad lists a series of attacks against Mr. Kasich in a “Jeopardy”-like, answer-first style: “Obamacare expansion” in Ohio; voted for “massive defense cuts” as a congressman; “defended the process that closed Pease Air Force Base” (in Portsmouth, N.H.); and had the “worst rating on spending of any governor in the country.” With each answer, a red “Kasich: YES” stamp lands with the thump of a drum. The ad closes by calling Mr. Kasich “wrong on New Hampshire issues.”

The Message

It’s a blunt, direct attack, stating that Mr. Kasich doesn’t align with New Hampshire values. The governor has risen in Granite State polls in the past few days, so the ad is a quick if not stylish reaction from Mr. Bush’s supporters.

Fact Check

Mr. Kasich has defended his expansion of Medicaid under President Obama’s Affordable Care Act, pointing to what he has been able to accomplish for the poor in his state. (New Hampshire also expanded Medicaid, but the expansion could expire at the end of the year.) And he pushed back on the Cato Institute report cited in the ad about his spending. (For the full back-and-forth, Cato responded to him, as well.)

Mr. Kasich, who served nine terms in Congress, likes to brag that he's a "cheap hawk," most notably for opposing the B-2 bomber, and for helping create the Base Realignment and Closure process. His role, and recent defense of it, got him into some hot water in New Hampshire, with Senator Kelly Ayotte, a fellow Republican, attacking him for it.

But the closure of Pease Air Force Base in 1991 led to it being "developed into Pease International Tradeport, home to approximately 300 businesses and 10,000 workers," according to Seacoast Online, a local news media outlet.

Where

New Hampshire.

Takeaway

The quickness with which this ad was produced and shipped to stations shows Right to Rise had been wary of Mr. Kasich in New Hampshire. But given that Mr. Kasich has been reaching out to independents, the criticisms may not damage him as much as the super PAC hopes.