

## Mark Sanford suspends presidential campaign

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CONCORD — Republican presidential candidate Mark Sanford is suspending his primary challenge to President Donald Trump, he announced in a news conference Tuesday.

Sanford, 59, is a former governor of South Carolina and also served in the U.S. House of Representatives for six terms.

Sanford came into the national spotlight as governor in 2009 over an extramarital affair, when his office told the public he was off hiking the Appalachian Trail before Sanford admitted he was with a mistress in Argentina.

Once considered the most fiscally conservative member of Congress by the right-leaning Cato Institute, Sanford has cited what he alleges to be Trump's unfitness for office and concerns about federal spending under the new administration.

While admitting his bid to unseat Trump in the GOP primary was a long shot, Sanford had visited downtown Keene last month, and was scheduled to register for the 2020 New Hampshire primary ballot in Concord Tuesday.

Instead, Sanford held an impromptu news conference in front of the Statehouse, announcing what amounts to the end of his campaign.

The mounting national debt and deficit has been central to Sanford's message, with the most recent deficit jumping to \$984 billion, its highest since 2012.

"I'm going to suspend my campaign, and I'm going to look for other ways in which to advance this incredibly timely, important, but now out-of-season issue," Sanford said at the news conference, which was recorded and posted online by Fox News reporter Paul Steinhauser.

Sanford also said he did not anticipate impeachment proceedings, and cited the hearings beginning Wednesday as a contributing factor, according to the Charleston Post and Courier.

Although he did not register for the ballot, Sanford did follow through on a scheduled visit to Franklin Pierce University in Rindge Tuesday evening. He spoke for about 45 minutes and answered questions from students, according to Paul Lambert, a sophomore and the director of Politics FitzU, a student group that hosts candidates at the university's Pizza and Politics series.

Former Massachusetts governor Bill Weld and former congressman Joe Walsh remain GOP primary challengers to Trump.