



Sununu Makes The Washington Post's 'Top 10' POTUS List For 2024

Is New Hampshire's governor presidential timber? It may seem farfetched to Granite Staters. But he made The Post list of possibles.

By Michael Graham, NH Journal

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The idea of Gov. Chris Sununu running for president in 2024 may seem farfetched to some Granite Staters, but political analysts at The Washington Post are taking it seriously.

In their latest ranking of the "Top 10 GOP Presidential Candidates," they put Sununu at number nine, just ahead of former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and behind GOP rising star Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R-Va.)

"The New Hampshire governor broke some GOP hearts by declining to run for Senate; he would've been a major recruit in a key race," the Post's Aaron Blake wrote. "And since doing so, he has made some pretty interesting comments about the national GOP."

Blake noted Sununu's anti-DC-GOP rhetoric, adding, "He has also suggested the party is overzealous in casting out anti-Trump Republicans. That's, of course, a helpful thing to say for a guy running for reelection as governor in a swing state. But could it also be a national platform? Sununu in November demurred about presidential ambitions, emphasizing his 2022 campaign comes first.

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"He'd probably be better able to massage the pro-Trump/anti-Trump divide than a lot of others on this list."

Former President Donald Trump topped the list, with Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis at number two and former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley in third. Donald Trump, Jr. also made the list at number five.

Interestingly, Sununu made the cut while other, more active potential candidates like Sen. Rick Scott (R-Fla.), Gov. Kristi Noem (R-S.D.) and former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie did not.

While Sununu has, in fact, "demurred" when asked the question, he has not done anything to dampen the 2024 presidential talk, either. He has made several appearances at national events for groups like the Cato Institute and the Republican Jewish Coalition. He has also been a regular on the national cable news circuit, with recent hits on Face the Nation and CNN.

He even teased the possibility of a presidential run when he announced his decision not to challenge U.S. Sen. Maggie Hassan last November.

So, what do Granite State politicians think of Sununu's latest ranking?

"Sununu's State of the State speech clearly indicated he was speaking to a national audience," said state Sen. Lou D'Allesandro (D-Manchester).

"The national GOP and media are now aware of what we already know in New Hampshire: Gov. Sununu is a generationally gifted political communicator with an enviable record of conservative accomplishments that stack up well against any other governor in America," said veteran GOP strategist Jim Merrill.

Another veteran of New Hampshire politics, Democrat Jim Demers, declined to comment on Sununu but did offer his view of the GOP presidential race.

"The Republicans could start 2024 with as many people running for president as the Democrats had in 2020. There are four lanes developing: the hardcore Trumpsters, the Trump-lites, the non-Trump, and the anti-Trump. No matter how you cut it, it's all about Trump and after the nominee is picked, merging the four lanes into one could be extremely difficult. Buckle up!"

Speaking of Trump, local advisor to the former president Corey Lewandowski says Trump is upset with Sununu's criticism and wants a serious primary challenger to step up and take on the governor this fall. In particular, Sununu has been harshly critical of Trump's suggestion that the violent criminals who participated in the January 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol should be pardoned.

"I don't care whether you were part of burning cities in Antifa in 2020 or storming the Capitol in 2021, everybody needs to be held fairly accountable across," Sununu told CNN.

Asked about The Washington Post ranking, Lewandowski laughed it off.

"This story, just like the Washington Post winning a Pulitzer for the fake Russiagate story, is all fake news," he told NHJournal. "Half the names on this list aren't serious candidates to win the GOP nomination."

Sununu declined to respond to requests for comment.