



Club for Growth warns about John Kasich's 'mixed record'

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The Club for Growth issued a white paper on Ohio Gov. John Kasich on Thursday warning about his "mixed record" on taxes, trade and economic liberty. The club is an influential conservative not-for-profit organization that focuses on economic issues and cutting taxes. It regularly releases "white papers" on the presidential candidates.

"John Kasich is a lifelong politician, with a long and mixed record on matters of economic liberty," said David McIntosh, Club for Growth's president, in a statement. "His work in Congress for a balanced federal budget and his efforts to lower the state income tax in Ohio are, unfortunately, overshadowed by his costly expansion of Medicaid, even in the face of opposition from the state legislature, a high rate of state spending, and his persistent efforts to increase taxes on oil and gas extraction."

The club's white paper took issue with Kasich's willingness to raise taxes as governor.

"While Governor Kasich's budgets have typically been proposed and passed with net decreases in overall taxation, he has also proposed numerous new taxes and tax increases," the white paper explained.

The club also negatively viewed his actions on spending as governor, similar to his record on trade and economic liberty. The white paper noted that under Kasich, "Ohio's rainy day fund has gone from being nearly nonexistent to now holding a \$2 billion balance." But the club's analysis also explained, "State spending in Ohio has increased significantly since Governor Kasich's first budget, leading the CATO Institute, in 2014, to give Kasich, 'the worst score of any governor in the country on spending.' "

Kasich has traveled through the Midwest this week, making stops in Illinois in Iowa. After a trip to Portillos, a popular restaurant chain in the Chicagoland area, the Chicago Tribune penned an editorial touting him as the "Anti-Trump."

"[I]f you're shopping for, say, a new president for your divided nation, a grown-up who has spent decades proving how capable he is at working the levers of government to deliver solutions, then skip Trump's entertaining show and pay serious attention to Kasich," the Tribune editorialized.

"If enough Americans do, you might see his name atop your election ballot on Nov. 8, 2016. Even if he had a weak record in office, Kasich would wake up every day as a serious potential nominee. No Republican has won the White House without winning Ohio — something Kasich has done twice, most recently with 64 percent of the vote. GOP strategists get giddy at the prospect of pairing Kasich on a ticket with Marco Rubio (ascendant) or Jeb Bush (not really) of Florida, another gotta-have swing state."

The Ohio governor polls seventh, at 3.3 percentage points, in RealClearPolitics average of national polls. He appears to be on the bubble to make the next primetime GOP presidential debate later this month, which requires candidates meet a national polling threshold of 2.5 percentage points or greater in a slate of hand-picked national polls.

Kasich, who dropped to 10th in the Washington Examiner's most recent power rankings, has appeared on the main stage of each of the first two Republican presidential debates, and will look to do so again in Colorado on Oct. 28.