

## Haley Barbour Is Not Running For President



Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour at Chez Vachon, April 14, 2011, in Manchester, N.H. (Jim Cole/AP Photo)

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April 25, 2011

The field of potential Republican presidential candidates shrank by one today when Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour said in a statement he would not seek the Republican nomination.

"A candidate for president today is embracing a 10-year commitment to an all-consuming effort, to the virtual exclusion of all else. His (or her) supporters expect and deserve no less than absolute fire in the belly from their candidate. I cannot offer that with certainty, and total certainty is required," said Barbour in the statement, which caught official Washington by surprise.

As someone who's been part of the political process at the highest levels, Barbour was keenly aware of what kind of sacrifices that would require. His wife Marsha recently told a local TV station that the idea of a presidential campaign "horrifies" her.

One Barbour confidante told ABC News, this was "just a very tough, personal decision."

**For a complete look at the Republican field of candidates, visit [ABC's guide to the players](#).**

Barbour is a natural-born politician, with a good sense of humor and a way with people. But his long career as a [Washington lobbyist](#) and comments that some perceive as [racially insensitive](#) were sure to be roadblocks to his appeal outside of Mississippi.

Before today's announcement, Barbour had been traveling extensively in key early nominating states like Iowa and New Hampshire. He scaled back his travel schedule in recent days. Last week his office issued a statement that he was recovering from minor back surgery.

"Hundreds of people have encouraged me to run and offered both to give and raise money for a presidential campaign," said Barbour in his statement. "Many volunteers have organized events in support of my pursuing the race. Some have dedicated virtually full time to setting up preliminary organizations in critical, early states and to helping plan what has been several months of intensive activity.

"I greatly appreciate each and every one of them and all their outstanding efforts. If I have disappointed any of them in this decision, I sincerely regret it.

Despite Barbour's political pedigree, had he run he still would have faced many of the same name recognition challenges that other potential candidates must overcome.

In the most recent [ABC News-Washington Post poll](#), Barbour turned up with just 1 percent support among [leaning Republican voters](#), tied with former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty, Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann and Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels.

That poll gave former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney the lead with 16 percent support, followed by real-estate and reality television mogul Donald Trump with 8 percent. Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee (6 percent), former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin (5 percent), Texas Rep. Ron Paul and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich -- each with 2 percent support -- rounded out the top six.

Done with his presidential aspirations, Barbour will no return to his day job.

"This decision means I will continue my job as Governor of Mississippi, my role in the Republican Governors Association and my efforts to elect a new Republican president in 2012, as the stakes for the nation require that effort to be successful," he said.