

Bobby Jindal set to join White House race

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Washington: Louisiana governor Piyush "Bobby" Jindal is widely expected to launch a bid for the Republican presidential nomination Wednesday, becoming the first Indian-American and 13th Republican to join the 2016 White House race.

"If I decide to announce on June 24th that I will seek the Republican nomination for President, my candidacy will be based on the idea that the American people are ready to try a dramatically different direction," he said in a statement earlier this month.

"We don't need just small changes, we need a dramatically different path," said Jindal, who as a child changed his first name to Bobby, after a character in the "Brady Bunch."

US-born son of immigrant parents from India, he converted from Hinduism to Christianity as a teen, and was later baptised a Catholic as a student at Brown University.

Once viewed as a rising star of the Republican party, Jindal, 44, who was the youngest American governor when first elected in 2007, is now polling toward the bottom of the Republican field, registering at just 1 percent in the latest CNN/ORC poll this month.

Jindal is entering an already crowded field of Republican candidates including Jeb Bush, Rick Perry and Mike Huckabee, former governors of Florida, Texas and Arkansas respectively, US Senators Ted Cruz, Rand Paul, Marco Rubio and Lindsey Graham, former Hewlett Packard CEO Carly Fiorina; and real estate mogul Donald Trump.

Jindal was the second Indian-American to be elected to the US House of Representatives in 2004 after Dalip Singh Saund, a Democrat, in 1957. He was re-elected to the Congress in 2006 before making his second run for governor in 2007. He was re-elected in 2011.

Jindal, who received wide support from the Indian-Americans in his Congressional and gubernatorial campaigns seems to have lost much traction with the community since he recently declared that he was tired of hyphenated Americans.

His parents, he declared, "They weren't coming to raise Indian-Americans. They were coming to raise Americans."

As Pearson Cross, a political science professor at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette who is writing a book on him told the Washington Post: "There's not much Indian left in Bobby Jindal."

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