

Presidential candidate Rubio headlines Idaho GOP meeting

IDAHO FALLS, Idaho (AP) — Sen. Marco Rubio didn't use his appearance at the Idaho Republican Party's summer meeting to criticize his fellow Republican candidates for president or to take aim at the Democrat Hillary Clinton.

Instead, The Idaho Post Register reports (<http://is.gd/PKMT0o>) Rubio spoke Friday in Idaho Falls about the challenges in America today and his vision for the future.

On his list: increased spending on defense and intelligence, tax incentives to hike wages and repeal of the Affordable Care Act.

The son of Cuban immigrants who came to the U.S. in 1956, a few years before Fidel Castro took power, the 44-year-old Rubio said what America meant to his parents was an opportunity for upward mobility.

In America, his parents found work — his father as a bartender, his mother in a variety of jobs — that allowed them to move up in the world and save money to buy a house.

Now, the candidate says, those kinds of opportunities have dried up.

"Now those same jobs either pay too little, or they've been replaced by machines," he said.

His ideas for future policies include more apprenticeships in skilled trades such as welding, tax incentives for businesses to increase wages and cutting taxes on business investment.

"We are truly just one election away from another American Century," he said.

Idaho's U.S. senators and representatives dismissed concerns that the large field of Republican presidential hopefuls could cause a repeat of the rough-and-tumble 2012 primary that many analysts said left Mitt Romney too damaged to win the general election.

"We are blessed in the Republican Party to have a very deep team," Sen. Mike Crapo said.

Sen. Jim Risch said the party has 16 candidates who have announced or will likely announce their candidacies.

"That's a good thing," Risch said. "We should have a good group to draw from."

After his speech, Rubio said the big field didn't concern him.

"We're blessed to have that many good candidates," he said. "The Democrats can't even come up with one."

Information from: Post Register, <http://www.postregister.com>

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