

Transcript: Mike Huckabee on 'FOX News Sunday'

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FOX NEWS

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The following is a partial transcript of the Oct. 21, 2007, edition of "FOX News Sunday With Chris Wallace":

"FOX NEWS SUNDAY" HOST CHRIS WALLACE: Welcome back to Orlando where in just hours FOX News Channel will host the first-in-Florida Republican presidential debate.

Joining us now from his home state of Arkansas before he gets on a plane to come down here, former Governor Mike Huckabee.

Governor, they held a values voter summit of social conservatives this weekend in Washington, and let's take a look at the straw poll that they conducted.

In the online contest, including those who attended the conference, Mitt Romney barely beat you by just 30 votes with all the others far behind.

But in the poll of just those who actually attended the conference, you swamped the field with 51 percent of the vote.

Governor, are you now the social conservative's candidate for president?

FORMER ARKANSAS GOV. MIKE HUCKABEE: Well, I think I am. And, Chris, if you look at three things — the poll yesterday — overwhelming, 5-1 over the next contender — the values voter debate that was held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida a few weeks ago — I got 64 percent of the vote there. The Palmetto Family Council straw poll was a similar event — overwhelmingly won there.

So when the voters who consider themselves values voters are actually given the opportunity, overwhelmingly, I win those contests.

And I think it is becoming clearer and clearer that this part of our party and our country wants somebody who is a hard-working, consistent conservative with some authenticity about those convictions.

WALLACE: And you're that man?

HUCKABEE: Well, I think so. And I think it's not just that I'm saying it. It sounds like an overwhelming number of people who are actually attending these events and listening to all of us on the same stage — when they hear all of us in these kind of moments, that's what happens.

I win overwhelmingly and, in many cases, end up with more votes, as I did in each of these three — with more votes than all of the others put together. That's a pretty, pretty good vote. I'd take that in any election I've ever been in.

WALLACE: Governor, last time you were with us, you said that you were moving from no shot to long shot to slingshot, and we actually have some evidence of that in the latest Rasmussen poll out of Iowa. Let's take a look at that.

It shows Romney is in the lead, but you and Fred Thompson are basically tied for second, six and seven points back, and you're well ahead of Senator McCain and Rudy Giuliani.

So, Governor, are you going to win Iowa and, in effect, do you have to win Iowa?

HUCKABEE: Well, I think I've got to do very well. I think we have a real shot to win Iowa. If you look at some of the numbers, many of the candidates have plateaued. They've hit their peak and started sliding backwards.

One thing about our campaign, Chris, since the very beginning, we've never had a retreat. We've never had higher numbers and then lower numbers. Every month we get better. Every month those numbers keep going up.

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That's the direction we want to be in, and I'm very confident that as we move toward the caucuses in January, it's going to look really good for us.

WALLACE: Well, to be straight about it, though, Governor, one place where you didn't slingshot was in campaign contributions.

In the third quarter, you raised just \$1 million, and when you take everything into account, you now have a little over \$600,000 cash on hand left. In fact, if you don't win Iowa, aren't you going to be broke?

HUCKABEE: Well, you know, when people look at the money situation, I've got more cash on hand than several of the people who are supposedly supposed to be ahead of me.

And if you take a look at how much money some have pumped into their own campaign from their personal resources or borrowed money, what I would point out is nobody is getting more miles per gallon than we are.

You know, a few months ago people said, "Well, if you don't have \$20 million, you're not in the game." Look, I'm in the game. I'm on my feet.

And this month alone, every single day of October, our online contributions are better each day than they were the day before. They continue to grow.

So our universe is expanding, not declining. I'm not disappointed where we are. And I'm very content where we're going to be.

WALLACE: Governor, let's talk about this debate that I was discussing with Senator McCain about who's the real Republican. You told that meeting of social conservatives yesterday to beware of political pandering. Which of your rivals are doing that?

HUCKABEE: Well, I'm going to let the voters and the viewers sort that out. What I said was that I think we need to be careful when you see candidates who are better at lip-syncing the songs than singing it from their hearts.

We've clearly got some real conservatives in the race. I'm not the only one. And let me say Sen. McCain, no matter what anyone may say, is a genuine conservative and I have great respect for the senator, and he knows that.

I think he's a terrific human being and has been a great public servant of this country. Sometimes he gets, you know, slammed for not being a conservative, but if you look at his record, he's got a solid record on things that really matter, and — pro-life. He's strong for our country's defense and security.

So you know, I'm not going to go out there and say I'm the only conservative in the race, but I am a conservative who has authenticity. I've got consistency. I'm a hard-working conservative.

I'll tell you another thing — more executive experience than anybody running on either side, Democrat or Republican.

And one other thing that I believe is important — I'm a conservative that hasn't had but one position on a lot of key issues, whether it's sanctity of life, the Second Amendment, the Bush tax cuts, whether it's — gosh, the position of traditional marriage.

Nobody's going to find some YouTube moments of me saying something radically different than what I'm saying today.

WALLACE: Senator, Fred Thompson says that he's the consistent conservative in the field. Give voters who are doing a little comparison shopping some help in judging you versus Fred Thompson.

HUCKABEE: I've actually run a government and have done it for 10.5 years. I got consistently elected and re-elected in a very Democrat state and saw real results from everything from the rebuilding of our infrastructure of roads and bridges, to the reform of education, to some of the most significant reforms in health care that got us national attention.

People are looking for a president who can get results. They don't want someone who can just talk, though they do want someone who can communicate. But they want someone who can communicate what he's going to do and then, after he's communicated it, actually has a record to say this is what we got done.

I'm convinced that a lot of Americans are utterly frustrated with the kind of politics that's all about talk and not enough about walk. They've seen that. They're tired of it.

They don't want the kind of partisan bickering they've seen in Washington. They want the sort of pragmatic, hands-on, get it done kind of

approach that governors bring to the table.

And that's why I think that more people are coming to our campaign every single week.

WALLACE: Governor, some critics say that you haven't had much to offer yet on foreign policy, so let's talk a little bit about that. What would you do about the cross-border incursions by the PKK?

HUCKABEE: Well, the problem is that we need to put American troops not to do military action but to train and arm the Kurds. They are capable of taking care of those terrorist cells along the Kurdish territory. They've proven that.

And what we really should be doing is making sure that we provide some assistance both in arming them and training them, try to resolve this crisis.

It's not an exciting thing to see Turkey move across that border, but the more we can do to bolster the Kurds, I think that's our best strategy.

WALLACE: What would you do to stabilize the situation in Pakistan? And specifically, would you side with Musharraf or would you side with Benazir Bhutto?

HUCKABEE: I think we have to be very careful about siding with either. That's a decision that the people of Pakistan are going to have to make.

And it seems that Bhutto and Musharraf are beginning to try to form some type of coalition. But we need to keep our eyes on Pakistan. I think we've sort of taken a view that everything is OK there, and it's not OK there.

Let's not forget, it's somewhere in the caves of Pakistan where Osama bin Laden is hiding. The next missile bomb that maybe comes our way, the next terrorist attack, is probably going to be postmarked Pakistan.

And that's why in a speech that I gave a few weeks ago I spent a lot of time talking about that we really need to keep a much more intense focus there than we have.

WALLACE: So, Governor, in the final minute that we've got, how would you answer people who say, "Look, this is a very creative governor," I guess Time Magazine called you one of the five best governors when you were running Arkansas, but they wonder whether or not you're ready to be commander in chief?

HUCKABEE: Well, that's what they said of Ronald Reagan. He was a movie actor and a governor, and he didn't have any foreign policy experience, but within 10 years after his taking office, there was no Soviet Union and the Berlin wall had fallen.

Franklin Roosevelt was someone who was criticized as not having foreign policy experience, but I don't think anybody would doubt his credentials in leading this country through one of its greatest crises.

It's really about your character, Chris, more than it's about anything. I can learn, and I do know more about some of the aspects of foreign policy than maybe people think, because governors deal with foreign governments both in a trade exchange cultural exchanges and deal with the CEOs and actually ink deals.

But it's really about your moral character. What are your principles, and do you abide by them? And do people of other countries look you in the eye and know that when you say something, you mean it and you stick by it?

That's what people need in a leader more than they need anything else, is they need somebody who has the character of convictions and then is willing to stick with them, and people know that you mean what you say and you say what you mean.

WALLACE: Governor Huckabee, we want to thank you so much for joining us this morning, and we'll see you tonight here in Florida.

HUCKABEE: Look forward to seeing you then, Chris. Thanks.