

Donald Trump: \$20 Billion for School Choice

Thursday afternoon, Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, saying it was time to “break with better failures of the past,” laid out a detailed plan for school choice during a speech at the Cleveland Arts and Social Sciences Academy.

“As your president, I will be the nation’s biggest cheerleader for school choice,” he said. “I want every single inner city child in America who is today trapped in a failing school to have the freedom—the civil right—to attend the school of their choice.

“I understand many stale old politicians will resist. But it’s time for our country to start thinking big once again. We spend too much time quibbling over the smallest words, when we should spend our time dreaming about the great adventures that lie ahead.”

Much like he did the day before with his 10-point plan for rebuilding the military, Trump laid out a multi-step approach to overhauling the nation’s education system. The four proposals were:

- His first budget will immediately add an additional federal investment of \$20 billion towards school choice. This will be done by reprioritizing existing federal dollars. Specifically, the plan will use \$20 billion of existing federal dollars to establish a block grant for the 11 million school age kids living in poverty. Individual states will be given the option as to how these funds will be used.
- He also said he will establish the national goal of providing school choice to every American child living in poverty. That means every disadvantaged child will be

able to choose the local public, private, charter or magnet school that is best for them and their family. Each state will develop its own formula, but the dollars would follow the student.

- Trump pledged to make this agenda a “shared national mission”—to bring hope to every child in every city in this land. He said he will use the bully pulpit of the presidency to campaign in all 50 states to call upon the American people to elect officials at the city, state and federal levels who support school choice.
- He also pledged to push for merit-based pay for teachers, so that “great teachers are rewarded instead of the failed tenure system that currently exists, which rewards bad teachers and punishes good ones.”

Trump’s running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, weighed in on the proposal, giving it a big thumbs-up.

“The school choice proposals unveiled today by Mr. Trump are a bold set of policies that will increase accountability and lead to better results for our nation’s children,” he said. “These policies prove once again that Mr. Trump is the only person running for president who has the leadership required to make America great again.”

The following is his entire speech:

Today, we are going to discuss one of the most important issues in this campaign: school choice.

But before we do, I want to briefly discuss new revelations about Hillary Clinton’s emails. According to the FBI report: “The FBI did find that hostile foreign actors gained access to the personal email accounts of individuals with whom Clinton was in regular contact, and, in doing so, obtained emails sent to or received by Clinton on her personal account.”

Remember, Hillary Clinton was emailing about the drone

program—among many other extremely sensitive matters.

This is yet more evidence that Hillary Clinton is unfit to be commander-in-chief. By the way, the whole country saw how unfit she was at the Townhall last night, where she refused to take accountability for her failed policies in the Middle East that have produced millions of refugees, unleashed the horror of radical Islamic terrorism, and made us less safe than ever before.

Throughout it all, she put the entire country at risk in order to cover-up her pay-for-play scandals as Secretary of State. These include scandals like giving up our uranium to Russia, doing favors for UBS bank, and selling contracts to friends and family in Haiti.

It's all about hiding her criminal enterprise at the Clinton Foundation.

As part of her criminal cover-up, Hillary Clinton's staff digitally bleached her emails after receiving a Congressional Subpoena. Her staff also destroyed some of her 13 different phones with a hammer.

Then, when she was interviewed by the FBI, she claimed she couldn't remember important events 39 times. She couldn't even remember whether she was trained on handling classified information. She even said she didn't know that the letter "C" stood for confidential classified information.

All the while, as Hillary and Bill raked in millions of dollars from special interests, the world fell apart. Hillary Clintons' policies produced ruin in Libya, Iraq, and Syria. She failed in Russia, in China, in North Korea.

Her policies unleashed ISIS, spread terrorism, and put Iran on the path to nuclear weapons—not to mention the ransom payments.

On top of it all, Hillary Clinton is trigger-happy. She's raced to invade, intervene, and topple regimes. She believes in globalism, not Americanism.

Last night, she even falsely said no American died in Libya. Then she also falsely said there's no ground troops in Iraq, even though we have 5,000 military personnel there right now.

Iraq is one of the biggest differences in this race. I opposed going in, and I opposed the reckless way Hillary Clinton took us out—letting ISIS fill the void.

But I was opposed to the war from the beginning.

Long after Howard Stern, but three months before the Iraq war started, I said, in an interview with Neil Cavuto, that "perhaps [we] shouldn't be doing it yet," and that "the economy is a much bigger problem as far as the President is concerned."

Then, On March 25th of 2003, just days after the war started, I was quoted as saying the war is "a mess," yet more clear evidence that I had opposed the war from the start.

In July of 2003, I said that "I would love to see New York City and some of the cities and some of the states get some of the money that's going toward Iraq and other places, because you know, they really need and it they need it badly." I had a number of quotes to this effect.

Then, in August of 2004, very early in the conflict, I made a detailed statement to Esquire magazine.

"Look at the war in Iraq and the mess that we're in. I would never have handled it that way. Does anybody really believe that Iraq is going to be a wonderful democracy where people are going to run down to the voting box and gently put in

their ballot and the winner is happily going to step up to lead the country? C'mon. Two minutes after we leave, there's going to be a revolution, and the meanest, toughest, smartest, most vicious guy will take over.

What was the purpose of the whole thing? Hundreds and hundreds of young people killed. And what about the people coming back with no arms and no legs? Not to mention the other side. All those Iraqi kids who've been blown to pieces. And it turns out that all of the reasons for the war were blatantly wrong. All this for nothing!

I would have been tougher on terrorism. Bin Laden would have been caught long ago."

Had I been in Congress at the time of the invasion, I would have cast a vote in opposition. For years, I have been a critic of the kind of reckless foreign invasions and interventions that have been the Hallmark of Hillary Clinton's failed career.

Here is the bottom line: I was a private citizen. I had no access to the briefings that Hillary Clinton had. But in Iraq, my judgement was right and hers was wrong.

Hillary Clinton is always complaining about what's wrong, but she's been there for more than 30 years and has never done anything about it—all you have to do is look at New York State, when she was a Senator. All talk, but nothing happened.

We're on track to spend \$6 trillion altogether on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, massive portions of our country are in a state of disrepair.

It's time to rebuild America.

Too many Americans living in our inner cities have not been

included in the American Dream.

We are one nation, and when any part of our country hurts—our whole country hurts.

My goal as President will be to ensure that every child in this nation—African-American, Hispanic-American, all Americans—will be placed on the ladder of success: a great education, and a great job.

That ladder rests on a fundamental foundation: safety.

In order to help our children succeed, our first duty is to ensure that every kid in America can grow up in a safe community.

You can't have prosperity without security.

This is the new civil rights agenda of our time. The right to a safe community, a quality education, and a secure job.

Our campaign represents the long-awaited chance to break with the bitter failures of the past, and to embrace a New American Future.

There is no failed policy more in need of urgent change than our government-run education monopoly.

The Democratic Party has trapped millions of African-American and Hispanic youth in failing government schools that deny them the opportunity to join the ladder of American success.

It is time to break-up that monopoly.

I want every single inner city child in America who is today trapped in a failing school to have the freedom—the civil right—to attend the school of their choice. This includes private schools, traditional public schools, magnet schools and charter schools which must be included in any definition

of school choice.

Our government spends more than enough money to easily pay for this initiative—with billions left over. It's simply a matter of putting students first, not the education bureaucracy.

Let's run through the numbers.

At the state and federal level, the United States spends more than \$620 billion on K-12 education each year. That's an average of about \$12,296 for every student enrolled in our elementary and secondary public schools.

The federal government pays for about 10 percent—\$64 billion, to be precise—of the K-12 costs. That \$64 billion makes up about half of the total spending of the U.S. Department of Education.

The other roughly \$570 billion spent on K-12 education comes from the states.

We spend more per student than almost any other major country in the world. Yet, our students perform near the bottom of the pack for major large advanced countries.

Our largest cities spend some of the largest amounts of money on public schools.

New York City spends \$20,226 dollars per pupil.

Baltimore spends \$15,287 dollars per student.

Chicago spends \$11,976 dollars per student, and in Los Angeles it is \$10,602.

Just imagine if each student in these school systems was given a scholarship for this amount of money—allowing them and their family to choose the public or private school of their choice.

Not only would this empower families, but it would create a massive education market that is competitive and produces better outcomes.

These schools would then cater to the needs of the individual student and family—not the needs of the Teachers' Union. There is no more important job than a teacher, and teachers will benefit greatly from these reforms.

The current government monopoly, while great for the bureaucrats, has utterly failed too many students.

According to the National Assessment of Education Progress, only 1 in 6 African-American students in the eighth grade are considered proficient in math and reading.

Failing schools then contribute to failing economies.

In Los Angeles the official unemployment rate for African-American men is almost 20.7 percent. In Baltimore, it is 16.2 percent, 14.7 percent in Chicago and 10.9 percent in New York City.

In Los Angeles, 26 percent of African American women live in poverty. In Baltimore, the poverty rate for African Americans is 27 percent. In New York, over 31 percent of African Americans live in poverty.

Nationwide, nearly 40% of African-American children live in poverty—including 45% of children under the age of six.

Our public schools are failing to put young Americans on a path to success.

Meanwhile, we have all seen the tragic rise in crime in these communities—which remains one of the greatest barriers to fostering opportunity and success for America's children.

Violent crime rose more than 20% in Los Angeles in 2015. Homicides in Baltimore increased by 63%. There have been

nearly 3,000 victims of shootings in Chicago so far this year.

Government is failing our citizens at every level.

That is why I am proposing a plan to provide school choice to every disadvantaged student in America.

That means parents will be able to send their kids to the desired public, private or religious school of their choice.

Here is how it will work.

Right now, about \$1.9 billion is spent on fifty private school choice programs nationwide. These are opportunity scholarships, tax credits, and education savings accounts. This covers about 400,000 students in our country.

Altogether, school choice is serving more than 3.4 million students nationwide.

Charter schools, in particular, have demonstrated amazing gains and results in providing education to disadvantaged children and the success of these schools will be a top priority for my Administration.

They also produce competition that causes better outcomes for everyone.

My first budget will immediately add an additional federal investment of \$20 billion towards school choice. This will be done by reprioritizing existing federal dollars.

Specifically, my plan will use \$20 billion of existing federal dollars to establish a block grant for the 11 million school age kids living in poverty.

We will give states the option to allow these funds to follow the student to the public or private school they attend. Distribution of this grant will favor states that

have private school choice and charter laws, encouraging them to participate.

This \$20 billion will instantly extend choice to millions more students.

A state like Ohio will benefit greatly from these new funds. Ohio is a leader in school choice. Ohio has 5 private school choice programs that serve over 30,000 students, and 384 charter schools serving 123,844 students.

But the \$20 billion is only the beginning. As President, I will establish the national goal of providing school choice to every American child living in poverty.

That means that we want every disadvantaged child to be able to choose the local public, private, charter or magnet school that is best for them and their family.

Each state will develop its own formula, but we want the dollars to follow the student.

9 in 10 dollars spent on K-12 education is spent at the state and local level. To achieve this long-term goal, we will have to make this a shared national mission—to bring hope to every child in every city in this land.

I will use the pulpit of the presidency to campaign for this in all 50 states, and I will call upon the American people to elect officials at the city, state and federal level who support school choice.

My Administration will partner with the leadership of any inner city in America—Chicago, Baltimore, Detroit—that is willing to run a pilot program to provide school choice to every child in that community. In Baltimore, for instance, that would mean more than \$15,000 funds available per student.

I am confident that the politicians will not be able to

suppress the will of the people anymore.

If we can put a man on the moon, dig out the Panama Canal, and win two World Wars, then I have no doubt that we, as a nation, can provide school choice to every disadvantaged child in America.

If the states collectively contribute another \$110 billion of their own education budgets toward school choice, on top of the \$20 billion in federal dollars, that could provide \$12,000 in school choice funds to every K-12 student who today lives in poverty.

The money will follow the student. That means the student will be able to attend the public, private, charter or magnet school of their choice—and each state will develop its own system that works best for them.

As your President, I will be the nation's biggest cheerleader for school choice. I understand many stale old politicians will resist. But it's time for our country to start thinking big once again. We spend too much time quibbling over the smallest words, when we should spend our time dreaming about the great adventures that lie ahead.

I will also support merit-pay for teachers, so that we reward great teachers—instead of the failed tenure system that rewards bad teachers and punishes good ones.

At the same time, we have to ensure that jobs are waiting for our young kids when they graduate high school and college.

My policies will add millions of new jobs to our country, especially for our African-American and Hispanic communities.

My plan to lift restrictions on the production of American energy will not only make home energy bills cheaper, but it

will add an estimated half a million jobs per year.

By reducing radical regulation and over-taxation, we can bring thousands of new companies into our poorest communities.

Crucially, my trade reforms will create a manufacturing revival in America. We have a nearly \$800 billion dollar annual trade deficit with the world—that's money coming straight out of states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Maine, and so many others. By ending foreign currency manipulation, product dumping, and other predatory trading practices, we will be able to open thousands of new plants and factories across America.

The future is filled with limitless possibilities for our nation, and exciting opportunities for our children.

All we have to do is cut our ties with the failed politics of the past. We've had a failed foreign policy. A failed education policy. A failed economic policy. And, underneath it all, a failed political system that rewards politicians for how many donors they have—or how many journalists they know—not how many Americans they help to live better lives.

But the failures of the past are about to end.

Those failures end beginning on November 8th.

We will have One American Nation.

We will be One American People.

We are fighting to give every child, in every forgotten stretch of this country, the chance to live out their dreams in safety and peace.

That means a safe neighborhood, a quality education, and a secure high-paying job.

This is how we will rebuild our future.

This is how We Will Make America Great Again—For Everyone.

Thank you.