

Hillary Clinton Faces Off Against Jeb Bush Over Equality Issues

Democrat Hillary Clinton sought to persuade African-Americans on Friday to resist any temptation to side with Republican Jeb Bush in the 2016 presidential race as they offered differing visions on how to tackle economic and racial inequality.

The annual convention of the National Urban League marked the first same-stage appearance for Clinton, front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination, and Bush, one of the leading candidates in the Republican race.

Democrats have long counted on African-Americans as a loyal voting bloc, whereas the Republican Party acknowledged after its loss in the 2012 presidential race that it needed to build support among minorities to win the presidency.

Bush has been trying to expand the appeal of his party by vowing to go places where Republicans haven't been seen in years, such as Hispanic neighborhoods and African-American churches.

Clinton did not mention Bush by name in her speech, but mocked his campaign slogan, "Right to rise," drawing applause from the crowd for her broadside.

"I don't think you can credibly say that everyone has a 'right to rise' and then say you're for phasing out Medicare or for repealing Obamacare. People can't rise if they can't afford health care," she said.

Bush recently called for reforms to Medicare to make it more fiscally stable, including raising the retirement age and

forcing wealthier beneficiaries to pay more.

He has said he would repeal the Affordable Care Act, commonly called Obamacare, and replace it with “catastrophic coverage” that would kick in when people can’t afford to pay for health care.

When it was his turn to speak, Bush did not respond to Clinton’s attack, using his speech to offer a message of unity. He told reporters afterward he hadn’t heard her remarks.

Bush campaign spokeswoman Allie Brandenburger called Clinton’s remarks “just more false, cheap political shots to distract from the fact that Secretary Clinton has no record of accomplishment to run on in this race.”

“The Urban League deserved better today,” she said.

In his speech, Bush said Democratic policies have failed to fix the education system, perpetuating a cycle of inequality, unemployment and poverty.

“I want to work with the Urban League movement to end this injustice once and for all,” said Bush, who touted his record on improving Florida’s school system.

“For a half century, this nation has pursued a war on poverty and massive government programs, funded with trillions of taxpayer dollars. This decades-long effort, while well intentioned, has been a losing one,” Bush said.

Bush received pockets of polite applause from the mainly African-American crowd.

Tammy McDonald-Anderson, a 52-year-old community organizer from Palm Beach County, said Bush had a steep hill to climb.

“He better be prepared and be doing research about what’s important to us,” McDonald-Anderson said. “We won’t take lip

service.”

Martin O’Malley and Bernie Sanders, two other Democratic candidates, also spoke, as did Republican Ben Carson.

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