

Hillary Clinton Wants a Supreme Court to 'Stick With' Abortion and Gay Marriage

During Sunday night's second presidential debate between Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton—described by many observers as the “town brawl” rather than the town hall—there wasn't much the two candidates would agree upon.

But they did agree the Supreme Court is perhaps the most important issue of the 2016 election.

Late in the debate, one of the audience members, Beth Miller, asked the following question: “Perhaps the most important aspect of this election is the Supreme Court justice. What would you prioritize as the most important aspect of selecting a Supreme Court justice?”

Clinton was the first to answer, saying she wants to appoint Supreme Court justices who “understand the way the world really works”—with real-life experience and who “actually understand what people are up against.” She said believes the current court has “gone in the wrong direction,” saying the *Citizens United* decision needs to be reversed in order to get “dark, unaccountable” money out of politics.

But, she didn't stop there:

“I would like the Supreme Court to understand that voting rights are still a big problem in many parts of our country, that we don't always do everything we can to make it possible for people of color and older people and young people to be able to exercise their franchise. I want a Supreme Court that will stick with *Roe v. Wade* and a woman's right to choose, and I want a Supreme Court that will stick with marriage equality.

“Now, Donald has put forth the names of some people that he would consider. And among the ones that he has suggested are people who would reverse Roe v. Wade and reverse marriage equality. I think that would be a terrible mistake and would take us backwards.

“I want a Supreme Court that doesn’t always side with corporate interests. I want a Supreme Court that understands because you’re wealthy and you can give more money to something doesn’t mean you have any more rights or should have any more rights than anybody else.”

Clinton accused the U.S. Senate of failing to do its duty because it has not yet held hearings on President Obama’s nominee to fill Scalia’s vacancy. She said if the Senate doesn’t move on the appointment before she is sworn in, she will immediately take action to get her own nominee confirmed.

Trump said he would appoint federal judges—not just to the Supreme Court—“very much in the mold of Justice Scalia.” He pointed to his “short list” of 20 potential high court nominees, who he said were “highly respected,” which he noted had been “beautifully reviewed” by conservatives.

“But people that will respect the Constitution of the United States,” he said. “And I think that this is so important. Also, the Second Amendment, which is totally under siege by people like Hillary Clinton. They’ll respect the Second Amendment and what it stands for, what it represents. So important to me.”

Then he pounced on the irony—or hypocrisy, your choice—of Clinton’s comments about *Citizens United* and money in politics, noting that he will have funded his own campaign to the tune of roughly \$100 million by Nov. 8, while Clinton hasn’t contributed any of her own money to her campaign. He also pointed out the many millions in “big-dollar donations” she has received from corporate interests.

"We're raising money for the Republican Party, and we're doing tremendously on the small donations, \$61 average or so," he said. "I ask Hillary, why doesn't—she made \$250 million by being in office. She used the power of her office to make a lot of money. Why isn't she funding, not for \$100 million, but why don't you put \$10 million or \$20 million or \$25 million or \$30 million into your own campaign?"

"It's \$30 million less for special interests that will tell you exactly what to do and it would really, I think, be a nice sign to the American public. Why aren't you putting some money in? You have a lot of it. You've made a lot of it because of the fact that you've been in office. Made a lot of it while you were secretary of state, actually. So why aren't you putting money into your own campaign? I'm just curious."

Before Clinton could attempt to answer the question, co-moderator Martha Raddatz of ABC News ended the discussion to move on to a different subject. Clinton, however, insisted she be able to say she supports the Second Amendment, but with "comprehensive background checks."

It was one of several moments in which Trump had Clinton on the ropes during the debate. Earlier in the town hall event, during a discussion about temperament, Clinton said "it's just awfully good that someone with the temperament of Donald Trump is not in charge of the law in our country."

He responded, "Because you'd be in jail."

That drew one of several rounds of applause—and admonishment from co-moderator Anderson Cooper of CNN—from the audience. Another happened a short time later when Clinton was attempting to explain the contents of a leaked speech in which she said a candidate needed to have both "public and private positions" on key issues.

"As I recall, that was something I said about Abraham Lincoln after having seen the wonderful Steven Spielberg movie called

Lincoln," she said. "It was a master class watching President Lincoln get the Congress to approve the 13th Amendment. It was principled, and it was strategic.

"And I was making the point that it is hard sometimes to get the Congress to do what you want to do and you have to keep working at it. And, yes, President Lincoln was trying to convince some people, he used some arguments, convincing other people, he used other arguments. That was a great—I thought a great display of presidential leadership."

Clinton went on to discuss recent hacking activities, saying they were the work of Russia, which is trying to influence the election on behalf of Trump. She added the WikiLeaks documents were a byproduct of the Russian influence.

Trump responded:

"Look, now she's blaming—she got caught in a total lie. Her papers went out to all her friends at the banks, Goldman Sachs and everybody else, and she said things—WikiLeaks that just came out. And she lied. Now she's blaming the lie on the late, great Abraham Lincoln. That's one that I haven't heard before.

"OK, Honest Abe. Honest Abe never lied. That's the good thing. That's the big difference between Abraham Lincoln and you. That's a big, big difference. We're talking about some difference."

Toward the end of the debate, the candidates were asked if they could be "a devoted president to all the people in the United States." Trump was the first to respond, and said he "absolutely" could, but noted Clinton's "basket of deplorables" comments from September.

Cooper came back to those comments in a follow-up to the candidates' answers:

"You said that half of Donald Trump's supporters are, quote,

“deplorables, racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic.” You later said you regretted saying half. You didn’t express regret for using the term “deplorables.” To Mr. Carter’s question, how can you unite a country if you’ve written off tens of millions of Americans?”

Clinton said she apologized for the comments—made in a prepared speech that reportedly had been used more than once in private meetings with high-dollar campaign donors—“within hours.” She said her argument is with the “hateful and divisive campaign” she says Trump has run.

But in his response, Trump hit back hard:

“We have a divided nation. We have a very divided nation. You look at Charlotte. You look at Baltimore. You look at the violence that’s taking place in the inner cities, Chicago, you take a look at Washington, D.C.

“We have an increase in murder within our cities, the biggest in 45 years. We have a divided nation, because people like her—and believe me, she has tremendous hate in her heart. And when she said deplorables, she meant it. And when she said irredeemable, they’re irredeemable, you didn’t mention that, but when she said they’re irredeemable, to me that might have been even worse ...

“She’s got tremendous hatred. And this country cannot take another four years of Barack Obama, and that’s what you’re getting with her.”

In the final question of the night, the candidates were asked to describe something about their respective opponent that they respect. Clinton said she respected Trump’s children, which he later said to take as a compliment, and then he said he respected the fact she “does fight hard, and she doesn’t quit, and she doesn’t give up,” which he said was a good trait.

The campaigns will have several days to regroup before the third and final presidential debate, which is scheduled for 9 p.m. EDT Oct. 19 at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas.