

Report: Jerry Falwell Jr. Turned Down Education Secretary Job

According to a report from the Associate Press, President-elect Donald Trump first offered the Secretary of Education post to Liberty University President Jerry Falwell Jr., who ultimately turned it down.

The man who helped propel the president-elect to the presidency and who has advocated for major reforms of the national education system turned that offer down, though. In an interview with AP, he said Trump wanted a four- to six-year commitment but he couldn't leave the university for more than two years.

Falwell also reportedly said he couldn't afford to work at a Cabinet-level job for longer than two years, and he didn't want to move his family—especially his 16-year-old daughter—closer to D.C. He said he believes charter school advocate Betsy DeVos, who ultimately got the nomination, is an “excellent choice.”

The decision was seemingly an about-face from earlier comments Falwell made after meeting with Trump and Vice President-elect Mike Pence last week. According to press accounts, Falwell emerged from those meetings and said:

“I let them know one of my passions is reforming higher education and education in general. I told them I'd be willing—I have a lot of responsibilities here—but I'd be willing to serve in some capacity that sort of brings education back to some form of sanity.”

Falwell, who is a lawyer, has led Liberty University since after his father's death in 2007. He endorsed Trump just prior

to the start of the presidential primary season, which became a point of controversy with students and alumni alike.

Both Trump and Pence have spoken at the university's Convocation meetings during the 2016 election cycle.

The Presidential Transition Team has not publicly responded to the AP report, nor has it responded to requests for comment.
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