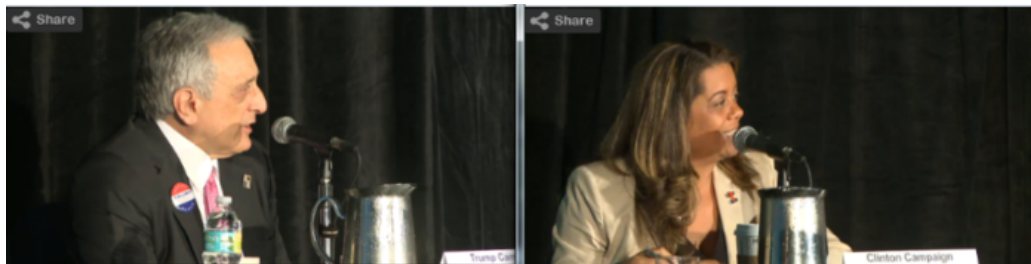


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Clinton Is 'Big' Backer of Charters, and Trump Will Trim Ed. Dept., Surrogates Say

By Andrew Ujifusa on October 21, 2016 4:40 PM



Hillary Clinton is and has been a robust supporter of charter schools, while Donald Trump might not pick someone with a background in education for his secretary of education, according to surrogates for the two respective candidates who spoke at a policy forum hosted by the Council of the Great City Schools in Miami on Friday.

Mildred Otero, a former aide to Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton who's also worked for Democratic ex-Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa, attempted to clarify Clinton's sometimes-hard-to-classify position on charter schools by saying, "She's a big supporter of public charter schools." Otero also stressed that Clinton's position on that issue hasn't really changed, although she added that Clinton is skeptical of the for-profit charter sector.

Clinton, a big supporter of early-childhood education programs, could also look at early-education work done by the District of Columbia public schools as a potential model to take to the federal level, Otero said at the event in Miami, which was moderated by Dan Rather, the former CBS News anchor who now runs a cable TV news program.

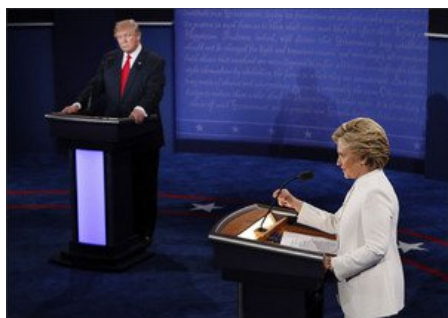
And Carl Paladino, a supporter of GOP nominee Donald Trump who is on the school board for the Buffalo, N.Y. district, said the candidate wouldn't necessarily pick an education secretary from the "education world." He also said he believed that Trump would seek to make "adjustments" to the U.S. Department of Education, but stopped short of saying Trump would definitely seek to shut down the department entirely. And Paladino attacked the Education Department's office for civil rights, saying the work it does should be turned over to the states.

Paladino also attacked President Barack Obama for not letting Education Secretary Arne Duncan push bigger changes to public schools, saying, "He wouldn't allow Duncan to do anything that would make the teachers' unions upset." (If you ask the unions, however, they'll be happy to say that Duncan promoted harmful policies like the tying of teacher evaluations to test scores.)



Clearing Up Unclear Positions?

During her 2016 campaign, Clinton's position on charters became a bit less clear. During her time as a U.S. senator from New York, for example, Clinton was a supporter of charters. She's even taken some grief from the teachers' unions for that stance. But during this White House run, she also criticized charters for not necessarily accepting all the same students that traditional public schools do. And she's said charters should supplement what public schools do and not replace them.



Similarly, Trump's position about ending the federal education department hasn't been easy to describe. He's said he would be interested in shutting it down entirely or dramatically shrinking it. But Trump has also called education a top priority for the federal government, although that doesn't automatically mean he wants a cabinet-level agency overseeing education.

The Common Core State Standards also came up. Otero said when she traveled the country talking to teachers before the common core, "Every teacher that I talked to said, 'Can we do something about raising standards?'"

"She's going to continue to support states as they raise their standards," Otero said of Clinton, adding that the federal government did not come up with the common core. It's worth noting

that according to 2014 Clinton speech released by WikiLeaks, Clinton called the common core a "political failure," although she did not appear to contradict her public support of the common core in that speech. (The Clinton campaign has not confirmed the accuracy of documents released by WikiLeaks.)

Asked about Clinton's potential education secretary, Otero said she hadn't discussed the issue with the nominee, but noted that Clinton would

do her "homework" in picking a person for the position.

Paladino, a former GOP candidate for governor of New York, also said he didn't think Trump would tolerate the Common Core State Standards if he's elected president—in fact, he said it appeared the standards were created by college professors who used to be "pot-smoking hippies" when they were younger. (Governors and state school chiefs oversaw the common core's creation.) He said to judge teachers dealing with disparate and often difficult circumstances by one standard is a bad approach.

"It doesn't appear that the system is prepared to adjust for that," Paladino said.

Otero also pushed back on Paladino's criticism of the Education Department's office for civil rights, saying that office provides a lot of important data and reminds people in education of "what we are working towards." She also stressed the importance of equity in education, but emphasized that states and local districts must take the lead in ensuring that more opportunities are more widely available, since federal education spending accounts for only about 11 percent of overall K-12 funding. **(Recent federal data puts the federal share of funding at about 9 percent.)**

Want more detail about where the candidates stand? **Check out our side-by-side comparison of Clinton and Trump on education policy.**

Image capture of Carl Paladino, left, and Mildred Otero, from a forum in Miami hosted by the Council of the Great City schools on Oct. 21, 2016.

Photo: Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton speaks as Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump listens during the third presidential debate at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, on Oct. 19 (Mark Ralston/AP)

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