

# Channeling FDR, Hillary Clinton Calls For 'Basic Bargain' On Economy In First 2016 Rally

The Huffington Post

Posted: 06/13/2015 3:07 pm EDT Updated: 06/16/2015 4:59 pm EDT

NEW YORK -- She's already been a candidate for two months, but it wasn't until her first major rally of the 2016 campaign on Saturday that Hillary Clinton began to make her case more explicitly about why she should become the next president.

Under a clear blue sky at an outdoor rally here on Roosevelt Island at Four Freedoms Park, Clinton sought to channel the isolated Manhattan enclave's [namesake](#), Franklin D. Roosevelt, in preaching a message of economic populism.

"You see corporations making record profits with CEOs making record pay, but your paychecks have barely budged," Clinton said. "While many of you are working multiple jobs to make ends meet, you see the top 25 hedge fund managers making more than all of America's kindergarten teachers combined and often paying a lower tax rate."

The tone and substance of Clinton's speech exhibited her 2016 campaign's strategy of focusing on rallying progressives and trying to maintain the new Democratic coalition that twice elected President Barack Obama.

With the capital of American finance almost visible from the stage across the East River, the former senator from New York took both veiled and overt shots at privileges granted to Wall Street, as she sought to present herself as a champion for Americans who are struggling economically.

"Democracy can't be just for billionaires and corporations," she said. "Prosperity and democracy are part of your basic bargain, too. You brought our country back. Now it's time -- your time -- to secure the gains and move ahead. And you know what, America can't succeed unless you succeed. That is why I am running for president of the United States."

Though she has maintained an enormous lead in the polls over her three declared challengers for the Democratic nomination -- Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, former Rhode Island Sen. and Gov. Lincoln Chafee -- Clinton's advisers insist that the front-runner isn't taking anything for granted.

Clinton has conducted several trips over the last couple of months to the early voting states on the Democratic nominating calendar, where she has engaged with voters there in carefully managed environments.

Following her New York City rally, Clinton was slated to make stops in Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina, where her Democratic rivals have been trying to gain some traction.

"Democrats, and in fact, our nation, will not make progress with status quo thinking," O'Malley senior strategist Bill Hyers wrote in an emailed statement to reporters after Clinton's speech on Saturday. "We need someone who can bring new leadership, strong progressive values, and a record of getting things done to the White House -- and that person is Martin O'Malley."

Enthusiasm for Clinton ran high at the rally on Saturday, however, as a sea of families -- many with young girls -- came out to see the woman who they hope will soon make history.

“She’s going to be the first female president,” said Sarah Bahi, 32, who lives in Manhattan. “That’s a big deal. And I’m a feminist.”

Nancy Cestare, 79, stood in the front row alongside her granddaughter, Grace, who was celebrating her 15th birthday. "We want to see a woman be elected president," said Cestare. "It's important to be here."

Cestare, who lives in New Jersey, said that her family of “liberal Catholics” was dedicated to social justice. "We're concerned about unequal distribution of wealth," she said. "The Democratic Party represents our values."

Ignoring her opponents for the Democratic nomination during her speech, Clinton directed all of her fire at Republicans, whom she accused of launching a campaign to “shame and blame women” rather than respecting their rights.

“They want to put immigrants who work hard and pay taxes at risk of deportation,” Clinton added. “And they turn their backs on gay people who love each other.”

Clinton’s speech was laced with references to her own upbringing, noting that her grandfather worked in a lace mill and that her mother had always believed in her.

She recalled her time working for the Children’s Defense Fund as a young law school graduate, and offered a plan for expansion of early childhood education nationally.

“I will propose that we make preschool and quality childcare available to every child in America,” she said.

The former secretary of state said that as president, she would “ban discrimination against LGBT Americans and their families” and “if necessary” would support a constitutional amendment to overturn the Supreme Court’s Citizens United decision on campaign finance.

After completing her speech to cheers from the large crowd that had gathered to see her, Clinton was joined on stage by her husband, former President Bill Clinton, her daughter, Chelsea, and her son-in-law, Marc Mezvinsky.

Clinton’s next stop on the campaign trail was Sioux City, Iowa, where she was scheduled to attend a Democratic house party on Saturday night.