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Clinton, Burke stress working together for economic success
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Former President Bill Clinton focused on Wisconsin's economy and stressed the importance of minimizing political divisiveness in a Milwaukee appearance for Mary Burke Friday.

Clinton said the Great Recession “was horrible for everyone” but that economic recovery continues to lag in Wisconsin.

“It doesn’t make any sense. ... You’ve got all the assets in the world,” Clinton said. “What you don’t have is a political system devoted to maximizing your assets, minimizing your problems and getting people together to actually get the show on the road.”

Clinton, who spoke to a packed room of an estimated 900 people at the Hyatt Regency hotel, said Burke’s policies were more likely to reduce poverty and get more people off public assistance.

“How do you propose to go forward?” he asked, adding: “It’s an especially big question for Wisconsin because you are still almost 50,000 jobs short of where you were when the crash occurred.”

Republicans used Clinton's appearance to slam Burke over lifted passages in her jobs plan, noting Hillary Clinton's campaign accused Barack Obama of plagiarizing a speech he delivered during their 2008 fight for the Dem presidential nomination.

“Perhaps Bill Clinton can spend part of his visit explaining that Burke should know better than to plagiarize her campaign documents and that it’s time for her to finally take responsibility for her actions,” said state GOP Executive Director Joe Fadness.

Clinton got in jabs at Gov. Scott Walker’s tenure without mentioning the GOP gov by name.

“If I were a moderate Republican, I’d vote for Mary Burke,” he said. “Because I’d rather have somebody who knew what it takes to build a small business into a bigger one and hire people and take them along for the ride on fair terms than somebody who thought we had to give more away to people who are already powerful, whether they create jobs in our state or not.”

In a reference to Walker's recent comment that a government-mandated minimum wage "serves no purpose," Clinton said he had raised it both as Arkansas governor and as president.

"Here's what I know: If you raised it to \$20 or more, you'd put a burden on small businesses. No one proposes that. But if you raise it so you keep up with inflation, you don't just raise the incomes of people on minimum wage. Millions and millions of Americans are just above that and they'll get a pay raise, too."

Added Clinton: "Before you know it, you've turned that money over to the economy so much, you've lifted America from the bottom up."

In introducing Clinton, Burke stressed similar themes of investing in education, raising the minimum wage and calling for "an end to the divisiveness – realizing that we're actually all on the same page and we are proud, proud Wisconsinites, first and foremost."

"As governor, I'm going to bring people together," Burke said.

She blasted Walker over education funding cuts and said, "He left 41,000 people on a waiting list for financial aid for tech colleges and universities. When I'm governor, that will never happen."

U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, focused on the Walker administration's treatment of the poor in a fiery speech before Burke and Clinton took the stage.

She said Walker has "humiliated the poor" by refusing to expand heating assistance and "by saying that needy families have to be drug-tested."

"We just screamed when Scott Walker took that \$800 million out of our kindergarten-12 schools," said Moore. "We screamed when he took money from our university systems. We just howled that this man has turned down high-speed Internet for our schools."

"Walker ignored numerous federal grant opportunities to expand Medicaid for our health care," said Moore.

"I am the laughingstock in Congress," she said, because the money that Wisconsinites could have used was sent back and distributed to other states.

"We groaned about his cluelessness in saying there's no jobs problem," said Moore, adding, "He thinks we're all lazy and don't want to work."

-- By Kay Nolan
For WisPolitics.com