

# Politicians: Hillary Clinton

By Biography.com Editors and A+E Networks, adapted by Newsela staff on 09.27.16

Word Count **1,086**



Hillary Clinton speaking with supporters at a campaign rally at Carl Hayden High School in Phoenix, Arizona Photo: Wikimedia Commons

**Synopsis:** Hillary Clinton was born on October 26, 1947, in Chicago, Illinois. She earned her law degree from Yale University and married fellow law school graduate Bill Clinton in 1975. After her husband became president, she served as first lady from 1993 to 2001, and then as a U.S. senator from 2001 to 2009. In 2008, she ran unsuccessfully for president as a Democrat. She became secretary of state from 2009 until 2013, and in 2016, she became the first woman in American history to become the presidential nominee of a major political party.

## Background

Hillary Clinton was born Hillary Diane Rodham on October 26, 1947, in Chicago, Illinois. She was raised in Park Ridge, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago.

Hillary Rodham was the eldest daughter of Hugh Rodham, a prosperous fabric store owner, and Dorothy Emma Howell Rodham.

As a young woman, Clinton was active in young Republican groups. She campaigned for the Republican presidential nominee, Barry Goldwater, in 1964. She was inspired to work in public service after hearing a speech in Chicago by the Reverend Martin Luther King,

## **Education And Early Career**

Hillary Clinton attended Wellesley College, where she was active in student politics and was elected senior class president before graduating in 1969. She then attended Yale Law School, where she met Bill Clinton, and graduated with honors in 1973.

Hillary Clinton worked at various jobs during her summers as a college student. In 1971, she first came to Washington, D.C. to work on a U.S. Senate subcommittee, and in the summer of 1972, she worked on the campaign of Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern.

She later became a faculty member of the University of Arkansas Law School in Fayetteville, where her Yale Law School classmate and boyfriend, Bill Clinton, was teaching.

## **Marriage To Bill Clinton**

Hillary Clinton married Bill Clinton on October 11, 1975, at their home in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Their daughter, Chelsea Victoria, was born on February 27, 1980.

In 1976, Hillary Clinton worked on Jimmy Carter's successful campaign for president while husband Bill was elected attorney general. Bill Clinton was elected governor of Arkansas in 1978 at age 32, lost reelection in 1980, but came back to win in 1982, 1984, 1986 (when the term of office was expanded from two to four years) and 1990.

Hillary Clinton joined the Rose Law Firm in Little Rock. As first lady of the state, she chaired the Arkansas Educational Standards Committee and co-founded the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families.

In 1988 and 1991, The National Law Journal named her one of the 100 most powerful lawyers in America.

## **First Lady**

During Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign, Hillary Clinton emerged as a dynamic and valued partner of her husband, and as president he named her to head the Task Force on National Health Reform. The commission produced a complicated plan that was abandoned in September 1994.

## **Senate Win And Presidential Run**

In 2001, Clinton became a U.S. senator from New York, becoming the first wife of a president to seek and win public office and the first woman to be elected to the Senate from New York. She easily won reelection in November 2006.

In early 2007, Clinton announced her plans to be the first female president. During the 2008 Democratic primaries, Clinton withdrew from the race when it became apparent that Barack Obama would win the party's nomination.

When Clinton suspended her campaign, she made a speech to her supporters. "Although we were not able to shatter that highest and hardest glass ceiling this time, thanks to you it has 18 million cracks in it," she said.

## **U.S. Secretary Of State**

Shortly after winning the U.S. presidential election, Obama nominated Clinton as secretary of state. She became the 67th U.S. secretary of state on January 21, 2009.

During her term, Clinton emphasized women's rights and human rights. She became one of the most traveled secretaries of state in American history, and promoted the use of social media to convey the country's positions. She also led U.S. diplomatic efforts in connection to the Arab Spring, popular uprisings through the Arab world, and the military intervention in Libya.

The State Department, under Clinton's leadership, came under investigation after a deadly attack on a U.S. diplomatic post in Benghazi, Libya, killed the ambassador and three others on September 11, 2012. An independent panel issued a report about the Benghazi attack. It found failures and leadership and management problems at the State Department.

Clinton stepped down from her post on February 1, 2013, having previously said that she was only interested in serving as secretary of state for one term.

## **Bid For 2016 Presidency**

In June 2014, Clinton released "Hard Choices," a memoir which rose to the top of the New York Times Best Seller list. The following year, in early March 2015, it was revealed that she had used her personal email account to handle official governmental business while secretary of state. She later turned over all governmental correspondence to the Obama administration and deleted personal messages.

After much speculation that Clinton would run for the U.S. presidency, her plans were made official in the spring of 2015.

## **Campaign Issues**

On her campaign site, Clinton discusses a wide variety of issues she believes in. They include lowering student debt, criminal justice reform, campaign finance reform, improving the health care coverage and costs of the Affordable Care Act, also called Obamacare, and women's rights.

However, she is also known for changing her positions on various hot-button issues such as gay marriage, which she now supports, and trade deals. Clinton has a plan to combat climate change but supports fracking, a controversial method of extracting natural gas from rock. She is also in favor of the death penalty but claims it should only be used in exceptional cases.

## **Email Scandal**

After a yearlong FBI investigation, FBI Director James B. Comey announced on July 2016 that the agency would not recommend criminal charges against Clinton. Comey said that the department found no clear evidence that Clinton intended to violate laws about the handling of the classified information. However, he said there was evidence that she and her staff members were very careless.

## **Making History**

On the final night of the Democratic National Convention, Clinton accepted her party's nomination for president, a historic achievement for women in the U.S. She became the first woman in the nation's 240-year history to lead the presidential ticket of a major U.S. political party.