

Ocasio-Cortez offers her services to the Biden campaign

Genevieve Leigh
16 April 2020

In an interview published on the *New York Times*' website Monday, Representative from New York Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, declared her support for the presumptive Democratic Party nominee, Joe Biden.

The *Times* posed the question directly: "Is an Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez endorsement of Joe Biden a sure thing?" To which the congresswoman responded, "I've always said that I will support the Democratic nominee."

The endorsement itself is not surprising. Ocasio-Cortez has repeatedly promised to back whoever won the nomination. It is, moreover, part of the mobilization of the Democratic Party as a whole behind Biden.

Ocasio-Cortez's interview came the same day that Bernie Sanders gave an obsequious tribute to Biden in a joint video conference. Then on Tuesday former president Barack Obama issued his official endorsement.

The congresswoman has been relentlessly promoted by the media and the DSA as the face of progressive politics within the Democratic Party. Her progressive credentials are, however, entirely fabricated.

The interview with the *Times* is revealing in this regard for a number of reasons.

First, Ocasio-Cortez managed not to place a single condition on her endorsement of the Biden campaign throughout the entire interview, unless one counts her hope to make Biden "uncomfortable."

She explained to the *Times* that she believes the process of uniting "should be uncomfortable for everyone involved," adding, "that's how you know it's working." The real "discomfort" she anticipates, however, is not from Biden, but from the workers and youth who supported the Sanders campaign and are hostile to Biden but whom she wants to convince to

support the Democratic Party candidate.

When asked to give examples of ways in which she hoped to see Biden "get uncomfortable," she criticized a proposal made by the Biden campaign to lower the Medicare age to 60. Ocasio-Cortez complained that Hillary Clinton's "olive branch" to the left in 2016 was to lower the Medicare age to 50.

The second significant aspect of the *Times* interview is what it indicates about Ocasio-Cortez's own political aims. She is advancing herself as an advisor to the Biden campaign and perhaps even lobbying for a position in a future Biden administration.

Ocasio-Cortez went out of her way to compliment Biden's victory: "I want to respect his win, he won because of his coalition building, he won because of his service, he won for a lot of different reasons." She did not take note of the mobilization of the entire Democratic Party leadership to push Biden's nomination and undermine the campaign of Sanders.

She went on to lay out what she sees as the weaknesses in the Biden campaign, not from the standpoint of political principles, but rather from the standpoint of Biden's chances of winning:

"I've flagged, very early, two patterns that I saw [among Biden's campaign], which is underperformance among Latinos and young people, both of which are very important demographics in November. And so, I don't think this conversation about changes that need to be made is one about throwing the progressive wing of the party a couple of bones—I think this is about how we can win."

In other words, Ocasio-Cortez sees herself as a useful tool for the Biden campaign. Specifically, she points out that he is lacking support from "Latinos and young people." Lucky for Biden, it just so happens that Ocasio-Cortez is a young Latina, two identities which

she leans on heavily in her own self-promotion.

She goes on to advise Biden on his messaging: “I think people understand that there are limits to what Biden will do, and that’s understandable — he didn’t run as a progressive candidate. But, at the bare minimum, we should aspire to be better than what we have been before. And I just don’t know if this message of ‘We’re going to go back to the way things were’ is going to work for the people for who the way things were was really bad.”

There is a strong element of Obama’s “hope and change” rhetorical strategy in Ocasio-Cortez’s advice to Biden: “People need to feel hope in a Democratic administration. And that’s what this is about.”

Her pitch to Biden is this: You won’t get elected by telling workers and youth that everything is going to go back to “the way things were.” There has to be modulation of your rhetoric.

In this regard, Ocasio-Cortez is marketing herself to Biden as the key to the youth vote. She made clear that she was open to close collaboration with the Biden campaign.

In response to a question about whether or not a Biden-AOC unity rally could be in the cards, Ocasio-Cortez responded: “It could be.” The congresswoman followed this by doubling down on her support for Biden stating that she understood the “goal ultimately” was to win the 2020 election: “And I’m not trying to needle as a way of making a point or to score points. I want to win. And I want to make sure that we win broadly.”

Ocasio-Cortez’s statements should come as no surprise to anyone who has been following the political trajectory of the congresswoman. She has been moving to the right since her election in 2018. She has cozied up to Nancy Pelosi who she warmly referred to in February as “mama bear” and dropped almost all of her earlier radical sounding rhetoric.

Organizations such as the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) continue to promote the congresswoman as evidence of a “transformation” within the Democratic Party. Just two weeks ago, an article in Democratic Left, the DSA’s publishing arm, cited Ocasio-Cortez as “one of many” future socialist presidential candidates who they anticipate will “overwhelm the Democratic stage.”

The election of Ocasio-Cortez in 2018 was hailed by

the organization as a “stunning defeat to the political establishment.” According to a statement released by the DSA National Political Committee at the time, her election was “a victory for basic principles of freedom and justice at a time when our political misleaders have given up on them.”

“Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez will continue the political revolution by fighting every day for the many, not the few, in Congress,” the DSA proclaimed.

Like Sanders, the “political revolution” has for Ocasio-Cortez ended with her groveling support for the most right-wing candidate in the Democratic Party.

The political trajectory of Ocasio-Cortez should serve as another object lesson in the character of organizations like the DSA. Her angling for a position as an advisor to the Biden campaign expressed the class character of the DSA. It represents privileged sections of the upper middle class who are looking for greater access to positions of power and privilege.

Workers and young people who may have been attracted to the DSA because it calls itself “socialist” should draw the necessary conclusions.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact