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Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton speaks during a capping stop, Feb. 5, 2016, in Manchester, N.H.

Photo by Matt Rourke/AP

Clinton: 'I don't believe' I have ever lied

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By Alex Seitz-Wald

Democratic presidential front-runner Hillary Clinton, who struggles with perceptions of dishonesty in polls, said Thursday that she didn't believe she had ever told a lie and vowed to do her best to be honest going forward.

Jimmy Carter famously pledged to the American people, "I will never lie to you." Asked if she could give a similar promise in an interview with CBS News, Clinton didn't quite go there.

"You're asking me to say, 'have I ever [lied]?' I don't believe I ever have. I don't believe I ever have. I don't believe I ever will. I am going to do the best I can to level with the American people," Clinton told anchor Scott Pelley.

Clinton also faced some questions about honesty during MSNBC's Democratic town hall in Las Vegas Thursday night. "It is obviously troubling that people have questions about me, which I will do my best to answer," Clinton said. "So people are really asking is she in it for herself or is she in it for me? I've always been somebody who believed and raised in my family and my faith that I, with my blessings, had an opportunity and an obligation to do what I could to help others. And that's what I will do as president."

In Iowa, where Clinton squeaked out a narrow win in the state's caucuses earlier this month, the former secretary of state earned the support of only 10 percent of voters who said honesty was their most important quality in choosing a candidate, according to entrance polls (83 percent of those voters went for rival Bernie Sanders).

A new national NBC News poll found that Democrats picked "honest and trustworthy" as the most important quality they're looking for in a candidate in the Democratic primary, though it was followed closely by "has the right experience," which likely favors Clinton.

Clinton and her allies have alleged that she is held to a different standard when it comes to honesty than other politicians because of her gender and long history in politics. They have also started making the case that it is Sanders who is deceiving supporters by promising pie-in-the-sky policies like single-payer health care that they say will never pass.

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