

Space -- the next frontier for Hillary Clinton?

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She has been the US secretary of state, a senator and nearly became president, but Hillary Clinton joked Thursday that she might want to try another role -- space tourist.

Welcoming to the State Department the British tycoon [Richard Branson](#), Clinton hailed the [space tourism](#) pioneer for being "such a strong proponent for business-as-unusual."

"I'm excited he is here because many, many, many years ago, I wanted to be an astronaut and I think he may be my last chance to live out that particular dream," Clinton, 64, said to laughter from the audience.

Branson in October opened the world's first-ever commercial spaceport in the New Mexico desert and hopes that his company, Virgin Galactic, will kick off a new era of space tourism with passengers paying \$200,000 a ride.

Branson quipped that members of the rival Republican Party had already offered to pay Clinton's way into space.

"So it's all paid for, all sorted," Branson said.

Despite Branson's joke, recent polls show that Clinton is one of the most popular politicians across America's political spectrum, fueling talk by pundits that she will make a new run for the White House in 2016.

Clinton, who narrowly lost the Democratic Party's nomination for

president in 2008, has repeatedly said that she is exhausted and will retire from public life after President Barack Obama's term ends in January, regardless of whether he is reelected in November.

Branson was visiting Washington for a forum spearheaded by Clinton on promoting US business.

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