

Michelle Obama's 2024 DNC speech

OK. We got a big night ahead. Thank you all so much. Thank you so much. OK. There you go.

Hello, Chicago! Yeah. All right. Something wonderfully magical is in the air, isn't it? You know, we're feeling it here in this arena, but it's spreading across this country we love. A familiar feeling that has been buried too deep for far too long. You know what I'm talking about. It's the contagious power of hope.

The anticipation, the energy, the exhilaration of once again being on the cusp of a brighter day. The chance to vanquish the demons of fear, division and hate that have consumed us and continue pursuing the unfinished promise of this great nation, the dream that our parents and grandparents fought and died and sacrificed for.

America, hope is making a comeback.

Yeah. But, to be honest, I am realizing that, until recently, I have mourned the dimming of that hope. And maybe you've experienced the same feelings, that deep pit in my stomach, a palpable sense of dread about the future.

And for me, that mourning has also been mixed with my own personal grief. The last time I was here in my hometown was to memorialize my mother — the woman who showed me the meaning of hard work and humility and decency, the woman who set my moral compass high and showed me the power of my own voice.

Folks, I still feel her loss so profoundly. I wasn't even sure if I'd be steady enough to stand before you tonight, but my heart compelled me to be here because of the sense of duty that I feel to honor her memory. And to remind us all not to squander the sacrifices our elders made to give us a better future.

You see, my mom, in her steady, quiet way, lived out that striving sense of hope every single day of her life. She believed that all children, all — all people have value. That anyone can succeed if given the opportunity. She and my father did not aspire to be wealthy. In fact, they were suspicious of folks who took more than they needed. They understood that it wasn't enough for their kids to thrive if everyone else around us was drowning.

So, my mother volunteered at the local school. She — she always looked out for the other kids on the block. She was glad to do the thankless, unglamorous work that for generations has strengthened the fabric of this nation. The belief that if you do unto others, if you love thy neighbor, if you work and scrape and sacrifice, it will pay off. If not for you, then maybe for your children or your grandchildren.

You see, those values have been passed on through family farms and factory towns, through tree-lined streets and crowded tenements, through prayer groups and National Guard units and social-studies classrooms. Those were the values my mother poured into me until her very last breath.

Kamala Harris and I built our lives on the same foundational values. Even though our mothers grew up an ocean apart, they shared the same belief in the promise of this country. That's why her mother moved here from India at 19. It's why she taught Kamala about justice, about the obligation to lift others up, about our responsibility to give more than we take. She'd often tell her daughter, "don't sit around and complain about things. Do something."

So, with that voice in her head, Kamala went out and she worked hard in school, graduating from an H.B.C.U., earning her law degree at a state school. And then she went on to work for the people, fighting to hold lawbreakers accountable, strengthening the rule of law, fighting to give folks better wages, cheaper prescription drugs, a good education, decent health care, child care, elder care. From a middle-class household, Kamala worked her way up to become vice president of the United States of America.

My girl, Kamala Harris, is more than ready for this moment. She is one of the most qualified people ever to seek the office of the presidency. And she is one of the most dignified. A tribute to her mother, to my mother and to your mother, too. The embodiment of the stories we tell ourselves about this country. Her story is your story. It's my story. It's the story of the vast majority of Americans trying to build a better life.

Look, Kamala knows, like we do, that regardless of where you come from, what you look like, who you love, how you worship, or what's in your bank account, we all deserve the opportunity to build a decent life. All of our contributions deserve to be accepted and valued. Because no one has a monopoly on what it means to be an American. No one.

Kamala has shown her allegiance to this nation. Not by spewing anger and bitterness, but by living a life of service, and always pushing the doors of opportunity open to others.

She understands that most of us will never be afforded the grace of failing forward. We will never benefit from the affirmative action of generational wealth.

If we bankrupt a business — if we bankrupt a business or choke in a crisis, we don't get a second, third or fourth chance. If things don't go our way, we don't have the luxury of whining or cheating others to get further ahead. No.

We don't get to change the rules so we always win. If we see a mountain in front of us, we don't expect there to be an escalator waiting to take us to the top. No. We put our heads down. We get to work. In America, we do something.

And throughout her entire life, that's what we have seen from Kamala Harris. The steel of her spine, the steadiness of her upbringing, the honesty of her example and yes, the joy of her laughter and her light.

It couldn't be more obvious. Of the two major candidates in this race, only Kamala Harris truly understands the unseen labor and unwavering commitment that has always made America great.

Now, unfortunately, we know what comes next. We know folks are going to do everything they can to distort her truth. My husband and I sadly know a little something about this.

For years, Donald Trump did everything in his power to try to make people fear us.

See, his limited, narrow view of the world made him feel threatened by the existence of two hard-working, highly educated, successful people who happen to be Black. I want to know — I want to know — who's going to tell him, who's going to tell him, that the job he is currently seeking might just be one of those Black jobs?

It's his same old con. His same old con. Doubling down on ugly, misogynistic, racist lies as a substitute for real ideas and solutions that will actually make people's lives better.

Look, because cutting our health care, taking away our freedom to control our bodies, the freedom to become a mother through I.V.F., like I did — those things are not going to improve the health outcomes of our wives, mothers and daughters. Shutting down the Department of Education, banning our books — none of that will prepare our kids for the future. Demonizing our children for being who they are and loving who they love, look, that doesn't make anybody's life better. Instead, instead, it only makes us small. And let me tell you this: Going small is never the answer. Going small is the opposite of what we teach our kids. Going small is petty. It's unhealthy. And quite frankly, it's un-presidential.

So, why would any of us accept this from anyone seeking our highest office. Why would we normalize that type of backward leadership? Doing so only demeans and cheapens our politics. It only serves to further discourage good, big-hearted people from wanting to get involved at all. America, our parents taught us better than that. And we deserve so much better than that. That's why we must do everything in our power to elect two of those good, big-hearted people. There is no other choice than Kamala Harris and Tim Walz. No other choice.

But as we embrace this renewed sense of hope, let us not forget the despair we have felt. Let us not forget what we are up against. Yes, Kamala and Tim are doing great now. We're loving it. They are packing arenas across the country. Folks are energized. We are feeling good. But remember, there are still so many people who are desperate for a different outcome, who are ready to question and criticize every move Kamala makes, who are eager to spread those lies, who don't want to vote for a woman, who will continue to prioritize building their wealth over ensuring that everyone has enough.

So no matter how good we feel tonight, or tomorrow, or the next day, this is going to be an uphill battle. So folks, we cannot be our own worst enemies. No. See, because the minute something goes wrong, the minute a lie takes hold,

folks, we cannot start wringing our hands. We cannot get a goldilocks complex about whether everything is just right. And we cannot indulge our anxieties about whether this country will elect someone like Kamala, instead of doing everything we can to get someone like Kamala elected.

Kamala and Tim, they have lived amazing lives. And I am confident that they will lead with compassion, inclusion and grace. But they are still only human. They are not perfect. And like all of us, they will make mistakes. But luckily, y'all, this is not just on them. This is up to us, all of us, to be the solution that we seek. It's up to all of us to be the antidote to the darkness and division. Look, I don't care how you identify politically, whether you are Democrat, Republican, independent or none of the above. This is our time to stand up for what we know in our hearts is right.

To stand up not just for our basic freedoms, but for decency and humanity. For basic respect, dignity and empathy. For the values at the very foundation of this democracy. It's up to us to remember what Kamala's mother told her: Don't just sit around and complain, do something.

So if they lie about her, and they will, we've got to do something. If we see a bad poll, and we will, we've got to put down that phone, and do something. If we start feeling tired, if we start feeling that dread creeping back in, we've got to pick ourselves up, throw water on our face, and what? [Crowd chants back: "Do Something!"]

We only have two and a half months, y'all, to get this done. Only 11 weeks to make sure every single person we know is registered and has a voting plan. So we cannot afford for anyone, anyone, anyone in America to sit on their hands and wait to be called. Don't complain if no one from the campaign has specifically reached out to you to ask you for your support. There is simply no time for that kind of foolishness. You know what you need to do. So consider this to be your official ask. Michelle Obama is asking you — no, I'm telling y'all — to do something.

This election is going to be close. In some states, just a handful — listen to me — a handful of votes in every precinct could decide the winner. So we need to vote in numbers that erase any doubt. We need to overwhelm any effort to suppress us. Our fate is in our hands. In 77 days, we have the power to turn our country away from the fear, division and smallness of the past. We have the power to marry our hope with our action. We have the power to pay forward the love, sweat and sacrifice of our mothers and fathers and all those who came before us. We did it before y'all, and we sure can do it again. Let us work like our lives depend on it, and let us keep moving our country forward and go higher, yes, always higher than we've ever gone before, as we elect the next president and vice president of the United States, Kamala Harris and Tim Walz. Thank you all, God bless.

Now, before I go, I have one more job tonight. Yeah. One more job.

You all, thank you for all the love. But it is now my honor to introduce somebody who knows a whole lot about hope. Someone who has spent his life strengthening our democracy. And let me tell you, as someone who lives with him: He wakes up every day, every day, and thinks about what's best for this country.

Please welcome America's 44th president and the love of my life, Barack Obama.

Barack Obama's 2024 DNC speech

Hello, Chicago! It is good to be home.

I don't know about you, but I'm feeling fired up! I'm feeling ready to go — even if I'm the only person stupid enough to speak right after Michelle Obama.

I'm feeling hopeful because this convention has always been pretty good to kids with funny names who believe in a country where anything is possible. Because we have the chance to elect someone who's spent her whole life trying to give people the same chances America gave her. Someone who sees you and hears you and will get up every single day and fight for you: the next president of the United States of America, Kamala Harris.

It's been 16 years since I had the honor of accepting this party's nomination for president. I know it's hard to believe since I haven't aged a bit, but it's true. And looking back, I can say without question that my first big decision as your nominee turned out to be one of my best — and that was asking Joe Biden to serve by my side as vice president.

Other than some common Irish blood, Joe and I come from different backgrounds. But we became brothers. And as we worked together for eight years, what I came to admire most about Joe wasn't just his smarts and experience, but his empathy and his decency; his hard-earned resiliency and his unshakable belief that everyone in this country deserves a fair shot.

Over the last four years, those are the values America has needed most.

At a time when millions of our fellow citizens were sick and dying, we needed a leader with the character to put politics aside and do what was right. At a time when our economy was reeling, we needed a leader with the determination to drive what became the world's strongest recovery — with 15 million jobs, higher wages, and lower health care costs. And at a time when the other party had turned into a cult of personality, we needed a leader who was steady, and brought people together, and was selfless enough to do the rarest thing there is in politics: putting his own ambition aside for the sake of the country.

History will remember Joe Biden as a president who defended democracy at a moment of great danger. I am proud to call him my president, but even prouder to call him my friend.

Now the torch has been passed. Now it's up to all of us to fight for the America we believe in. And make no mistake: It will be a fight. For all the incredible energy we've been able to generate over the last few weeks, this will still be a tight race in a closely divided country — a country where too many Americans are still struggling, and don't believe government can help.

And as we gather here tonight, the people who will decide this election are asking a very simple question:

Who will fight for me? Who's thinking about my future; about my children's future, about our future together?

One thing is for certain: Donald Trump is not losing sleep over these questions. This is a 78-year-old billionaire who hasn't stopped whining about his problems since he rode down his golden escalator nine years ago. It's been a constant stream of gripes and grievances that's actually gotten worse now that he's afraid of losing to Kamala. The childish nicknames and crazy conspiracy theories and weird obsession with crowd size. It just goes on and on. The other day, I heard someone compare Trump to the neighbor who keeps running his leaf blower outside your window every minute of every day.

From a neighbor, that's exhausting. From a president, it's just dangerous. The truth is, Donald Trump sees power as nothing more than a means to his ends. He wants the middle class to pay the price for another huge tax cut that would mostly help him and his rich friends. He killed a bipartisan immigration deal that would've helped secure our southern border because he thought trying to actually solve the problem would hurt his campaign. He doesn't seem to care if more women lose their reproductive freedoms since it won't affect his life.

Most of all, Donald Trump wants us to think that this country is hopelessly divided between us and them; between the real Americans who support him and the outsiders who don't. And he wants you to think that you'll be richer and safer if you just give him the power to put those "other" people back in their place.

It's one of the oldest tricks in politics — from a guy whose act has gotten pretty stale. We don't need four more years of bluster and chaos. We've seen that movie — and we all know that the sequel's usually worse.

America is ready for a new chapter. America's ready for a better story.

We are ready for a President Kamala Harris.

And Kamala Harris is ready for the job. This is a person who has spent her life fighting on behalf of people who need a voice and a champion. As you heard from Michelle, Kamala wasn't born into privilege. She had to work for what she's

got, and she actually cares about what other people are going through. She's not the neighbor running the leaf blower — she's the neighbor rushing over to help when you need a hand.

As a prosecutor, Kamala stood up for children who had been victims of sexual abuse. As attorney general of the most populous state in the country, she fought big banks and for-profit colleges, securing billions of dollars for the people they had scammed. After the home mortgage crisis, she pushed me and my administration hard to make sure homeowners got a fair settlement. Didn't matter that I was a Democrat or that she had knocked on doors for my campaign in Iowa — she was going to fight to get as much relief as possible for the families who deserved it.

As vice president, she helped take on the drug companies to cap the cost of insulin, lower the cost of health care, and give families with kids a tax cut. And she's running for president with real plans to lower costs even more, protect Medicare and Social Security, and sign a law to guarantee every woman's right to make her own health care decisions.

Kamala Harris won't be focused on her problems — she'll be focused on yours. As president, she won't just cater to her own voters and punish those who refuse to bend the knee. She'll work on behalf of every American.

That's who Kamala is. And in the White House, she will have an outstanding partner in Gov. Tim Walz.

I love this guy. Tim's the kind of person who should be in politics — somebody who was born in a small town, served his country, taught kids, coached football, and took care of his neighbors. He knows who he is and what's important. You can tell those flannel shirts he wears don't come from some consultant, they come from his closet, and they've been through some stuff.

Together, Kamala and Tim have kept faith with America's central story — a story that says we're all created equal, that everyone deserves a chance, and that, even when we don't agree with each other, we can find a way to live with each other.

That's Kamala's vision. That's Tim's vision. That's the Democratic Party's vision. And our job over the next eleven weeks is to convince as many people as possible to vote for that vision.

It won't be easy. The other side knows it's easier to play on people's fears and cynicism. They'll tell you that government is corrupt; that sacrifice and generosity are for suckers; and that since the game is rigged, it's ok to take what you want and look after your own.

That's the easy path. We have a different task. Our job is to convince people that democracy can actually deliver. And we can't just point to what we've already accomplished or only rely on the ideas of the past. We need to chart a new way forward to meet the challenges of today.

Kamala understands this. She knows, for example, that if we want to make it easier for more young people to buy a home, we need to build more units, and clear away some of the outdated laws and regulations that have made it harder to build homes for working people in this country. And she's put out a bold new plan to do just that.

On health care, we should all be proud of the enormous progress we've made through the Affordable Care Act — providing millions of people access to affordable coverage and protecting millions more from unscrupulous insurance practices. But Kamala knows we can't stop there, which is why she'll keep working to limit out of pocket costs.

Kamala knows that if we want to help people get ahead, we need to put a college degree within reach of more Americans. But college shouldn't be the only ticket to the middle class. We need to follow the lead of governors like Tim Walz who've said that if you've got the skills and the drive, you shouldn't need a degree to work for state government. And in this new economy, we need a president who actually cares about the millions of people all across this country who wake up every day to do the essential, often thankless work to care for our sick and clean our streets and deliver our packages — and stand up for their right to bargain for better wages and working conditions.

Kamala will be that president.

A Harris-Walz administration can help us move past some of the tired old debates that keep stifling progress, because at their core, Kamala and Tim understand that when everybody gets a fair shot, we're all better off. They understand that when every child gets a good education, the whole economy gets stronger; that when women are paid the same as men, all families benefit. We can secure our border without tearing kids away from their parents, just like we can keep our streets safe while also building trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

Donald Trump and his well-heeled donors don't see the world that way. For them, one group's gain is another group's loss. For them, freedom means that the powerful can do what they please, whether its fire workers trying to organize a union or poison our rivers or avoid paying taxes like everybody else has to do.

We have a broader idea of freedom. We believe in the freedom to provide for your family if you're willing to work; the freedom to breathe clean air and drink clean water and send your kids to school without worrying if they'll come home. We believe that true freedom gives each of us the right to make decisions about our own life — how we worship, what our family looks like, how many kids we have, who we marry. And we believe that freedom requires us to recognize that other people have the freedom to make choices that are different than ours.

That's the America Kamala Harris and Tim Walz believe in. An America where "We the People" includes everyone. Because that's the only way this American experiment works. And despite what our politics might suggest, I think most Americans understand that. Democracy isn't just a bunch of abstract principles and dusty laws. It's the values we live by, and the way we treat each other — including those who don't look like us or pray like us or see the world exactly like we do.

That sense of mutual respect has to be part of our message. Our politics has become so polarized these days that all of us, across the political spectrum, seem quick to assume the worst in others unless they agree with us on every single issue. We start thinking that the only way to win is to scold and shame and out yell the other side. And after a while, regular folks just tune out, or don't bother to vote at all.

That approach may work for the politicians who just want attention and thrive on division. But it won't work for us. To make progress on the things we care about, the things that really affect people's lives, we need to remember that we've all got our blind spots and contradictions and prejudices; and that if we want to win over those who aren't yet ready to support our candidate, we need to listen to their concerns — and maybe learn something in the process.

After all, if a parent or grandparent occasionally says something that makes us cringe, we don't automatically assume they're bad people. We recognize the world is moving fast, and that they need time and maybe a little encouragement to catch up. Our fellow citizens deserve the same grace we hope they'll extend to us.

That's how we can build a true Democratic majority. And by the way, that doesn't just matter to people in this country. The rest of the world is watching to see if we can actually pull it off.

No nation, no society, has ever tried to build a democracy as big and diverse as ours before — one where our allegiances and our community are defined not by race or blood, but by a common creed. That's why when we uphold our values, the world's a little brighter. When we don't, the world's a little dimmer, dictators and autocrats feel emboldened, and over time we become less safe. We shouldn't be the world's policeman, and we can't eradicate every cruelty and injustice in the world. But America can be, must be, a force for good — discouraging conflict, fighting disease, promoting human rights, protecting the planet from climate change, defending freedom. That's what Kamala Harris believes — and so do most Americans.

I know these ideas can feel pretty naïve right now. We live in a time of such confusion and rancor, with a culture that puts a premium on things that don't last — money, fame, status, likes. We chase the approval of strangers on our phones; we build all manner of walls and fences around ourselves and then wonder why we feel so alone. We don't trust each other as much because we don't take the time know each other — and in that space between us, politicians and algorithms teach us to caricature each other and troll each other and fear each other.

But here's the good news. All across America, in big cities and small towns, away from all the noise, the ties that bind us together are still there. We still coach Little League and look out for our elderly neighbors. We still feed the hungry, in churches and mosques and synagogues, and share the same pride when our Olympic athletes compete for the gold. Because the vast majority of us don't want to live in a country that's bitter and divided. We want something better. We want to be better. And the joy and excitement we're seeing around this campaign tells us we're not alone.

I've spent a lot of time thinking about this these past few months because, as Michelle mentioned, this summer we lost her mom.

I don't know that anybody has ever loved their mother — in — law any more than I loved mine. Mostly it's because she was funny and wise and maybe the least pretentious person I knew. That and she always defended me with Michelle when I messed up.

But I also think one of the reasons we became so close was she reminded me of my grandmother, the woman who raised me as a child. On the surface, the two of them didn't have a lot in common — one was a Black woman from Chicago, the other a white woman born in a tiny town called Peru, Kansas. And yet, they shared a basic outlook on life — strong, smart, resourceful women, full of common sense, who, regardless of the barriers they encountered, went about their business without fuss or complaint and provided an unshakable foundation of love for their children and grandchildren.

In that sense, they both represented an entire generation of working people who, through war and depression, discrimination and limited opportunity, helped build this country. Many of them toiled every day at jobs that were often too small for them and willingly went without just to give their children something better. But they knew what was true and what mattered. Things like honesty and integrity, kindness and hard work. They weren't impressed with braggarts or bullies, and they didn't spend a lot of time obsessing about what they didn't have. Instead, they found pleasure in simple things — a card game with friends, a good meal and laughter around the kitchen table, helping others and seeing their children do things and go places that they would have never imagined for themselves.

Whether you're a Democrat or a Republican or somewhere in between, we've all had people like that in our lives. People like Kamala's parents, who crossed oceans because they believed in the promise of America. People like Tim's parents, who taught him about the importance of service. Good, hardworking people who weren't famous or powerful, but who managed, in countless ways, to leave this country a little better than they found it.

As much as any policy or program, I believe that's what we yearn for — a return to an America where we work together and look out for each other. A restoration of what Lincoln called, on the eve of civil war, "our bonds of affection." An America that taps what he called "the better angels of our nature." That's what this election is about. And I believe that's why, if we each do our part over the next 77 days — if we knock on doors and make phone calls and talk to our friends and listen to our neighbors — if we work like we've never worked before — we will elect Kamala Harris as the next President of the United States, and Tim Walz as the next Vice President of the United States. We'll elect leaders up and down the ballot who will fight for the hopeful, forward — looking America we believe in. And together, we too will build a country that is more secure and more just, more equal and more free.

So let's get to work. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.