

DNC 2024 | Day 2 Speeches | Barack Obama

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Speakers:

Barack Obama - 100.0%

Notes:

- Thank you. thank you. Thank you, everybody. Thankyou. Thank You.
- Kamala Harris has spent her entire life trying to give people the same chances America gave her. Now, it is up to all of us to fight for the America we believe in. This will still be a tight race in a closely divided country.
- Kamala Harris has put out a bold new plan to do just that on health care. Our job is to convince people that democracy can actually deliver. At their core, Kamala and Tim understand that when everybody gets a fair shot, we are all better off.
- Kamala Harris and Tim Rawls represent an entire generation of working people who helped build this country. A return to an America where we work together and look out for each other is what this election is about.

Thank you. Thank you.

00:00:04

Thank you, everybody. Thank you.

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Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. All right, all right, all right. That's enough.

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Thank you. Thank you, Chicago.

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It's good to be home.

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It is good to be home. And I don't know about you, but I'm feeling fired up.

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I am feeling ready to go.

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Even if. Even if I am the only person stupid enough to speak after Michelle Obama, I am feeling hopeful, because this convention has always been pretty good to kids with funny names who believe in a country where anything is possible.

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Because we have a chance to elect someone who has spent her entire 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, uh, the United States of America, Kamala Harris.

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It's been 16 years since I had the honor of accepting this party's nomination for president. And I know that's hard to believe because I have not aged a bit, but it's true.

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And looking back, I can say without question that, uh, 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.

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Uh, other than some common irish blood, Joe and I come from different backgrounds, but we became brothers. And as we worked together for eight, sometimes pretty tough years, what I came to admire most about Joe wasn't just his smarts, his experience. It was his empathy and his decency and his hard earned resilience, his unshakable belief that everyone in this country deserves a fair shot.

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And over the last four years, those are, uh, 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 would become the world's strongest recovery. 15 million jobs, higher wages, lower health care costs. At a time, uh, 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.

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Putting his own ambition aside for the sake of the country, history will remember Joe Biden as an outstanding president who defended democracy at a moment of great danger. And I am proud to call him my president, but I am even prouder to call him my friend.

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Now the torch has been passed. Now, uh, it is 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, for all the rallies and the memes, this will still be a tight race in a closely divided country. A country where, uh, too many Americans are still struggling, where a lot of Americans don't believe government can help.

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And as we gather here tonight, the people who will decide this election are asking a very simple who will fight for me? Who's thinking about my future, about my children's future, about our future together?

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One thing is for certain. Donald Trump is not losing sleep over that question.

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Here's a 78 year old billionaire who has not stopped whining about his problems since he rode down his golden escalator nine years ago. It has been a constant stream of gripes and grievances that's actually been getting worse now that he's afraid of losing to Kamala.

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There's the, uh, childish nicknames, the crazy conspiracy theories, this weird obsession with crowd sizes.

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It just goes on and on and on.

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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.

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Now, uh, from a neighbor, that's exhausting. From a president, it's just dangerous.

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The truth is, Donald Trump sees power as nothing more than it 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 written in part by one of the most conservative Republicans in Congress that would have helped secure our southern border, because he thought trying, uh, to actually solve the problem would hurt his campaign. He doesn't do not vote, vote.

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He doesn't seem to care if more women lose their reproductive freedom. It won't affect his life.

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

It is one of the oldest tricks in politics from a guy who has, let's face it, gotten pretty stale.

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We do not need four more years of, ah, bluster and bumbling and chaos. We have seen that movie before, and we all know that the sequel is usually worse.

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America is ready for a new chapter. America is ready for a better story. We are ready for a President Kamala Harris.

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And Kamala Harris is ready for the job.

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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 was not born into privilege. She had to work for what she's got. And she actually cares about, uh, what other people are going through. She's not the neighbor running the leaf blower.

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She's the neighbor rushing over to help when you need a hand.

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As a prosecutor, Kamala stood up for children who had been victims of sexual abuse. As an attorney general of, uh, 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. Didn't matter that she had knocked on doors for my campaign in Iowa.

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She was going to fight to get as much relief as possible for the families who deserved it.

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

In other words, Kamala Harris won't be focused on her problems. She'll be focused on yours.

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As president. She won't, uh, just cater to her own supporters and punish those who refuse to kiss the ring or 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 Governor Tim Waltz.

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Let me tell you something, uh. Let me tell you something. I love this guy.

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Tim is the kind of person who should be in politics. Born in a small town, served his country, taught kids, coached football, took care of his neighbors. Uh, he knows who he is and he knows what's important. You can tell those flannel shirts he wears don't come from some political consultant. They come from his closet.

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And they have been through some stuff.

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They have been through some stuff that's right.

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Together, Kamala and Tim have kept faith with America's central story. A story that says we are all created equal.

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All of us endowed with certain inalienable rights. That everyone deserves a chance. That even when we don't agree with each other, we can find a way to live with each other.

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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.

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Now, it won't be easy. The other side knows it's easier to play on people's fears and cynicism. It always has been. They will tell you that government is inherently corrupt, that sacrifice and generosity are for suckers. And since, um, the game is rigged, it's okay to take what you want and just look after your own.

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That's the easy path. We have a different task. Our job is to convince people that democracy can actually deliver.

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And in doing that, we can't just point to what we've already accomplished. We can't just rely on the ideas of the past. We need to chart a new way forward to meet the challenges of today. And 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 made it harder to build homes for working people in this country.

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That is a priority. 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 that we've made through the Affordable Care act, providing millions of people access to, uh, affordable coverage, protecting millions more from unscrupulous insurance practices. I noticed, by the way, that since it's become popular, they don't call it Obamacare no more.

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But Kamala knows we can't stop there, which is why she'll keep working to limit out of pocket costs. Kamala knows that, uh, if we want to help people get ahead, we need to put a college degree within reach of more Americans.

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But she also knows college shouldn't be the only ticket to the middle class.

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We need to follow the lead of governors like Tim Walls, who said, 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 single day to do the essential, often thankless work, to care for our sick, to clean our streets, to deliver our, uh, packages. We need a president who will stand up for their right to bargain for better wages and working conditions. And

Kamala will be that president.

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Yes, she can.

00:18:07

Yes, she can.

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Harris Waltz 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 are all better off. They understand that when every child gets a good education, the whole economy gets stronger. When women are paid the same as men for doing the same job, all families benefit.

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They understand that we can secure our borders without tearing kids away from their parents. M just like we can keep our streets safe while also building trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve and eliminating bias that will make it better for everybody.

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Donald Trump and his well heeled donors, they don't see the world that way. For them, one group's gains is necessarily another group's loss. For them, freedom means that the powerful can do pretty much what they please, whether it's fireworkers trying to organize a union or put poison in our rivers or avoid paying taxes like everybody else has to do.

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Well, we have a broader idea of freedom. We believe in the freedom to provide for your family, if you're willing to work hard, the freedom to breathe clean air and drink clean water and send your kids to school without worrying if they'll come home.

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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 okay.

That's the America Kamala Harris and Tim Walls 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 in some books somewhere. It's the values we live by. It's the way we treat each other, including those who don't look like us or pray like us, uh, or see the world exactly like we do.

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That sense of mutual respect has to be part of our message. Our politics have become so polarized these days that all of us across the political spectrum seem so quick to assume the worst in others unless they agree with us on every single issue.

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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 they don't bother to vote.

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Now, 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.

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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 candidates, we need to listen to their concerns and maybe learn something in the process.

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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 that the world is moving fast, 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.

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That's how we can build a true democratic majority, one that can get things done. And by the way, that does not just matter to the people in this country. The rest of the world is watching to see if we can actually pull this off.

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No nation, no society, has ever tried to build a democracy as big and as diverse as ours

before, one that includes people that, over decades, have come from every corner of the globe, one where our allegiances and our community are defined not by race or blood, but by a common creed. And that's why, when we uphold our values, uh, the world's a little brighter. When we don't, the world's a little dimmer. And dictators and autocrats feel emboldened. And over time, we become less safe.

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We shouldn't be the world's policemen, and we can't eradicate every cruelty and injustice in the world. But America can be and must be a force for good. Discouraging conflict, fighting disease, promoting human rights, protecting the planet from climate change, defending freedom, brokering peace. That's what Kamala Harris believes, and so do most Americans.

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Uh, I I know these ideas can feel pretty naive right now.

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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.

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We chase the approval of strangers on our phones. We build all manner of walls and fences around ourselves. And then we wonder why we feel so alone.

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We don't trust each other as much because, uh, we don't take the time to 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.

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But here's the good news, Chicago. 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 temples. We share the same pride when our olympic athletes compete for the gold because the vast majority of us do not want to live in.

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In a country that's bitter and divided.

We want something better. We want to be better. And the joy and the excitement that we're seeing around this campaign tells us we're not alone.

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You know, I've spent a lot of time thinking about this these past few months, because, as Michelle mentioned, uh, this summer, we lost her mom, Miss Marion Robinson. And I don't know that anybody has ever loved their mother in law any more than I love mine. Mostly, uh, it's because she was funny and wise and the least of pretentious person. I knew that. And she always defended me with Michelle.

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When I messed up, I'd hide behind her.

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But I also think one of the reasons Mary and I became so close. Washington. She reminded me of my grandmother, um, the woman who helped, ah, raise me as a child.

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And on the surface, the two of them did not have a lot in common. One was a black woman from right here, south side of Chicago, right down the way, went to Englewood High School. The other was a little, old white lady born in a tiny town called Peru, Kansas.

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I know there aren't that many people from Peru, and yet they shared a basic outlook on life. They were strong, smart, resourceful women, full of common sense, who, regardless of the barriers they encountered, and women growing up in the forties and fifties and sixties, they encountered barriers. They still went about their business without fuss or complaint and provided an unshakable foundation of love for their children and their grandchildren.

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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.

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A lot of them toiled every day at jobs that were often too small for them and didn't pay a lot.

They willingly went without just to keep a roof over their families heads, just to give their children something better. M but they knew what was true. They knew what mattered. Things like honesty and integrity, kindness and hard work.

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They weren't. They weren't impressed with braggarts or bullies. They didn't think putting other people down lifted you up or made you strong. They didn't spend a lot of time obsessing about what they didn't have. Instead, uh, they appreciated what they did.

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They found pleasure in simple things. A card game with friends, a good meal and laughter around the kitchen table, helping others, and most of all, seeing their children do things and go places that they would have never imagined for themselves.

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Whether you are a Democrat, Democrat or a Republican or somewhere in between, we have 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.

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Good, hardworking people who weren't famous or powerful, but who managed in countless ways to lead this country just a little bit better than they found it.

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As much, uh, 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 are bonds of affection. An America that taps what he called the better angels of our nature.

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That is 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, if we make phone calls, if we talk to our friends, if we listen to our neighbors, if we work like we've never worked before, if we hold firm to our convictions, we will elect Kamala Harris as the next president of the United States and Tim Rawls as the next vice president of the United States. We will elect leaders up and down the ballot who will fight for the hopeful, forward looking America we all 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.

