

Kamala Harris speech in Douglas, Arizona | September 27, 2024

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Speakers:

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Notes:

Summary by ChatGPT

- Acknowledgment of Courage: Commends Teresa for her advocacy regarding the fentanyl crisis and emphasizes the importance of sharing personal stories to drive change.
- Border Security and Immigration Reform: Advocates for a strong border security strategy while also supporting humane immigration reform, including a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.
- Fentanyl Crisis: Discusses the impact of fentanyl on American communities and outlines a comprehensive plan to combat its trafficking, focusing on resources for law enforcement.

- Critique of Trump Administration: Highlights failures of the Trump presidency regarding immigration and border security, including calls to end harmful policies like family separation.

- Call for Bipartisanship: Urges collaboration across political lines to create effective solutions for immigration and border issues, stressing the need for unity and action.

Kamala Harris

00:00:02

Good afternoon. Hi, everyone. Hi. Good afternoon. Can we please applaud Teresa and her extraordinary courage?

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Please, can we applaud extraordinary courage? Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

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Please have a seat, everyone. Thank you. It's good to be back in Arizona. It is good to be back in Arizona. Thank you all.

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Thank you so very much.

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Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

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Thank you. Thank you. I appreciate. Thank you so very much. I just wanted for a moment speak about Theresa.

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Um, we had some time together backstage and, you know, I think that, um, in moments of crisis, m such as the fentanyl crisis, um, there are people who, through their suffering and their pain, rise with courage in such a selfless way to be a voice for others with the anticipation and the hope and the hard work of hoping that their story will be the reason other people don't have that story. You sharing your story about Jacob and your advocacy on why we have to stop this scourge is so incredibly important. And again, I applaud

Teresa and I know we all do.

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And our need to stop this issue is one of the reasons that we are all here together today. I also want to thank the extraordinary elected officials who are here. Senator Mark Kelly came with me and his extraordinary wife, Gabby Giffords traveled with me from Washington, DC to be here. And senator, uh, Kelly has been talking with me for quite some time about the importance of this visit. And so I thank you in front of all of our friends for your work.

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Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Attorney General Chris Mays, who just tore up the floor. She is, you know, one of.

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I'm going to talk a bit about it in a minute, but, um, some of the work that, that I have done in my career as attorney general and watching her do the work that she has done as attorney general really does emphasize the importance of having the right leader at the right time in the right place, and that's who she is. Mayor Hewish, I thank you for the warm welcome. We've spent some time together. You've shared with me the needs of your community, and I thank you for your leadership as well. And to all the elected and community leaders here today, thank you for taking the time out of your busy lives to be here this afternoon.

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Um, before I begin, I do want to say a few words about Hurricane Helene. Um, I spoke this morning with our FEMA administrator, Chris well, and President Biden and I, of course, will continue to monitor the situation closely. We have mobilized more than 1500 federal personnel to support those communities that have been impacted. We have food, water, and generators that are ready for deployment, and we are working to restore power for millions of people who currently are experiencing outages. And I just want to stress, and for the press that is here, um, to those who are watching, the storm continues to be dangerous and deadly, and lives have been lost, and the risk of flooding still remains high.

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So I continue to urge everyone to please continue to follow guidance from your local officials until we get past this moment. So, thank you all. And, um, now I'll speak about, in particular, the people, um, who are here today and why we are gathered here together today. Uh, so, Arizona, I think you all know, and this is why you are here. There are consequential issues at stake in this election, and one is the security of our border.

The United States is a sovereign nation, and I believe we have a duty to set rules at our border and to enforce them. And I take that responsibility very seriously. We are also a nation of immigrants. The United States has been enriched by generations of people who have come from every corner of the world to contribute to our country and to become part of the American story. And so we must reform our immigration system to ensure that it works in an orderly way, that it is humane, and that it makes our country stronger.

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So I have just come from visiting the border and the port of entry in Douglas. I spoke with dedicated agents from border patrol and customs officers who every day see the overflow of commercial traffic through the port. These men and women who work there and at other places along our southern border help keep our nation secure, and they need more resources to do their jobs, which is why we have and are in the process of investing half a billion dollars to modernize. And I expand the port of entry here in Douglas.

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And why last December, I helped raise the rate of overtime pay for border agents. And also why I strongly supported the comprehensive border security bill written last year. Written last year, as you know, by a bipartisan group of senators, including one of the most conservative members of the United States Congress. That bill would have hired 1500 more border agents and officers. It would have paid for 100 inspection machines to detect fentanyl that is killing tens of thousands of Americans every year.

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It would have allowed us to more quickly and effectively remove those who come here illegally, and it would have increased the number of immigration judges and asylum officers. It was the strongest border security bill we have seen in decades. It was endorsed by the Border Patrol union, and it should be in effect today, producing results in real time right now for our country.

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But Donald Trump tanked it. He picked up the phone and called some friends in Congress and said, stop the bill. Because, you see, he prefers to run on a problem instead of fixing a problem.

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And the American people deserve a president who cares more about border security than playing political games and their personal political future.

And so, even though Donald Trump tried to sabotage the border security bill, it is my pledge to you that as president of the United States, I will bring it back up and proudly sign it into law.

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And let me say the issue of border security is not a new issue to me. I was attorney general of a border state for two terms. I saw the violence and chaos that transnational criminal organizations cause and the heartbreak and loss from the spread of their illicit drugs. I walked through tunnels that traffickers used to smuggle contraband into the United States. I've seen tunnels with walls as smooth as the walls of your living room, complete with lighting and air conditioning, making very clear that it is about an enterprise that is making a whole lot of money in the trafficking of guns, drugs and human beings.

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And my knowledge on how they work comes from the fact that I have prosecuted transnational criminal organizations who traffic in guns, drugs and human beings. My team and I broke up a heroin trafficking ring in the Bay Area with ties to Mexican cartels. We took down a gang working with the Sinaloa cartel to traffic methamphetamine into the United States. We seized millions of dollars worth of cocaine from the Guadalajara cartel and broke up a drug trafficking operation, including pill mills and so called recovery centers, that were pushing opioids with deadly results. As attorney general of California, it was ten years ago that I brought a bipartisan group of American attorneys general and led that group to travel to Mexico City to meet with Mexican attorneys general to address this issue, and in particular, to increase intelligence sharing on gang activity, all of which allowed us to prosecute more humanity.

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Traffickers and I started, as attorney general, the first comprehensive report in the state of California analyzing transnational criminal organizations and the threats they pose to public safety and to the economy. So stopping transnational criminal organizations and strengthening our border is not new to me, and it is a longstanding priority of mine. I have done that work, and I will continue to treat it as a priority when I am elected president of the United States.

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And it is my pledge to you, understanding how solutions get formed, that I will reach across the aisle and I will embrace common sense approaches and new technologies to get the job done. Because I know transnational gangs coming across the border, trafficking in guns, drugs and human beings could care less who somebody voted for in the last election, they could care less. They've got one goal in mind, and it is therefore

critically important that anybody who calls themselves a leader would work with other leaders for common sense solutions, understanding the pain and the suffering that Americans are experiencing. If we don't work together to fix these problems, and look, transnational gangs, one of the things I know about them, they are always innovating. So to disrupt them, we must do the same.

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And that means, again, working together in real time, grounded on finding common sense approaches, not just about some rhetoric at a rally, but actually doing the work of fixing a problem.

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And as president, I won't only bring back the border security bill that Donald Trump tanked. I will do more to secure our border. To reduce illegal border crossings, I will take further action to keep the border closed between ports of entry. Those who cross our borders unlawfully will be apprehended and removed and barred from re entering for five years. We will pursue more severe criminal charges against repeat violators.

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And if someone does not make an asylum request at a legal point of entry and instead crosses our border unlawfully, they will be barred from receiving asylum. While we understand that many people are desperate to migrate to the United States, our system must be orderly and secure. And that is my goal. And that is my goal.

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Securing our border also means addressing the flow of fentanyl into our communities. Fentanyl is a scourge on our country. The nature of it as a drug is such that it is highly addictive and it is highly lethal. So much so that using it one time only can be fatal. I have met far too many families, parents, loved ones who have lost a family member, a child, to fentanyl.

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And their grief is heartbreaking. And the devastation caused by fentanyl is being felt from rural communities to big cities. It's impacting communities across our country regardless of where they are geographically, politically, or any other demographic you choose to talk about. It's a scourge in our country, and we have to take it seriously. And as president, I will make it a top priority to disrupt the flow of fentanyl coming into the United States.

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And I know everyone here understands that most of the fentanyl in America comes from two cartels based in Mexico. Most often, they are smuggling it through vehicles at legal ports of entry like the one I visited today. The fact is, border officers don't have enough resources and are only able to search a fraction of the vehicles that pass through their checkpoints. This is unacceptable. They need the resources to do their jobs.

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And as we could have done with that border security bill, I will surge support to law enforcement agencies on the front lines, more personnel, more training, and more technology, including 100 new inspection systems that can detect fentanyl hidden in vehicles. And we will make sure that our ports of entry, including airports and seaports, have additional state of the art technology to detect fentanyl and the chemical tools used to make it. I will also double the resources for the Department of Justice to extradite and prosecute transnational criminal organizations and the cartels. Uh, yes.

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I will ensure that we target the entire global fentanyl supply chain, because we must materially and sustainably disrupt the flow of illicit fentanyl coming into our country. My approach takes into account also that the precursor chemicals used to make fentanyl are, by and large, made in China and then shipped to Mexican cartels and trafficked right here into the United States. Our administration demanded that China crack down on the companies that make those chemicals, and it has started to happen. But they need to do more. And as president, I will hold them to their commitment to significantly reduce the flow of precursor chemicals coming from China.

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And all of this to say, we must tackle this issue from every angle, because our highest charge must be to protect the lives of our people. It must be to understand the pain and to have the courage to know that solutions are at hand. If we focus on fixing a problem instead of running on a problem and on this issue writ large, we must ensure that our country remains strong and competitive, which includes fixing our broken immigration system. And let me be. I reject the false choice.

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I reject the false choice that suggests we must either choose between securing our border or creating a system of immigration that is safe, orderly, and humane. We can and we must do both.

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We must do both.

And we need clear legal pathways for people seeking to come into our country. And we must make our current system work better. For example, it can take years for asylum claims to be decided. Well, this is a problem we can solve, including by hiring more asylum officers and expanding processing centers in people's home countries. And as president, I will work with Congress to create, at long last, a pathway to citizenship for hardworking immigrants who have been here for years, for years, and deserve to have a system that works.

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I also have in mind our dreamers. I have met.

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I have met with so many of our dreamers throughout my career. They who have grown up in the United States, were educated here, pay taxes here, serve in our military, and contribute to our communities every day. They are American in every way. But still, they do not have an earned pathway to citizenship. And this problem has gone unsolved at this point now for decades.

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The same goes for farm workers who ensure that we have food on our tables and who sustain our, uh, agricultural industry. And they, too, have been in legal limbo for years because politicians have refused to come together to fix our broken immigration system. Well, as president, I will put politics aside to fix our immigration system and find a solutions, solutions to problems which have persisted for far too long. For far too long, we have all known this is not working as it can and as it should. And so, as I said at the beginning, these issues are highly consequential for our nation.

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And the contrast in this election is clear. It is a choice between common sense solutions and the same old political games. In the four years that Donald Trump was president, he did nothing to fix our broken immigration system. He did not solve the shortage of immigration judges. He did not solve the shortage of border agents.

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He did not create lawful pathways into our nation. He did nothing to address an outdated asylum system, and did not work with other governments in our hemisphere to deal with what clearly is also a regional challenge.

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As overdoses went up during his presidency, he fought to slash funding for the fight against fentanyl. And what did he do instead? Well, let's talk about that. He separated families. He ripped toddlers out of their mother's arms, put children in cages, and tried to end protections for dreamers.

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He made the challenges at the border worse. And he is still. And he is still fanning the flames of, uh, fear and division. And let me be clear. That is not the work of a leader.

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That is not the work of a leader. And that is, in fact, I think we all believe, an abdication of leadership.

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And so, on behalf of all across our nation who want to see these problems solved, I say we cannot accept Donald Trump's failure to lead. We should not permit scapegoating, uh, instead of solutions, and let's see what's happening. Let's not permit scapegoating instead of solutions or rhetoric instead of results.

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As your president, I will protect our nation's sovereignty, secure our border, and work to fix the. Our broken system of immigration. And I will partner with Democrats, Republicans, and independents to do it.

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Arizona, it is time for us to turn the page on the ugly battles that have characterized our politics. And it is time to move forward together to achieve real solutions that make our country stronger. And I know we can get this done. I know we have the will. I know we have the courage.

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I know the solutions are at hand, and I know we are ready. And so with all of that, I say thank you. May God bless you, and may God bless the United States of America. Thank you.