

DNC 2024 | Day 3 Speeches | Oprah Winfrey

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Speakers:

Oprah Winfrey - 100.0%

Notes:

- We're now so fired up, we can't wait to leave here and do something. And what we're going to do is elect Kamala Harris as the next president of the United States.

- I am so honored to speak on tonight's theme about what matters most to me, to you and all of us Americans. Freedom. When we stand together, it is impossible to conquer us. America is an ongoing project. It requires commitment. And every now and then, it requires standing up to life's bullies.

- Tessie Prevost Williams was born in New Orleans not long after the Supreme Court ruled that segregated public schools were unconstitutional. Nine years later, she became part of the second class to integrate the public schools in Berkeley, California. This election isn't about us and theme. It's about you and me and what we want our futures to look like.

Oprah Winfrey

00:00:00

Good evening, everybody.

Who says you can't go home again after watching the Obamas last night? That was some, um, epic fire, wasn't it? Some epic fire.

Oprah Winfrey

00:00:27

We're now so fired up, we can't wait to leave here and do something.

Oprah Winfrey

00:00:39

And what we're going to do is elect Kamala Harris as the next president of the United States.

Oprah Winfrey

00:00:54

I am so honored to have been asked to speak on tonight's theme about what matters most to me, to you and all of us Americans. Freedom.

Oprah Winfrey

00:01:11

There are people who want you to see our country as a nation of us against them. People who want to scare you, who want to rule you, people who'd have you believe that books are dangerous and assault rifles are safe, that there's a right way to worship and a wrong way to love. People who seek first to divide and then to conquer. But here's the thing. When we stand together, it is impossible to conquer us.

Oprah Winfrey

00:01:58

In the words of an extraordinary American, the late Congressman John Lewis, he said, no matter what ship our ancestors arrived on, we are all in the same boat now. Congressman Lewis knew very well how far this country has come because he was one of the brilliant Americans who helped to get us where we are. But he also knew that the work is not done. The work will never be done, because freedom isn't free. America is an ongoing project.

Oprah Winfrey

00:02:38

It requires commitment. It requires being open to the hard work and the heart work of democracy. And every now and then, it requires standing up to life's bullies.

Oprah Winfrey

00:02:58

I know this. I've lived in Mississippi, in Tennessee, in Wisconsin, Maryland, Indiana, Florida, Hawaii, Colorado, California, and California, and sweet home Chicago, Illinois.

Oprah Winfrey

00:03:33

I have actually traveled this country from the redwood forest. Love those redwoods to the

Gulf Stream waters. I've seen racism and sexism and income inequality and division. I've not only seen it at times, I've been on the receiving end of it. But more often than not, what I've witnessed and experienced are human beings, both conservative and liberal, who may not agree with each other, but who'd still help you in a heartbeat if you were in trouble.

Oprah Winfrey

00:04:09

These are the people who make me proud to say that I am an American.

Oprah Winfrey

00:04:21

They are the best of America. And despite what some would have you think, we are not so different from our neighbors. When a house is on fire, we don't ask about the homeowner's race or religion. We don't wonder who their partner is or how they voted. No.

Oprah Winfrey

00:04:42

We just try to do the best we can to save them. And if the place happens to belong, to a childless cat lady.

Oprah Winfrey

00:05:04

We try to get that cat out, too, because we are a country of people who work hard for the money. We wish our brothers and sisters well, and we pray for peace. We know all the old tricks and tropes that are designed to distract us from what actually matters. But we are beyond ridiculous tweets and lies and foolery. These are complicated times, people, and they require adult conversation.

Oprah Winfrey

00:05:44

And, uh, I welcome those conversations, because civilized debate is vital to democracy, and it is the best of America.

Oprah Winfrey

00:05:58

Now, over the last couple of nights, we have all seen brave people walk onto the stage and share their most private pain. Amanda and Josh Kaitlin Hadley, they told us their stories of rape and incest and near death experiences from having the state deny them the abortion that their doctor explained was medically necessary. And they've told us these things for one reason, and that is to keep what happened to them from happening to anybody else. Because if you do not have autonomy over this, over this, if you cannot control when and how you choose to bring your children into this world and how they are raised and supported, there is no american dream.

The women and men who are battling to keep us from going back to a time of desperation and shame and stone cold fear, they are the new freedom fighters. And make no mistake, they are the best of America.

Oprah Winfrey

00:07:19

I want to talk now about somebody who's not with us tonight. Tessie Prevost Williams was born in New Orleans not long after the Supreme Court ruled that segregated public schools were unconstitutional. That was in 1954, same year I was born. But I didn't have to head to first grade at the all white Madonna 19 school with a us marshal by my side like Tessie did. And when I got to school, the building wasn't empty like it was for Tessie.

Oprah Winfrey

00:07:54

You see, rather than allowing Madonna to be integrated, parents pulled their kids out of the school, leaving only Tessie and two other little black girls, Gail Etienne and Leona Tate, to sit in a classroom with the windows papered over to block snipers from attacking their six year old bodies. Tessie passed away six weeks ago, and I tell this story to honor her tonight because she, like Ruby Bridges and her friends, Leona and Gail, the New Orleans four, they were called, they broke barriers, and they paid dearly for it. But it was the grace and guts and courage of women like Tessie Prevost Williams that paved the way for another young girl who, nine years later, became part of the second class to integrate the public schools in Berkeley, California.

Oprah Winfrey

00:09:15

And it seems to me that at school and at home, somebody did a beautiful job of showing this young girl how to challenge the people at the top and empower the people at the bottom. They showed her I how to look at the world and see not just what is, but what can be. They instilled in her a passion for justice and freedom and the glorious fighting spirit necessary to pursue that passion. And soon, and very soon, soon and very soon, we're going to be teaching our daughters and sons about how this child of an indian mother and a jamaican father, two idealistic, energetic immigrants.

Oprah Winfrey

00:10:11

Immigrants.

Oprah Winfrey

00:10:14

How this child grew up to become the 47th president of the United States.

Oprah Winfrey

00:10:28

That is the best of America. Uh, you know, you know, let me tell you this. This election isn't

about us and theme. It's about you and me and what we want our futures to look like. There are choices to be made when we cast our ballot.

Oprah Winfrey

00:11:06

Now, there's a certain candidate that says if we just go to the polls this one time, that we'll never have to do it again. Well, you know what? You're looking at a registered independent who's proud to vote again and again and again because I'm an American and that's what Americans do.

Oprah Winfrey

00:11:31

Voting is the best of America.

Oprah Winfrey

00:11:36

And I have always, since I was eligible to vote, I've always voted my values, and that is what is needed in this election now more than ever. So I'm calling on all you independents and all you undecideds. Um, uh, you know this is true. You know, I'm telling you the truth, that values and character matter most of all in leadership and in life. And more than anything, you know, this is true.

Oprah Winfrey

00:12:22

That decency and respect are on the ballot in 2024.

Oprah Winfrey

00:12:35

And just plain common sense, common sense tells you that Kamala Harris and Tim waltz can give us decency and respect. They're the ones that give it to us. So we are Americans. We are Americans. Let us choose loyalty to the constitution over loyalty to any individual because, uh, because, uh, that's the best of America.

Oprah Winfrey

00:13:11

And let us choose optimism over cynicism because that's the best of America. And let us choose inclusion over retribution. Let us choose common sense over nonsense because that's the best of America.

Oprah Winfrey

00:13:38

And let us choose the sweet promise of tomorrow over the bitter return to yesterday. We won't go back. We won't be set back, pushed back, bullied back, kicked back. We're not going back.

Not going back. We're not going back. So let us choose. Let us choose truth. Let us choose honor.

Oprah Winfrey

00:14:19

And let us choose joy, because that's the best of America. But more than anything else, let us choose freedom. Why? Because that's the best of America. We're all Americans.

Oprah Winfrey

00:14:43

And together, let's all choose Kamala Harris.

Oprah Winfrey

00:14:52

Thank you, Chicago. Thank you, America.