

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 22, 2024

REMARKS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY: Vice President Harris' Acceptance Speech

Good evening.

To my husband, Doug, thank you for being an incredible partner to me and father to Cole and Ella.

And happy anniversary. I love you so very much.

To Joe Biden—Mr. President. When I think about the path we have traveled together, I am filled with gratitude.

Your record is extraordinary, as history will show.

And your character is inspiring. Doug and I love you and Jill. And I am forever thankful to you both.

And to Coach Tim Walz, you are going to be an incredible Vice President.

And to the delegates and everyone who has put your faith in our campaign—your support is humbling.

America, the path that led me here in recent weeks, was no doubt ... unexpected. But I'm no stranger to unlikely journeys.

My mother Shyamala Harris had one of her own. I miss her every day. Especially now. And I know she's looking down tonight. And smiling.

My mother was 19 when she crossed the world alone, traveling from India to California, with an unshakeable dream to be the scientist who would cure breast cancer.

When she finished school, she was supposed to return home to a traditional arranged marriage.

But, as fate would have it, she met my father, Donald Harris, a student from Jamaica. They fell in love and got married, and that act of self-determination made my sister Maya and me.

Growing up, we moved a lot. I will always remember that big Mayflower truck, packed with all our belongings, ready to go: to Illinois, to Wisconsin, and wherever our parents' jobs took us.

My early memories of my parents together are joyful ones. A home filled with laughter and music. Aretha. Coltrane. And Miles.

At the park, my mother would tell us to stay close. But my father would just smile, and say, "Run, Kamala. Run." "Don't be afraid." "Don't let anything stop you."

From my earliest years, he taught me to be fearless.

But the harmony between my parents did not last.

When I was in elementary school, they split up. And it was mostly my mother who raised us.

Before she could finally afford to buy a home, she rented a small apartment in the East Bay.

In the Bay, you either live in the hills or the flatlands. We lived in the flats.

A beautiful working-class neighborhood of Firefighters, nurses, and construction workers, all who tended their lawns with pride.

My mother worked long hours.

And, like many working parents, she leaned on a trusted circle to help raise us.

Mrs. Shelton, who ran the daycare below us and became a second mother. Uncle Sherman. Aunt Mary. Uncle Freddy. And Auntie Chris.

None of them, family by blood. And all of them, Family. By love.

Family who taught us how to make gumbo. How to play chess. And sometimes even let us win.

Family who loved us. Believed in us. And told us we could be anything. Do anything.

They instilled in us the values they personified. Community. Faith. And the importance of treating others as you would want to be treated. With kindness. Respect. And compassion.

My mother was a brilliant, five-foot-tall, brown woman with an accent. And, as the eldest child, I saw how the world would sometimes treat her.

But she never lost her cool. She was tough. Courageous. A trailblazer in the fight for women's health.

And she taught Maya and me a lesson that Michelle mentioned the other night— She taught us to never complain about injustice. But...do something about it.

She also taught us—Never do anything half-assed. That's a direct quote.

I grew up immersed in the ideals of the Civil Rights Movement.

My parents had met at a civil rights gathering. And they made sure we learned about civil rights leaders, including lawyers like Thurgood Marshall and Constance Baker Motley.

Those who battled in the courtroom to make real the Promise of America. So, at a young age, I decided I wanted to do that work. I wanted to be a lawyer.

And when it came time to choose – the type of law I would pursue – I reflected on a pivotal moment in my life.

When I was in high school, I started to notice something about my best friend Wanda.

She was sad at school. And there were times she didn't want to go home.

So, one day, I asked if everything was alright. And she confided in me that she was being sexually abused by her step-father. And I immediately told her she had to come stay with us.

And she did. That is one of the reasons I became a prosecutor.

To protect people like Wanda. Because I believe everyone has a right: To safety. To dignity. And to justice.

As a prosecutor, when I had a case, I charged it not in the name of the victim. But in the name of. "The People."

For a simple reason. In our system of justice, a harm against any one of us is a harm against all of us.

I would often explain this, to console survivors of crime. To remind them: No one should be made to fight alone. We are all in this together.

Every day in the courtroom, I stood proudly before a judge and said five words:
“Kamala Harris, for the People.”

And to be clear: My entire career, I have only had one client. The People.
And so, on behalf of The People, On behalf of every American. Regardless of
party. Race. Gender. Or the language your grandmother speaks.
On behalf of my mother and everyone who has ever set out on their own unlikely
journey.

On behalf of Americans like the people I grew up with. People who work hard.
Chase their dreams. And look out for one another.

On behalf of everyone whose story could only be written in the greatest nation on
Earth.

I accept your nomination for President of the United States of America.

With this election, our nation has a precious, fleeting opportunity to move past
the bitterness, cynicism, and divisive battles of the past.

A chance to chart a New Way Forward.
Not as members of any one party or faction. But as Americans.
I know there are people of various political views watching tonight.

And I want you to know: I promise to be a President for all Americans.

You can always trust me to put country above party and self. To hold sacred
America’s fundamental principles. From the rule of law. To free and fair
elections. To the peaceful transfer of power.
I will be a President who unites us around our highest aspirations. A President
who leads. And listens. Who is realistic. Practical. And has common sense. And
always fights for the American people.
From the courthouse to the White House, that has been my life’s work.

As a young courtroom prosecutor in Oakland, I stood up for women and children
against predators who abused them.

As Attorney General of California, I took on the Big Banks. Delivered \$20 billion
for middle-class families who faced foreclosure. And helped pass a Homeowner
Bill of Rights—one of the first of its kind.

I stood up: For veterans and students being scammed by Big for-Profit colleges.
For workers who were being cheated out of the wages they were due. For seniors
facing elder abuse.

I fought against cartels who traffic in guns, drugs, and human beings. Who threaten the security of our border and the safety of our communities. Those fights were not easy. And neither were the elections that put me in those offices. We were underestimated at every turn. But we never gave up. Because the future is always worth fighting for.

And that's the fight we are in right now. A fight for America's future.

Fellow Americans, this election is not only the most important of our lives. It is one of the most important in the life of our nation.

In many ways, Donald Trump is an unserious man.

But the consequences of putting Donald Trump back in the White House are extremely serious.

Consider not only the chaos and calamity when he was in office, but also the gravity of what has happened since he lost the last election. Donald Trump tried to throw away your votes.

When he failed, he sent an armed mob to the United States Capitol, where they assaulted law enforcement officers.

When politicians in his own party begged him to call off the mob and send help, he did the opposite. He fanned the flames.

And now, for an entirely different set of crimes, he was found guilty of fraud by a jury of everyday Americans. And separately, found liable for committing sexual abuse.

And consider what he intends to do if we give him power again.

Consider his explicit intent to set free the violent extremists who assaulted those law enforcement officers at the Capitol.

His explicit intent to jail journalists. Political opponents. Anyone he sees as the enemy.

His explicit intent to deploy our active-duty military against our own citizens.

Consider the power he will have— especially after the United States Supreme Court just ruled he would be immune from criminal prosecution.

Just imagine Donald Trump with no guardrails. How he would use the immense powers of the presidency of the United States. Not to improve your life. Not to strengthen our national security.

But to serve the only client he has ever had: Himself.
And we know what a second Trump term would look like. It's all laid out in "Project 2025." Written by his closest advisors. And its sum total is to pull, our country back into the past.

But America, we are not going back.

We are not going back to when Donald Trump tried to cut Social Security and Medicare. We are not going back to when he tried to get rid of the Affordable Care Act.

When insurance companies could deny people with pre-existing conditions.

We are not going to let him eliminate the Department of Education that funds our public schools. We are not going to let him end programs like Head Start that provide preschool and child care.

America, we are not going back. We are charting. A. New. Way. Forward.
Forward—to a future with a strong and growing middle class.

Because we know a strong middle class has always been critical to America's success. And building that middle class will be a defining goal of my presidency. This is personal for me. The middle class is where I come from. My mother kept a strict budget. We lived within our means. Yet, we wanted for little.

And she expected us to make the most of the opportunities that were available to us. And to be grateful for them. Because opportunity is not available to everyone.

That's why we will create what I call an opportunity economy. An opportunity economy where everyone has a chance to compete and a chance to succeed.

Whether you live in a rural area, small town, or big city.

As President, I will bring together: Labor and workers, Small business owners and entrepreneurs, And American companies.

To create jobs. Grow our economy. And lower the cost of everyday needs. Like health care. Housing. And groceries.

We will: Provide access to capital for small business owners, entrepreneurs, and founders. We will end America's housing shortage. And protect Social Security and Medicare.

Compare that to Donald Trump. He doesn't actually fight for the middle class. Instead, he fights for himself and his billionaire friends. He will give them another round of tax breaks, that will add 5 trillion dollars to the national debt.

All while he intends to enact what, in effect, is a national sales tax—call it, a Trump tax— that would raise prices on middle-class families by almost 4 thousand dollars a year.

Well, instead of a Trump tax hike, we will pass a middle class tax cut that will benefit more than 100 million Americans.

Friends, I believe America cannot truly be prosperous unless Americans are fully able to make their own decisions about their own lives. Especially on matters of heart and home.

But tonight, too many women in America are not able to make those decisions. Let's be clear about how we got here.

Donald Trump hand-picked members of the United States Supreme Court to take away reproductive freedom. And now he brags about it. His words: Quote –“I did it, and I'm proud to have done it.” End quote.

Over the past two years, I have traveled across our country. And women have told me their stories. Husbands and fathers have shared theirs. Stories of: Women miscarrying in a parking lot...Getting sepsis...Losing the ability to ever have children again...

All—because doctors are afraid of going to jail for caring for their patients. Couples just trying to grow their family...cut off in the middle of IVF treatments. Children who have survived sexual assault, potentially forced to carry the pregnancy to term.

This is what is happening in our country. Because of Donald Trump. And understand, ---he is not done.

As a part of his agenda, he and his allies would: Limit access to birth control, Ban medication abortion, And enact a nation-wide abortion ban with or without Congress.

And. Get this, he plans to create a National. Anti-Abortion. Coordinator. And force states to report on women's miscarriages and abortions. Simply put. They are. Out. Of. Their. Minds.

And one must ask: Why exactly is it that they don't trust women?

Well. We. trust. women.

And when Congress passes a bill to restore reproductive freedom, as President of the United States, I will proudly sign it into. law.

In this election, many other fundamental freedoms are at stake. The freedom to live safe from gun violence—in our schools, communities, and places of worship.

The freedom to love who you love openly and with pride. The freedom to breathe clean air, drink clean water, and live free from the pollution that fuels the climate crisis. And the freedom that unlocks all the others. The freedom to vote.

With this election, We finally have the opportunity to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Act and the Freedom to Vote Act. And let me be clear. After decades in law enforcement, I know the importance of safety and security, especially at our border.

Last year, Joe and I brought together Democrats and conservative Republicans to write the strongest border bill in decades.

The Border Patrol endorsed it.

But Donald Trump believes a border deal would hurt his campaign. So he ordered his allies in Congress to kill the deal.

Well, I refuse to play politics with our security. Here is my pledge to you: As President, I will bring back the bipartisan border security bill that he killed. And I will sign it into law.

I know we can live up to our proud heritage as a nation of immigrants— And reform our broken immigration system. We can create an earned pathway to citizenship— And secure our border. America, we must also be steadfast in advancing our security and our values abroad.

As Vice President, I have: confronted threats to our security, negotiated with foreign leaders, strengthened our alliances, and engaged with our brave troops overseas.

As Commander-in-Chief, I will ensure America always has the strongest, most lethal fighting force in the world. I will fulfill our sacred obligation to care for our troops and their families.

And I will always honor, and never disparage, their service and their sacrifice.

I will make sure that: We lead the world into the future on space and Artificial Intelligence. That America—not China—wins The competition for the 21st century. And that we strengthen—not abdicate—our global leadership.

Trump, on the other hand, threatened to abandon NATO. He encouraged Putin to invade our allies. Said Russia could—quote—“do whatever the hell they want.”

Five days before Russia attacked Ukraine, I met with President Zelensky to warn him about Russia’s plan to invade. I helped mobilize a global response—

over 50 countries—to defend against Putin’s aggression. And as President, I will stand strong with Ukraine and our NATO allies.

With respect to the war in Gaza. President Biden and I are working around the clock. Because now is the time to get a hostage deal and ceasefire done.

Let me be clear: I will always stand up for Israel’s right to defend itself and I will always ensure Israel has the ability to defend itself. Because the people of Israel must never again face the horror that the terrorist organization Hamas caused on October 7th. Including unspeakable sexual violence and the massacre of young people at a music festival.

At the same time, what has happened in Gaza over the past 10 months is devastating. So many innocent lives lost. Desperate, hungry people fleeing for safety, over and over again. The scale of suffering is heartbreaking.

President Biden and I are working to end this war such that Israel is secure, the hostages are released, the suffering in Gaza ends, and the Palestinian people can realize their right to dignity. Security. Freedom. And self-determination.

And know this: I will never hesitate to take whatever action is necessary to defend our forces and our interests against Iran and Iran-backed terrorists. And I will not cozy up to tyrants and dictators like Kim-Jong-Un, who are rooting for Trump. Because they know he is easy to manipulate with flattery and favors. They know Trump won’t hold autocrats accountable—because he wants to be an autocrat.

As President, I will never waver in defense of America’s security and ideals. Because, in the enduring struggle between democracy and tyranny, I know where I stand—and where the United States of America belongs.

Fellow Americans, I love our country with all my heart.

Everywhere I go—in everyone I meet—I see a nation ready to move forward.

Ready for the next step, in the incredible journey that is America.

I see an America where we hold fast to the fearless belief that built our nation.

That inspired the world. That here, in this country, anything is possible. Nothing is out of reach.

An America, where we care for one another, look out for one another, and recognize that we have so much more in common than what separates us. That none of us has to fail for all of us to succeed. And that, in unity, there is strength.

Our opponents in this race are out there, every day, denigrating America. Talking about how terrible everything is. Well, my mother had another lesson she used to teach. Never let anyone tell you who you are. You show them who you are.

America, let us show each other—and the world—who we are. And what we stand for. Freedom. Opportunity. Compassion. Dignity. Fairness. And endless possibilities.

We are the heirs to the greatest democracy in the history of the world. And on behalf of our children and grandchildren, and all those who sacrificed so dearly for our freedom and liberty, we must be worthy of this moment. It is now our turn to do what generations before us have done. Guided by optimism and faith, to fight for this country we love.

To fight for the ideals we cherish.

And to uphold the awesome responsibility that comes with the greatest privilege on Earth. The privilege and pride of being an American.

So, let's get out there and let's fight for it.

Let's get out there and let's vote for it.

And together, let us write the next great chapter in the most extraordinary story ever told.

Thank you. God bless you. May God bless the United States of America.

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