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Exclusive to OpEd News:

OpEdNews Op Eds 9/3/2024 at 9:46 PM EDT H2'ed 9/3/24

[Remarkable Speeches At Chicago DNC Extraordinary, Marker for Future Conventions by Both Parties](#)

By: [Robert Weiner](#) , [Patricia Berg](#), and [Tomas Alves](#)

The Chicago Democratic National Convention's extraordinary quality of the speeches was a model for future conventions by both parties -- the best we've seen from any convention since 1972. The messages were effective and memorable. Given the Convention's timing in the election cycle, after the RNC and President Biden's withdrawal from the race, attendees were waiting for a reason to be energized. They got several. Amid the wave of momentum and excitement with the nomination of Vice President Kamala Harris, the Convention became a huge motivator for election efforts. The precedent offers a lesson to future conventions by this remarkable effort put forth by the speech writers and speakers.

The speakers' lineup dwarfed the RNC's equivalent. Everyone from Former President Barack Obama, Former First Lady Michelle Obama, Oprah Winfrey, Former President Bill Clinton and even Republicans Former Representative Adam Kinzinger and Georgia Lieutenant Governor Geoff Duncan gave their unique angles.

In a convention packed to the brim with speakers that caused multiple keynote addresses to be pushed out of primetime, we've developed a cache of some of the best one-liners and sound bytes that may endure.

President Biden:

- "America, I gave my best to you."
- "You cannot say you love your country only when you win."
- "I've made a lot of mistakes in my career but I gave my best to you."
- "Donald Trump is going to find out the power of women in 2024."

Vice President and Presidential Nominee Kamala Harris:

- "I've always only had one client: the people."
- "He's (Donald Trump) only ever served one client: himself."
- "My mother said to me, 'Quit complaining. Tell me what you're going to do about it.'"
- "We are not going back."

- "I will stand strong with NATO."
- "Now is the time to get a hostage deal and a ceasefire deal done."
- "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 realize their right to dignity, security, freedom and self-determination."
- "At the same time, what's happened in Gaza over the past ten months is devastating. The scale of suffering is heartbreaking."

Illinois Governor JB Pritzker:

- "Take it from a real billionaire, the only thing he's rich in is stupidity."
- "Americans want to get promoted at work without being derided for the sin of being successful while not white."

Former President Bill Clinton:

- "I'm 78 and I'm still younger than Donald Trump."
- "You're gonna have a hard time believing this, but so help me, I triple-checked it. Since the end of the Cold War in 1989, America has created about 51 million new jobs. What's the score: Democrats 50, Republicans 1"

Former First Lady Michelle Obama:

- "Don't sit around and complain about things, DO something!"
- "Hope is making a comeback"
- "His (Trump's) limited narrow view of the world, made him feel threatened by the existence of two hardworking, highly educated, successful people who happen to be black."
- "Who's gonna tell him that the current job he's currently seeking might just be one of those 'black jobs'?"

Former President Barack Obama:

- "Don't boo -- Vote!"
- "It has been a constant stream of gripes and grievances."
- "Donald Trump's weird obsession with crowd sizes."

Maryland Governor Wes Moore:

- "Loving your country does not mean lying about its history."

Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear:

- "I am seeing more momentum and people than ever in my life. The energy feels unprecedented all over the country."

Georgia Republican Lieutenant Governor Jeff Duncan:

- "I am a Republican but tonight I am an American. Trump must never set foot in the Oval Office again."
- "A vote for Harris is not Democratic, it is for the country."

USA Men's Olympic Basketball Team Coach Steve Kerr:

- "I believe that leaders must display dignity. I believe that leaders must tell the truth. I believe that leaders should be able to laugh at themselves. I believe that leaders must care for and love the people they are leading. I believe that leaders must possess knowledge and expertise but with the full awareness that none of us has all the answers."
- "Shouldn't you want those same qualities in your President?"

Former Representative Adam Kinzinger (R-IL):

- "The Democrats are as patriotic as us"
- "They love this country just as much as we do"
- "Donald Trump is a weak man pretending to be strong"
- "He's a perpetrator who can't stop playing the victim"
- "Donald Trump has suffocated the soul of the Republican Party"
- "We must put Country first"

Representative Bennie Thompson (D- MS), Chair of the US House Select Committee on the January 6 Attack:

- "The members of that mob had another goal -- they wanted to stop the peaceful transfer of power for the first time in American Democracy."

Stevie Wonder:

- "We must choose courage over complacency"

Keenan Thompson (Saturday Night Live):

- "On Page 459, Project 2025 resurrects a law from the 1800s called the Comstock Act to ban abortion nationwide and throw healthcare providers in jail"
- "On Page 78, Project 2025 calls for President Trump to purge the civil service of everyone who isn't a MAGA loyalist"
- "Also, Page 319 calls for the complete elimination of the Department of Education"

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY):

- "Trump is like an old boyfriend you broke up with and won't go away. We broke up with you for a reason! There is no reason to ever get back together."

Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro:

- "It's not freedom to tell our children what books they're allowed to read. And it's not freedom to tell women what they can do with their bodies. It sure as hell isn't freedom to say, 'You can go vote, but he gets to pick the winner.'"
- "We are the party of real freedom."

Amanda Gorman (Biden Inauguration young poet):

- "But tomorrow is not written by the odds of our hardship but by the audacity of our hope, by the vitality of our vote."

Oprah Winfrey:

- "Let us choose common sense over nonsense."
- "America is an ongoing project. It requires commitment, being open to the hard work and the heart work of democracy. Every now and then it requires standing up to life's bullies."

Representative Jamie Raskin (D-MD):

- "It was after 80 judges rejected the ever ridiculous claim raised by this sore loser who does not know how to take no for an answer from American voters, American courts or American women."
- "By the way, JD Vance, do you understand why there was a sudden job opening for Running Mate on the GOP ticket? They tried to kill your predecessor!"
- "America, let's make it a landslide so big that Donald Trump and his kangaroo court Supreme Court justices cannot even try to steal it."

Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg:

- "That is what awaits us. When America decides to end Trump's politics of darkness once and for all."
- "Donald Trump rants about law and order as if he wasn't a convicted criminal running against a prosecutor." "As if we were going to forget that crime was higher under his watch."
- "When I deployed to Afghanistan, I didn't have kids then" but let me tell you our commitment to the future of this country was pretty damn physical."

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton:

- "Donald Trump fell asleep at his own trial and when he woke up, he made his own kind of history: the first person to run for President with 34 felony convictions."
- "...On the other side of that glass ceiling is Kamala Harris, raising her hand and taking the oath of office as our 47th President of the United States."

Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT):

- "When the political will is there, the government can deliver for the American people. We need a government for all of us, not just the top 1%."

Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY)

- "You cannot love this country if you only fight for the wealthy and big business. To love this country is to fight for its people, all people, working people, every day Americans like bartenders and factory workers, and fast food cashiers who punch a clock and are on their feet all day in some of the toughest jobs out there."

Finally, the Democrats' Vice Presidential nominee, Minnesota Governor Governor and former High School Football Coach Tim Walz summarized it best when he used a football analogy to describe the Democrats' current position in the race.

- "It's the fourth quarter and we're down a field goal, but we're on offense and we've got the ball. We're driving down the field."

Of the 15,000 media personnel in attendance, the Weiner Public News team who also were National Press Club interns were privileged to join with Bob Weiner and Dr. Patricia Berg as convention media logistics volunteer staff in the morning and early afternoon, and credentialed media in the evening prime time sessions. The team of summer interns included Jonathan Person, Ashleigh Fields, Olivia Ardito, Kailynn Bannon, Catherine Walker and Tomas Alves who over the summer co-bylined op-ed articles in major national news outlets including the Chicago Tribune, the Charlotte Observer, the Dallas Morning News, the Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder, The Washington Informer, the Amsterdam News, Afro, The Pulse Institute, The Boulder Daily Camera, The Keene Sentinel, The Marin Journal, OpEd News with several top rankings, and many more.



Weiner NPC intern oped writers Summer 2024 group at NPC/National Journalism Institute Spelling Bee 'Press Vs Politicians (Press won 31-30), on July 27, 2024 in National Press Club ballroom, immediately before Presidential Debate watch. Photo by Alan Kotok

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The team joined efforts at the McCormick Convention Center by leading convention media logistics with staff Peter Velz, Connor Kelly, Aidan Nguyen, Jasmine Cazares, and others. In aiding media in their

coverage of the DNC and attending the United Center to cover each night's lineup of speakers, this young group was incredibly busy and productive.

The team was also able to take photos with lawmakers including Representatives Jamie Raskin (D-MD), Jared Moskowitz (D-FL), Sen. Bernie Sanders and high profile media figures like Dana Bash of CNN and Jon Favreau of Crooked Media. Amidst the buzz and bustle of the United Center, the concourse hallways on each floor were filled with reporters flagging down lawmakers for interviews, camera standups, constant liveshots and otherwise a flood of delegates, media and others rushing through the halls.

The historic moment of Vice President Kamala Harris' formal acceptance of the Democratic Party's nomination for President was captured by the entire team, a moment that sent shockwaves through the crowd.

While the DNC seemed to hinge on that moment, the week leading up to Harris' headlining speech were filled by the Democratic Party's topline communicators and speakers. Each morning, the young journalists covered the official press briefing headlined by Director of Communications for the Harris Campaign, Michael Tyler, Executive Director for the 2024 DNCC, Alex Hornbrook and Chair of the DNC Committee, Minyon Moore. The guest speakers' that were invited alongside them to convey the Democrats' message included Kentucky Governor, Andy Beshear, Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), Representative Robert Garcia (D-CA), Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) and Former Representative Cedric Richmond, co-Chairs of the Harris for President campaign and others. On the late night sessions ending post prime time, a few testy questions even led Chuck Levin of California, former Mondale advance staff, to suggest separately from Los Angeles that the convention start at 4pm instead of 5:30pm to which would have solved the constant late endings.

To couple with the morning press briefings, the days at McCormick Place were filled with the Caucus Council meetings where high profile Democrats from across the country gathered to rally behind the Harris campaign and to forward the Democrats' message of joy. The Black, Hispanic, Labor, Women's, LGBTQ, Rural, Youth caucus meetings and others were attended by Minnesota Governor and Vice President nominee, Tim Walz, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Representative Ayanna Pressley (D-MA), Democratic Party Chair, Jamie Harrison and many more. Each of the caucuses was energized by the speakers.

Above all, the team recognized the privilege to cover the historic 2024 DNC in Chicago in person and relished the opportunity to witness the message of Democratic nominees for President and Vice President, Kamala Harris and Tim Walz: "We are not going back." and "We'll sleep when we're dead."

Robert Weiner was a spokesman in the Clinton and George W. Bush White Houses. He was communications director of the House Government Operations Committee, and senior aide to Congressman John Conyers and Charles Rangel, Reps. Claude Pepper and Ed Koch, Sen. Ted Kennedy, and Four-Star General/ Drug Czar Barry McCaffrey.

Dr. Patricia Berg is the Senior Editor for Robert Weiner Associates News and Solutions for Change. She is a graduate of the University of Chicago with a Ph.D from the Illinois Institute of Technology.

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