

## Full Transcript of Michelle Obama's Speech at the Democratic Convention

OK. We got a big night ahead. Thank you all so much. Thank you so much. OK. There you go.

Hello, Chicago! Yeah. All right. Something wonderfully magical is in the air, isn't it? You know, we're feeling it here in this arena, but it's spreading across this country we love. A familiar feeling that has been buried too deep for far too long. You know what I'm talking about. It's the contagious power of hope.

The anticipation, the energy, the exhilaration of once again being on the cusp of a brighter day. The chance to vanquish the demons of fear, division and hate that have consumed us and continue pursuing the unfinished promise of this great nation, the dream that our parents and grandparents fought and died and sacrificed for.

America, hope is making a comeback.

Yeah. But, to be honest, I am realizing that, until recently, I have mourned the dimming of that hope. And maybe you've experienced the same feelings, that deep pit in my stomach, a palpable sense of dread about the future.

And for me, that mourning has also been mixed with my own personal grief. The last time I was here in my hometown was to memorialize my mother — the woman who showed me the meaning of hard work and humility and decency, the woman who set my moral compass high and showed me the power of my own voice.

Folks, I still feel her loss so profoundly. I wasn't even sure if I'd be steady enough to stand before you tonight, but my heart compelled me to be here because of the sense of duty that I feel to honor her memory. And to remind us all not to squander the sacrifices our elders made to give us a better future.

You see, my mom, in her steady, quiet way, lived out that striving sense of hope every single day of her life. She believed that all children, all — all people have value. That anyone can succeed if given the opportunity. She and my father did not aspire to be wealthy. In fact, they were suspicious of folks who took more than they needed. They understood that it wasn't enough for their kids to thrive if everyone else around us was drowning.

So, my mother volunteered at the local school. She — she always looked out for the other kids on the block. She was glad to do the thankless, unglamorous work that for generations has strengthened the fabric of this nation. The belief that if you do unto others, if you love thy neighbor, if you work and scrape and sacrifice, it will pay off. If not for you, then maybe for your children or your grandchildren.

You see, those values have been passed on through family farms and factory towns, through tree-lined streets and crowded tenements, through prayer groups and National Guard units and social-studies classrooms. Those were the values my mother poured into me until her very last breath.

Kamala Harris and I built our lives on the same foundational values. Even though our mothers grew up an ocean apart, they shared the same belief in the promise of this country. That's why her mother moved here from India at 19. It's why she taught Kamala about justice, about the obligation to lift others up, about our responsibility to give more than we take. She'd often tell her daughter, "don't sit around and complain about things. Do something."

So, with that voice in her head, Kamala went out and she worked hard in school, graduating from an H.B.C.U., earning her law degree at a state school. And then she went on to work for the people, fighting to hold lawbreakers accountable, strengthening the rule of law, fighting to give folks better wages, cheaper prescription drugs, a good education, decent health care, child care, elder care. From a middle-class household, Kamala worked her way up to become vice president of the United States of America.

My girl, Kamala Harris, is more than ready for this moment. She is one of the most qualified people ever to seek the office of the presidency. And she is one of the most dignified. A tribute to her mother, to my mother and to your mother, too. The embodiment of the stories we tell ourselves about this country. Her story is your story. It's my story. It's the story of the vast majority of Americans trying to build a better life.

Look, Kamala knows, like we do, that regardless of where you come from, what you look like, who you love, how you worship, or what's in your bank account, we all deserve the opportunity to build a decent life. All of our contributions deserve to be accepted and valued. Because no one has a monopoly on what it means to be an American. No one.

Kamala has shown her allegiance to this nation. Not by spewing anger and bitterness, but by living a life of service, and always pushing the doors of opportunity open to others.

She understands that most of us will never be afforded the grace of failing forward. We will never benefit from the affirmative action of generational wealth.

If we bankrupt a business — if we bankrupt a business or choke in a crisis, we don't get a second, third or fourth chance. If things don't go our way, we don't have the luxury of whining or cheating others to get further ahead. No.

We don't get to change the rules so we always win. If we see a mountain in front of us, we don't expect there to be an escalator waiting to take us to the top. No. We put our heads down. We get to work. In America, we do something.

And throughout her entire life, that's what we have seen from Kamala Harris. The steel of her spine, the steadiness of her upbringing, the honesty of her example and yes, the joy of her laughter and her light.

It couldn't be more obvious. Of the two major candidates in this race, only Kamala Harris truly understands the unseen labor and unwavering commitment that has always made America great.

Now, unfortunately, we know what comes next. We know folks are going to do everything they can to distort her truth. My husband and I sadly know a little something about this.

For years, Donald Trump did everything in his power to try to make people fear us.

See, his limited, narrow view of the world made him feel threatened by the existence of two hard-working, highly educated, successful people who happen to be Black. I want to know — I want to know — who's going to tell him, who's going to tell him, that the job he is currently seeking might just be one of those Black jobs?

It's his same old con. His same old con. Doubling down on ugly, misogynistic, racist lies as a substitute for real ideas and solutions that will actually make people's lives better.

Look, because cutting our health care, taking away our freedom to control our bodies, the freedom to become a mother through I.V.F., like I did — those things are not going to improve the health outcomes of our wives, mothers and daughters. Shutting down the Department of Education, banning our books — none of that will prepare our kids for the future. Demonizing our children for being who they are and loving who they love, look, that doesn't make anybody's life better. Instead, instead, it only makes us small. And let me tell you this: Going small is never the answer. Going small is the opposite of what we teach our kids. Going small is petty. It's unhealthy. And quite frankly, it's unpresidential.

So, why would any of us accept this from anyone seeking our highest office. Why would we normalize that type of backward leadership? Doing so only demeans and cheapens our politics. It only serves to further discourage good, big-hearted people from wanting to get involved at all. America, our parents taught us better than that. And we deserve so much better than that. That's why we must do everything in our power to elect two of those good, big-hearted people. There is no other choice than Kamala Harris and Tim Walz. No other choice.

But as we embrace this renewed sense of hope, let us not forget the despair we have felt. Let us not forget what we are up against. Yes, Kamala and Tim are doing great now. We're loving it. They are packing arenas across the country. Folks are energized. We are feeling good. But remember, there are still so many people who are desperate for a different outcome, who are ready to question and criticize every move Kamala makes,

who are eager to spread those lies, who don't want to vote for a woman, who will continue to prioritize building their wealth over ensuring that everyone has enough.

So no matter how good we feel tonight, or tomorrow, or the next day, this is going to be an uphill battle. So folks, we cannot be our own worst enemies. No. See, because the minute something goes wrong, the minute a lie takes hold, folks, we cannot start wringing our hands. We cannot get a goldilocks complex about whether everything is just right. And we cannot indulge our anxieties about whether this country will elect someone like Kamala, instead of doing everything we can to get someone like Kamala elected.

Kamala and Tim, they have lived amazing lives. And I am confident that they will lead with compassion, inclusion and grace. But they are still only human. They are not perfect. And like all of us, they will make mistakes. But luckily, y'all, this is not just on them. This is up to us, all of us, to be the solution that we seek. It's up to all of us to be the antidote to the darkness and division. Look, I don't care how you identify politically, whether you are Democrat, Republican, independent or none of the above. This is our time to stand up for what we know in our hearts is right.

To stand up not just for our basic freedoms, but for decency and humanity. For basic respect, dignity and empathy. For the values at the very foundation of this democracy. It's up to us to remember what Kamala's mother told her: Don't just sit around and complain, do something.

So if they lie about her, and they will, we've got to do something. If we see a bad poll, and we will, we've got to put down that phone, and do something. If we start feeling tired, if we start feeling that dread creeping back in, we've got to pick ourselves up, throw water on our face, and what? [Crowd chants back: "Do Something!"]

We only have two and a half months, y'all, to get this done. Only 11 weeks to make sure every single person we know is registered and has a voting plan. So we cannot afford for anyone, anyone, anyone in America to sit on their hands and wait to be called. Don't complain if no one from the campaign has specifically reached out to you to ask you for your support. There is simply no time for that kind of foolishness. You know what you need to do. So consider this to be your official ask. Michelle Obama is asking you — no, I'm telling y'all — to do something.

This election is going to be close. In some states, just a handful — listen to me — a handful of votes in every precinct could decide the winner. So we need to vote in numbers that erase any doubt. We need to overwhelm any effort to suppress us. Our fate is in our hands. In 77 days, we have the power to turn our country away from the fear, division and smallness of the past. We have the power to marry our hope with our action. We have the power to pay forward the love, sweat and sacrifice of our mothers and fathers and all those who came before us. We did it before y'all, and we sure can do

it again. Let us work like our lives depend on it, and let us keep moving our country forward and go higher, yes, always higher than we've ever gone before, as we elect the next president and vice president of the United States, Kamala Harris and Tim Walz. Thank you all, God bless.

Now, before I go, I have one more job tonight. Yeah. One more job.

You all, thank you for all the love. But it is now my honor to introduce somebody who knows a whole lot about hope. Someone who has spent his life strengthening our democracy. And let me tell you, as someone who lives with him: He wakes up every day, every day, and thinks about what's best for this country.

Please welcome America's 44th president and the love of my life, Barack Obama.

[New York Times](#)