



## Major Takeaways from the 2024 Democratic National Convention in Chicago

Between Monday and Thursday of this week, the 2024 Democratic National Convention (DNC) was held in Chicago, as current U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris and Minnesota Governor Tim Walz officially accepted the Democratic Party's nominations for presidential candidate and vice-presidential candidate, respectively. Delegates to the DNC cast votes to cement the Harris-Walz ticket in a ceremonial roll call to mark the virtual one that had been conducted earlier this month. The convention featured an array of speeches from high-profile figures including Former Presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton, incumbent President Joe Biden, Former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Former First Lady Michelle Obama, and U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), among others. Some of the main subjects addressed included a highlighting of accomplishments under President Biden, Democrats' platform for pushing the U.S. forward, and the areas of focus of a potential Harris administration and how it contrasts with a possible second Trump term.

A theme that was evident at the DNC, particularly during the opening night on Monday, was what several observers deemed a sentiment of "passing the torch" from the "old guard" of the Democratic Party. This was discernable with President Biden's appearance on the first evening of the convention, which came across as a celebration of his political legacy and a shift to embrace a new generation of political party leaders. Many of the speakers paid tribute to Biden, thanking him for his career in public service and accomplishments, while at the same time striving to build excitement for what is to come. Others referenced what they perceived as a yearning from much of the American population for a new generation of political leadership. They also stressed the need to look towards shaping the future of the country, including the importance of safeguarding freedoms and implementing forward-looking policies, and their belief that Vice President Harris was the right candidate to carry on that task.

Another point of emphasis throughout the course of the convention was a desire to offer up an optimistic outlook on the shared values and principles that bind Americans together, and a clear effort to try to distinguish that from what was viewed as the Trump campaign's negative and divisive rhetoric. During Former President Obama's remarks on Tuesday evening, for example, he criticized Trump for seeking to turn Americans against one another and commented that "Most of all, Donald Trump wants us to think that this country is hopelessly divided between us and them." Obama also implored Democrats to show empathy to those with differing points of view, adding that "We need to remember that we've all got our blind spots and contradictions and prejudices; and that if we want to win over those who aren't yet ready to support our candidate, we need to listen to their concerns – and maybe learn something in the process." Former President Clinton struck a similar tone when he called on citizens not to demean or disrespect those that they disagree with. On the theme of drawing distinctions with Trump, in her nomination acceptance speech to close out the convention on Thursday evening, Vice President Harris aimed to contrast the two candidates' visions for the future by pitching what was labeled as a "New Way Forward" agenda. With it and the upcoming election, she expressed that the nation has a "precious, fleeting opportunity to move past the bitterness, cynicism, and divisive battles of the past."

The DNC also took place amid the presence of the 'uncommitted' movement, an initiative which won 30 delegates to the convention and has tried to use the electoral process to advocate for an end to the destructive Gaza war.

The delegation and its supporters held a sit-in outside of the DNC after their request for a Palestinian-American to speak on the main stage was denied. Some elected officials had spoken in support of the group's request, expressing that after the family of an Israeli-American hostage was given time to share their story, it would have been only right for a Palestinian-American speaker to also convey their anguish at the pain and devastation caused by the widely and increasingly criticized conflict. The delegates representing the 'uncommitted' movement had supported the idea of having the hostage's family speak, and had merely sought the same platform for sharing their hurt regarding the abhorrent civilian death toll and distressing humanitarian crisis in Gaza as a result of the war.