

**The Honorable Kamala Harris  
Nominee for Vice President of the United States  
Democratic National Convention  
Wednesday, August 19, 2020  
Remarks as Prepared for Delivery**

Greetings America.

It is truly an honor to be speaking with you.

That I am here tonight is a testament to the dedication of generations before me. Women and men who believed so fiercely in the promise of equality, liberty, and justice for all.

This week marks the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment. And we celebrate the women who fought for that right.

Yet so many of the Black women who helped secure that victory were still prohibited from voting, long after its ratification.

But they were undeterred.

Without fanfare or recognition, they organized, testified, rallied, marched, and fought—not just for their vote, but for a seat at the table. These women and the generations that followed worked to make democracy and opportunity real in the lives of all of us who followed.

They paved the way for the trailblazing leadership of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton.

And these women inspired us to pick up the torch, and fight on.

Women like Mary Church Terrell and Mary McCleod Bethune. Fannie Lou Hamer and Diane Nash. Constance Baker Motley and Shirley Chisholm.

We're not often taught their stories. But as Americans, we all stand on their shoulders.

There's another woman, whose name isn't known, whose story isn't shared. Another woman whose shoulders I stand on. And that's my mother—Shyamala Gopalan Harris.

She came here from India at age 19 to pursue her dream of curing cancer. At the University of California Berkeley, she met my father, Donald Harris—who had come from Jamaica to study economics.

They fell in love in that most American way—while marching together for justice in the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

In the streets of Oakland and Berkeley, I got a stroller's-eye view of people getting into what the great John Lewis called "good trouble."

When I was 5, my parents split and my mother raised us mostly on her own. Like so many mothers, she worked around the clock to make it work—packing lunches before we woke up— and paying bills after we went to bed. Helping us with homework at the kitchen table—and shuttling us to church for choir practice.

She made it look easy, though I know it never was.

My mother instilled in my sister, Maya, and me the values that would chart the course of our lives.

She raised us to be proud, strong Black women. And she raised us to know and be proud of our Indian heritage.

She taught us to put family first—the family you're born into and the family you choose.

Family, is my husband Doug, who I met on a blind date set up by my best friend. Family is our beautiful children, Cole and Ella, who as you just heard, call me Momala. Family is my sister. Family is my best friend, my nieces and my godchildren. Family is my uncles, my aunts—my chitthis. Family is Mrs. Shelton—my second mother who lived two doors down and helped raise me. Family is my beloved Alpha Kappa Alpha...our Divine 9...and my HBCU brothers and sisters. Family is the friends I turned to when my mother—the most important person in my life—passed away from cancer.

And even as she taught us to keep our family at the center of our world, she also pushed us to see a world beyond ourselves.

She taught us to be conscious and compassionate about the struggles of all people. To believe public service is a noble cause and the fight for justice is a shared responsibility.

That led me to become a lawyer, a District Attorney, Attorney General, and a United States Senator.

And at every step of the way, I've been guided by the words I spoke from the first time I stood in a courtroom: Kamala Harris, For the People.

I've fought for children, and survivors of sexual assault. I've fought against transnational gangs. I took on the biggest banks, and helped take down one of the biggest for-profit colleges.

I know a predator when I see one.

My mother taught me that service to others gives life purpose and meaning. And oh, how I wish she were here tonight but I know she's looking down on me from above. I keep thinking about that

25-year-old Indian woman—all of five feet tall—who gave birth to me at Kaiser Hospital in Oakland, California.

On that day, she probably could have never imagined that I would be standing before you now speaking these words: I accept your nomination for Vice President of the United States of America.

I do so, committed to the values she taught me. To the Word that teaches me to walk by faith, and not by sight. And to a vision passed on through generations of Americans—one that Joe Biden shares. A vision of our nation as a Beloved Community—where all are welcome, no matter what we look like, where we come from, or who we love.

A country where we may not agree on every detail, but we are united by the fundamental belief that every human being is of infinite worth, deserving of compassion, dignity and respect.

A country where we look out for one another, where we rise and fall as one, where we face our challenges, and celebrate our triumphs—together.

Today... that country feels distant.

Donald Trump's failure of leadership has cost lives and livelihoods.

If you're a parent struggling with your child's remote learning, or you're a teacher struggling on the other side of that screen, you know that what we're doing right now isn't working.

And we are a nation that's grieving. Grieving the loss of life, the loss of jobs, the loss of opportunities, the loss of normalcy. And yes, the loss of certainty.

And while this virus touches us all, let's be honest, it is not an equal opportunity offender. Black, Latino and Indigenous people are suffering and dying disproportionately.

This is not a coincidence. It is the effect of structural racism.

Of inequities in education and technology, health care and housing, job security and transportation.

The injustice in reproductive and maternal health care. In the excessive use of force by police. And in our broader criminal justice system.

This virus has no eyes, and yet it knows exactly how we see each other—and how we treat each other.

And let's be clear—there is no vaccine for racism. We've gotta do the work.

For George Floyd. For Breonna Taylor. For the lives of too many others to name. For our children. For all of us.

We've gotta do the work to fulfill that promise of equal justice under law. Because, none of us are free...until all of us are free...

We're at an inflection point.

The constant chaos leaves us adrift. The incompetence makes us feel afraid. The callousness makes us feel alone.

It's a lot.

And here's the thing: We can do better and deserve so much more.

We must elect a president who will bring something different, something better, and do the important work. A president who will bring all of us together—Black, White, Latino, Asian, Indigenous—to achieve the future we collectively want.

We must elect Joe Biden.

I knew Joe as Vice President. I knew Joe on the campaign trail. But I first got to know Joe as the father of my friend.

Joe's son, Beau, and I served as Attorneys General of our states, Delaware and California. During the Great Recession, we spoke on the phone nearly every day, working together to win back billions of dollars for homeowners from the big banks that foreclosed on people's homes.

And Beau and I would talk about his family.

How, as a single father, Joe would spend 4 hours every day riding the train back and forth from Wilmington to Washington. Beau and Hunter got to have breakfast every morning with their dad. They went to sleep every night with the sound of his voice reading bedtime stories. And while they endured an unspeakable loss, these two little boys Always knew that they were deeply, unconditionally loved.

And what also moved me about Joe is the work he did, as he went back and forth. This is the leader who wrote the Violence Against Women Act—and enacted the Assault Weapons Ban. Who, as Vice President, implemented The Recovery Act, which brought our country back from The Great Recession. He championed The Affordable Care Act, protecting millions of Americans with pre-existing conditions. Who spent decades promoting American values and interests around the world, standing up with our allies and standing up to our adversaries.

Right now, we have a president who turns our tragedies into political weapons.

Joe will be a president who turns our challenges into purpose.

Joe will bring us together to build an economy that doesn't leave anyone behind. Where a good-paying job is the floor, not the ceiling.

Joe will bring us together to end this pandemic and make sure that we are prepared for the next one.

Joe will bring us together to squarely face and dismantle racial injustice, furthering the work of generations.

Joe and I believe that we can build that Beloved Community, one that is strong and decent, just and kind. One in which we all can see ourselves.

That's the vision that our parents and grandparents fought for. The vision that made my own life possible. The vision that makes the American promise—for all its complexities and imperfections—a promise worth fighting for.

Make no mistake, the road ahead will not be not easy. We will stumble. We may fall short. But I pledge to you that we will act boldly and deal with our challenges honestly. We will speak truths. And we will act with the same faith in you that we ask you to place in us.

We believe that our country—all of us, will stand together for a better future. We already are.

We see it in the doctors, the nurses, the home health care workers and the frontline workers who are risking their lives to save people they've never met.

We see it in the teachers and truck drivers, the factory workers and farmers, the postal workers and the Poll workers, all putting their own safety on the line to help us get through this pandemic.

And we see it in so many of you who are working, not just to get us through our current crises, but to somewhere better.

There's something happening, all across the country.

It's not about Joe or me.

It's about you.

It's about us. People of all ages and colors and creeds who are, yes, taking to the streets, and also persuading our family members, rallying our friends, organizing our neighbors, and getting out the vote.

And we've shown that, when we vote, we expand access to health care, expand access to the ballot box, and ensure that more working families can make a decent living.

I'm inspired by a new generation of leadership. You are pushing us to realize the ideals of our nation, pushing us to live the values we share: decency and fairness, justice and love.

You are the patriots who remind us that to love our country is to fight for the ideals of our country.

In this election, we have a chance to change the course of history. We're all in this fight.

You, me, and Joe—together.

What an awesome responsibility. What an awesome privilege.

So, let's fight with conviction. Let's fight with hope. Let's fight with confidence in ourselves, and a commitment to each other. To the America we know is possible. The America, we love.

Years from now, this moment will have passed. And our children and our grandchildren will look in our eyes and ask us: Where were you when the stakes were so high?

They will ask us, what was it like?

And we will tell them. We will tell them, not just how we felt.

We will tell them what we did.

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