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The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Democratic National Convention
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Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

Good evening, Democrats!

Here's a sentence I never thought I would find myself saying: I'm Pete Buttigieg, and you might recognize me from Fox News.

I believe in going anywhere and everywhere in service of a good cause. And friends, we gather in a very good cause: electing Kamala Harris and Tim Walz the next president and vice president of the United States.

The choice couldn't be clearer. Donald Trump rants about law and order—as if we're going to forget that crime was higher on his watch. Talks about the forgotten man—wishing we'd forget that the only economic policy promise he actually kept was to cut taxes for the rich.

And don't even get me started on his new running mate. At least Mike Pence was polite. JD Vance is one of those guys who thinks if you don't live the life he has in mind for you, then you don't count. A guy who thinks that if you don't have kids you have “no physical commitment to the future of this country.”

You know, Senator, when I was deployed to Afghanistan, I didn't have kids. Some of the men and women who went outside the wire with me did not have kids. But let me tell you, our commitment to the future of this country was nothing if not physical.

Choosing a guy like JD Vance to be America's next vice president sends a message, all right: doubling down on negativity and grievance. A concept of campaigning best summed up in one word: darkness. That's what they are selling. But I just don't think America is in the market for more darkness right now.

America is ready for a better kind of politics. Yes, politics at its worst can be ugly, crushing, and demeaning. But it doesn't have to be. At its best, politics can be empowering and uplifting—it can even be a kind of soulcraft.

My faith teaches me that the world isn't made of good and bad people, but that each of us is capable of good and bad things. I believe leaders matter because of what they bring out in each of us: the good or the bad.

The other side is appealing to what is smallest within us. Telling you that greatness comes from going back to the past, that anyone different from you is a threat. Telling you that your neighbor or co-worker or daughter who votes differently than you do isn't just wrong—they're the enemy.

I believe in a better politics—one that finds us at our most decent, and open, and brave.

And that kind of politics also just feels better to be part of. There is joy in it, as well as power.

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And if all that sounds naive, let me insist that I have come to this view not through idealism but through experience.

Not just my improbable career—serving in Indiana, in Washington, in uniform.

I mean something more basic: what it's like at dinnertime in our house in Michigan. When the dog is barking, and the air fryer is beeping, and the mac and cheese is boiling over, and it feels like all the political negotiating experience in the world isn't enough for me to get two 3-year-olds, our son and our daughter, to just wash their hands and sit at the table.

It's the part of our day when politics seems the most distant. And yet the makeup of our kitchen table—the existence of my family—is just one example of something that was literally impossible as recently as 25 years ago when an anxious teenager growing up in Indiana wondered if he would ever find belonging in the world.

This kind of life went from impossible to possible—from possible to real—from real to almost ordinary, in less than half a lifetime.

That didn't just happen.

It was brought about—by idealism and courage, organizing and storytelling and persuading—and, yes, politics. The right kind of politics. It's the kind of politics that can make an impossible dream an everyday reality. And I know it matters to you too.

I don't presume to know what it's like in your kitchen, but I know, as sure as I am standing here, that everything in it—the bills you pay at that table, the shape of the family that sits there, the fears and dreams you talk about late into the night there—all of it compels us to demand more from our politics than a rerun of some TV wrestling deathmatch.

This November we get to choose—our president, our policies, but most of all, we can choose a better politics. One of hope, of promise, of freedom, of trust. This is what Kamala Harris and Tim Walz represent.

This is what it means to seek out the leaders who are out there building bridges and not the ones who are out there banning books.

This is what awaits us when America decides this November to end Trump's politics of darkness once and for all.

This is why we will work every day, with passion and urgency, and yes, also with joy, to elect Democrats up and down the ticket and lift each other up along the way.

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