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Derrick Johnson and Melanie Campbell  
Democratic National Convention  
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Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

Derrick Johnson is the President and CEO of the NAACP.

Melanie Campbell is the President and CEO of The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation and National Convener of the Black Women’s Roundtable.

Good evening. I’m Derrick Johnson, President and CEO of the NAACP.

Since the founding of our nation, we have been on an unending march to perfect our imperfect union. Tonight, we celebrate the power of the collective. Of what is possible when we are all in, for all people.

But as we do, let us not forget the history that preceded this moment—or the history-makers who prepared us for it. As we just heard, in 1964, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party—led by Fannie Lou Hamer, and Mississippi NAACP President Aaron Henry—stood tall and challenged a process that excluded them to ensure everyone would be recognized.

In 1973, the historic elections of Atlanta’s Maynard Jackson, Detroit’s Coleman Young, and LA’s Tom Bradley paved the way for another historic election just 10 years later: Chicago’s own Harold Washington. And in 1988, Reverend Jesse Jackson’s second quest for the White House inspired us to keep hope alive. Black history *is* American history. And in this historic moment, we will write the next chapter, together.

Good evening. I’m Melanie Campbell, President and CEO of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation and National Convener of the Black Women’s Roundtable.

We have come this far by faith. And for Black women, this moment has been a long time coming. Vice President Kamala Harris’s path to becoming the Democratic nominee for President of the United States has been paved by the leadership, sacrifice, faith, and patriotism of generations of Black women—like Dr. Dorothy Height, Diane Nash, Ella Baker, Amelia Boynton Robinson, Barbara Jordan, Shirley Chisholm, and Rev. Willie Barrow. Women whose optimism about what America could be, and their fight to make that vision real, redefined the leadership role that Black women could play in moving our nation forward.

As president, Kamala Harris will lead with power, brilliance, and strength from the highest office in the land.

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