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The Honorable Tim Walz
Governor of Minnesota
Democratic National Convention
Wednesday, August 21, 2024
Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

Thank you!

Thank you, Vice President Kamala Harris, for putting your trust in me and for inviting me to be part of this incredible campaign. Thank you to President Joe Biden for four years of strong, historic leadership. And it is the honor of my life to accept your nomination for vice president of the United States.

We're all here tonight for one beautiful, simple reason—we love this country! So thanks to all of you here in Chicago and watching at home tonight—for your passion, for your determination, for the joy that you're bringing to this fight.

I grew up in the small town of Butte, Nebraska, population 400. I had 24 kids in my high school class and none of 'em went to Yale. Growing up in a small town like that, you learn to take care of each other. The family down the road—they may not think like you do, they may not pray like you do, they may not love like you do, but they're your neighbors. And you look out for them, just like they do for you.

Everybody belongs, and everybody has a responsibility to contribute. For me, it was serving in the Army National Guard. I joined up two days after my 17th birthday and I proudly wore our country's uniform for 24 years. My dad, a Korean War-era veteran, died of lung cancer a couple years later and left behind a mountain of medical debt. Thank God for Social Security survivor benefits. And thank God for the GI Bill that allowed both my dad and me to go to college—just like it has for millions of Americans.

Eventually, I fell in love with teaching, just like the rest of my family. Heck, three out of four of us even married teachers. I wound up teaching social studies and coaching football at Mankato West High School. Go Scarlets! We ran a 4-4 defense, played through the whistle every single down, and even won a state championship. Never close that yearbook, people.

It was my students who first inspired me to run for Congress. They saw in me what I hoped to instill in them—a commitment to the common good. An understanding that we're all in this together. And a true belief that one person can make a real difference for their neighbors.

So there I was, a 40-something high school teacher with young kids, zero political experience, no money, and running in a deep-red district. But you know what? Never underestimate a public school teacher.

I represented my neighbors in Congress for 12 years and I learned an awful lot. I learned how to work across the aisle on issues like growing rural economies and taking care of our veterans. And I learned how to compromise without compromising my values.

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Then I came back home to serve as governor and we got right to work making a difference in our neighbors' lives. We cut taxes for middle-class families. We passed paid family and medical leave. We invested in fighting crime and affordable housing. We cut the cost of prescription drugs and helped people escape the kind of medical debt that nearly sank my family. And we made sure that every kid in our state got breakfast and lunch at school. So while other states were banning books from their schools, we were banishing hunger from ours.

We also protected reproductive freedom because, in Minnesota, we respect our neighbors and the personal choices they make. And even if we wouldn't make the same choices for ourselves, we've got a Golden Rule—mind your own damn business.

That includes IVF and fertility treatments. This is personal for Gwen and me. Let me just say this—even if you've never experienced the hell of infertility, I guarantee you know somebody who has. I remember praying each night for a call with good news, the pit in my stomach when the phone would ring, and the agony when we heard the treatments hadn't worked. It took me and Gwen years.

But we had access to fertility treatments and when our daughter was finally born, we named her Hope. Hope, Gus, Gwen—you are my whole world. I love you all so much.

I'm letting you in on how we started our family because that's a big part of what this election is about—freedom. When Republicans use that word, they mean that the government should be free to invade your doctor's office. Corporations free to pollute the air and water. Banks free to take advantage of customers. But when we Democrats talk about freedom, we mean your freedom to make a better life for yourself and the people you love. The freedom to make your own health care decisions. And, yeah, your kids' freedom to go to school without worrying they'll be shot dead in the halls.

Look, I know guns. I'm a veteran. I'm a hunter. I was a better shot than most Republicans in Congress and I have the trophies to prove it. But I'm also a dad. I believe in the Second Amendment. But I also believe that our first responsibility is to keep our kids safe. That's what this is all about. The responsibility we have to our kids, to each other, and to the future we're building together—a future in which everyone is free to build the kind of life they want.

But not everyone feels the same sense of responsibility. Some folks just don't understand what it means to be a good neighbor. Take Donald Trump and JD Vance—their Project 2025 will make things much, much harder for people who are just trying to live their lives. They've spent a lot of time pretending they know nothing about it. But look, I coached high school football long enough, I promise you this—when somebody takes the time to draw up a playbook, they plan on using it.

We know what they'll do if they get back in the White House. They'll jack up costs on middle-class families. They'll repeal the Affordable Care Act. They'll gut Social Security and Medicare. They'll ban abortion across America, with or without Congress.

It's an agenda that nobody asked for. It's an agenda that serves nobody but the richest people and the most extreme voices in our country. An agenda that does nothing for our neighbors in need. Is it weird? Absolutely. But it's also wrong. And it's dangerous. It's not just me saying so. It's Trump's own people. They were with him for four years. And they're warning us that the next four years would be much, much worse.

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When I was teaching, we would always elect a student body president. And you know what? Those teenagers could teach Donald Trump a lesson about what it means to be a leader. Leaders don't spend all day insulting people and blaming people. Leaders do the work. I don't know about you all, but I'm ready to turn the page on these guys. So say it with me: "We're not going back."

We've got something better to offer the American people. It starts with our candidate, Kamala Harris. From her first day as a prosecutor, as a district attorney, as an attorney general, as a U.S. senator, and then, as our vice president, she's fought on the side of the American people. She's taken on predators and fraudsters. She's taken down transnational gangs. She's stood up to powerful corporate interests. She's never hesitated to reach across the aisle if it meant improving lives. And she's always done it with energy, passion, and joy.

Folks, we have a chance to make Kamala Harris the next president of the United States. But I think we owe it to the American people to tell them exactly what she'd do as president before we ask for their votes. So here's the part you clip and save and send to that undecided relative.

If you're a middle-class family or a family trying to get into the middle class, Kamala Harris is gonna cut your taxes. If you're getting squeezed by the price of your prescription drugs, Kamala Harris is gonna take on Big Pharma. If you're hoping to buy a home, Kamala Harris is gonna help make it more affordable. And no matter who you are, Kamala Harris is gonna stand up and fight for your freedom to live the life you want to lead. Because that's what we want for ourselves. And that's what we want for our neighbors.

You know, I haven't given a lot of big speeches like this one in my life. But I've given a lot of pep talks. So let me finish with this, team. It's the fourth quarter. We're down a field goal. But we're on offense. We're driving down the field. And, boy, do we have the right team to win this. Kamala Harris is tough. She's experienced. And she's ready. Our job is to get in the trenches and do the blocking and tackling. One inch at a time, one yard at a time, one phone call at a time, one door knock at a time, one \$5 donation at a time. We've only got 76 days to go. That's nothing. We'll sleep when we're dead. And we're gonna leave it all on the field.

That's how we'll keep moving forward. That's how we'll turn the page on Donald Trump. That's how we'll build a country where workers come first, health care and housing are human rights, and the government stays the hell out of our bedrooms. That's how we make America a place where no child is left hungry. Where no community is left behind. Where nobody gets told they don't belong.

That's how we're gonna fight. And as the next president of the United States says, "When we fight, we win!" When we fight, we win! When we fight, we win! Thank you, and God bless America!

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