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Hillary Clinton

*2008 Democratic National Convention Keynote Address*



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**AUTHENTICITY CERTIFIED:** Text version below transcribed directly from audio

Thank you all very much. I am so honored to be here tonight. You know, I'm here tonight as a proud mother, as a proud democrat, as a proud Senator from New York, a proud American, and a proud supporter of Barack Obama.

My friends, it is time to take back the country we love. And whether you voted for me or you voted for Barack, the time is now to unite as a single Party with a single purpose. We are on the same team, and none of us can afford to sit on the sidelines. This is a fight for the future and it's a fight we must win together.

I haven't spent the past 35 years in the trenches advocating for children, campaigning for universal health care, helping parents balance work and family, and fighting for women's rights here at home and around the world to see another Republican in the White House squander our promise of a country that really fulfills the hopes of our people. And you haven't worked so hard over the last 18 months or endured the last eight years to suffer through more failed leadership.

No way, no how, no McCain.

Barack Obama is my candidate, and he must be our President.

Tonight, I ask you to remember what a presidential election is really about. When the polls have closed, and the ads are finally off the air, it comes down to you, the American people, and your lives and your children's' futures.



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For me, it's been a privilege to meet you in your homes, your workplaces, and your communities. Your stories reminded me that every day America's greatness is bound up in the lives of the American people. Your hard work, your devotion to duty, your love for your children, and your determination to keep going -- often in the face of enormous obstacles -- you taught me so much. And you made me laugh, and, yes, you even made me cry.

You allowed me to become part of your lives, and you became part of mine.

I will always remember the single mom who had adopted two kids with autism. She didn't have any health insurance; and she discovered that she had cancer. But she greeted me with her bald head, painted with my name on it, and asked me to fight for health care for her and her children.

I will always remember the young man in a Marine Corps t-shirt who waited months for medical care, and he said to me, "Take care of my buddies. A lot of them are still over there." And then, "Will you please take care of me."

And I will always remember the young boy who told me his mom worked for the minimum wage, that her employer had cut her hours. He said he just didn't know what his family was going to do.

I will always be grateful for everyone from all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Territories, who joined our campaign on behalf of all those people left out and left behind by the Bush Administration.

To my supporters, to my champions, so my "Sisterhood of the Traveling Pant Suits," from the bottom of my heart -- thank you. Thank you because you never gave in and you never gave up.

And together we made history, and along the way America lost two great democratic champions who would have been here with us tonight. One of our finest young leaders, Arkansas democratic chair, Bill Gwatney, who believed with all his heart that America and the South should be democratic from top to bottom; and Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones, a dear friend to many of us -- a loving mother, a courageous leader who never gave up her quest to make America fairer and stronger, smarter and better; steadfast in her beliefs, a fighter of uncommon grace, she was an inspiration to me and to us all. Our heart goes out to Stephanie's son, Mervyn Jr., and Bill's wife, Rebecca, who traveled here to Denver to join this family of Democrats.

You know, Bill Gwatney and Stephanie Tubbs Jones knew that after eight years of George Bush, people are hurting at home; and our standing has eroded around the world. We have a lot of work ahead of us: jobs lost, houses gone, falling wages, rising prices, a Supreme Court in a right-wing headlock, and our government in partisan gridlock; the biggest deficit in our nation's history, money borrowed from the Chinese to buy oil from the Saudis; Putin and Georgia, Iran and Iraq.



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I ran for President to renew the promise of America, to rebuild the middle-class and sustain the American Dream, to provide opportunity to those who are willing to work hard for it and have that work rewarded; so they could save for college, a home, and retirement; afford gas and groceries and have a little left over each month; to promote a clean energy economy that will create millions of green collar jobs; to create a health care system that is universal, high quality and affordable, so that every single parent knows their children will be taken care of.

We want to create a world-class education system, and make college affordable again; to fight for an America that is defined by deep and meaningful equality -- from civil rights to labor rights, from women's rights to gay rights; from ending discrimination to promoting unionization; to providing help for the most important job there is: caring for our families; and to help every child live up to his or her God-given potential; to make America once again a nation of immigrants and of laws; to restore fiscal sanity to Washington, and to make our Government an institution of the public good, not of private plunder; to restore America's standing the world, to end the war in Iraq, bring our troops home with honor, care for our veterans and given them the services they have earned.

We will work for an America again that will join with our allies in confronting our shared challenges, from poverty and genocide to terrorism and global warming.

Most of all, I ran to stand up for all those who have been invisible to their government for eight long years. Those are the reasons I ran for President, and those are the reasons I support Barack Obama for President.

I want you to ask yourselves: Were you in this campaign just for me? Or were you in it for that young Marine and others like him? Were you in it for that mom struggling with cancer while raising her kids? Were you in it for that young boy and his mom surviving on the minimum wage? Were you in it for all the people in this country who feel invisible?

We need leaders once again who can tap into that special blend of American confidence and optimism that has enabled generations before us to meet our toughest challenges -- leaders who can help us show ourselves and the world that with our ingenuity, creativity and innovative spirit, there are no limits to what is possible in America.

Now, this will not be easy. Progress never is. But it will be impossible if we don't fight to put a Democrat back into the White House. We need to elect Barack Obama because we need a President who understands that America can't compete in the global economy by padding the pockets of energy speculators while ignoring the workers whose jobs have been shipped overseas. We need a President who understands we can't solve the problems of global warming by giving windfall profits to the oil companies while ignoring opportunities to invest in the new technologies that will build a green economy. We need a President who understands that the genius of America has always depended on the strength and vitality of the middle class.



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Barack Obama began his career fighting for workers displaced by the global economy. He built his campaign on a fundamental belief that change in this country must start from the ground up, not the top down. And he knows that government must be about "We the people" -- not "We the favored few."

And when Barack Obama is in the White House, he'll revitalize our economy, defend the working people of America, and meet the global challenges of our time. Democrats know how to do this. As I recall, we did it before with President Clinton and the Democrats. And if we do our part, we'll do it again with President Obama and the Democrats.

Just think of what America will be as we transform our energy economy, create those millions of jobs, build a strong base for economic growth and shared prosperity, get middle class families get the tax relief they deserve.

And I cannot wait to watch Barack Obama sign into law a health care plan that covers every single American.

And we know that President Obama will end the war in Iraq responsibly, bring our troops home, and begin to repair our alliances around the world.

And Barack will have with him a terrific partner in Michelle Obama. Anyone who saw Michelle's speech last night knows she will be a great First Lady for America.

And Americans are fortunate that Joe Biden will be at Barack Obama's side -- a strong leader, a good man, who understands both the economic stresses here at home and the strategic challenges abroad. He is pragmatic; he's tough; and he's wise. And, Joe, of course, will be supported by his wonderful wife, Jill. They will be a great team for our country.

Now, John McCain is my colleague and my friend. He has served our country with honor and courage. But we don't need four more years of the last eight years: more economic stagnation and less affordable health care; more high gas prices and less alternative energy; more jobs getting shipped overseas and fewer jobs created here at home; more skyrocketing debt and home foreclosures and mounting bills that are crushing middle class families; more war and less diplomacy; more of a government where the privileged come first and everyone else comes last.

Well, John McCain says the economy is fundamentally sound. John McCain doesn't think 47 million people without health insurance is a crisis. John McCain wants to privatize Social Security. And in 2008, he still thinks it's okay when women don't earn equal pay for equal work. Now, with an agenda like that, it makes perfect sense that George Bush and John McCain will be together next week in the Twin Cities -- because these days they're awfully hard to tell apart.

You know, America is still around after 232 years because we have risen to every challenge and every new time, changing to be faithful to our values of equal opportunity for all and the common good. And I know what that can mean for every man, woman, and child in America.



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I'm a United States Senator because in 1848 a group of courageous women and a few brave men gathered in Seneca Falls, New York, many traveling for days and nights, to participate in the first convention on women's rights in our history.

And so dawned a struggle for the right to vote that would last 72 years, handed down by mother to daughter to granddaughter -- and a few sons and grandsons along the way.

These women and men looked into their daughters' eyes and imagined a fairer and freer world, and found the strength to fight, to rally, to picket, to endure ridicule and harassment, and brave violence and jail. And after so many decades -- 88 years ago on this very day -- the 19th amendment giving women the right to vote became enshrined in our Constitution.

My mother was born before women could vote. My daughter got to vote for her mother for President. This is the story of America, of women and men who defy the odds and never give up.

So how do we give this country back to them? By following the example of a brave New Yorker, a woman who risked her life to bring slaves along the Underground Railroad. On that path to freedom, Harriet Tubman had one piece of advice: If you hear the dogs, keep going. If you see the torches in the woods, keep going. If they're shouting after you, keep going. Don't ever stop. Keep going. If you want a taste of freedom, keep going. And even in the darkest of moments, that is what Americans have done. We have found the faith to keep going.

I've seen it. I have seen it in our teachers and our firefighters, our police officers, our nurses, our small business owners and our union workers. I've seen it in the men and women of our military. In America, you always keep going. We're Americans. We're not big on quitting.

And remember, before we can keep going, we've got to get going by electing Barack Obama the next President of the United States. We don't have a moment to lose or a vote to spare. Nothing less than the fate of our nation and the future of our children hangs in the balance.

I want you to think about your children and grandchildren come Election Day. Think about the choices your parents and grandparents made that had such a big impact on your lives and on the life of our nation.

We've got to ensure that the choice we make in this election honors the sacrifices of all who came before us, and will fill the lives of our children with possibility and hope. That is our duty, to build that bright future, to teach our children that, in America, there is no chasm too deep, no barrier too great, no ceiling too high for all who work hard, who keep going, have faith in God, in our country, and each other.

That is our mission, Democrats. Let's elect Barack Obama and Joe Biden for that future worthy of our great country.

Thank you. God bless you, and Godspeed.