

DNCC: Former Second Lady Dr. Jill Biden's full remarks at the 2020 Democratic National Convention

Posted on Tuesday, Aug 18, 2020

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MILWAUKEE—Below are Former Second Lady of the United States Dr. Jill Biden's full remarks as prepared for delivery from night two of the 2020 Democratic National Convention.

Dr. Jill Biden
Former Second Lady of the United States of America
Democratic National Convention
Tuesday, August 18, 2020
Remarks as Prepared for Delivery
Introduction

I have always loved the sounds of a classroom. The quiet that sparks with possibility just before students shuffle in. The murmur of ideas bouncing back and forth as we explore the world together. The laughter and tiny moments of surprise you find in materials you've taught a million times. When I taught English here at Brandywine High School, I would spend my summer preparing for the school year about to start—filled with anticipation. But this quiet is heavy. You can hear the anxiety that echoes down empty hallways. There's no scent of new notebooks or freshly waxed floors. The rooms are dark as the bright young faces that should fill them are now confined to boxes on a computer screen. I hear it from so many of you: the frustration of parents juggling work while they support their children's learning—or are afraid that their kids might get sick from school. The concern of every person working without enough protection. The despair in the lines that stretch out before food banks. And the indescribable sorrow that follows every lonely last breath when the ventilators turn off. As a mother and a grandmother, as an American, I am heartbroken by the magnitude of this loss—by the failure to protect our communities—by every precious and irreplaceable life gone. Like so many of you, I'm left asking: how do I keep my family safe?

Healing a Family

You know, motherhood came to me in a way I never expected. I fell in love with a man and two little boys standing in the wreckage of unthinkable loss. Mourning a wife and mother—a daughter and sister.

I never imagined, at the age of 26, I would be asking myself: how do you make a broken family whole? Still, Joe always told the boys, "Mommy sent Jill to us,"—and how could I argue with her?

And so, we figured it out together—in those big moments that would go by too fast—

Thanksgivings and state championships, birthdays and weddings. In the mundane ones that we didn't even know were shaping our lives: reading stories, piled on the couch. Rowdy Sunday dinners and silly arguments. Listening to the faint sounds of laughter that would float downstairs as Joe put the kids to bed every night—while I studied for grad school or graded papers under the pale yellow kitchen lamp—the dinner dishes waiting in the sink.

We found that love holds a family together. Love makes us flexible and resilient. It allows us to become more than ourselves—together. And though it can't protect us from the sorrows of life, it gives us refuge—a home.

How do you make a broken family whole? The same way you make a nation whole. With love and understanding—and with small acts of kindness. With bravery. With unwavering faith. You show up for each other, in big ways and small ones, again and again. It's what so many of you are doing right now. For your loved ones. For complete strangers. For your communities.

There are those who want to tell us that our country is hopelessly divided—that our differences are irreconcilable. But that's not what I've seen over these months.

We're coming together and holding on to each other. We're finding mercy and grace in the moments we might have once taken for granted. We're seeing that our differences are precious and our similarities infinite.

We have shown that the heart of this nation still beats with kindness and courage. That's the soul of America Joe Biden is fighting for now.

Why Joe Fights

After our son, Beau, died of cancer, I wondered if I would ever smile or feel joy again. It was summer but there was no warmth left for me.

Four days after Beau's funeral, I watched Joe shave and put on his suit. I saw him steel himself in the mirror—take a breath—put his shoulders back—and walk out into a world empty of our son. He went back to work. That's just who he is.

There are times when I couldn't imagine how he did it—how he put one foot in front of the other and kept going. But I've always understood why he did it.

...For the daughter who convinces her mom to finally get a breast cancer screening and misses work to drive her to the clinic.

...For the community college student who has faced homelessness and survived abuse—but finds the grit to finish her degree and make a good life for her kids.

...For the little boy whose mom is serving as a marine in Iraq, who puts on a brave face in his video call, and doesn't complain when the only thing he wants for his birthday is to be with her.

...For all those people Joe gives his personal phone number to, at rope lines and events—the ones he talks to for hours after dinner—helping them smile through their loss—letting them know that they aren't alone.

He does it for you.

Joe's purpose has always driven him forward. His strength of will is unstoppable. And his faith is unshakable—because it's not in politicians or political parties—or even himself. It's in the providence of God. His faith is in you—in us.

Conclusion

Yes, so many classrooms are quiet right now. The playgrounds are still. But if you listen closely, you can hear the sparks of change in the air.

Across the country, educators, parents, first responders—Americans of all walks of life are putting their shoulders back, fighting for each other. We haven't given up.

We just need leadership worthy of our nation. Worthy of you. Honest leadership to bring us back together—to recover from this pandemic and prepare for whatever else is next.

Leadership to reimagine what our nation will be.

That's Joe. He and Kamala will work as hard as you do, every day, to make this nation better. And if I have the honor of serving as your First Lady, I will too.

And with Joe as president, these classrooms will ring out with laughter and possibility once again.

The burdens we carry are heavy, and we need someone with strong shoulders. I know that if we entrust this nation to Joe, he will do for your family what he did for ours: bring us together and make us whole. Carry us forward in our time of need. Keep the promise of America, for all of us.