

# America must not lose its way

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President, AFT

I have been on a bus most days since Labor Day, encouraging people across our great nation to participate in one of the most consequential elections of our lifetimes. We have held more than 80 events, visited 14 states and logged thousands of miles—and we're not stopping until Election Day. Everywhere I go, I hear the same thing: People want a better life for themselves and their families and a brighter future for the country. The opportunities and freedoms that are the promise of America are at stake in this presidential election, and only one candidate is fighting to realize that promise for all of us.

Kamala Harris wants to cut taxes for more than 100 million working- and middle-class Americans. She has laid out plans to fight price gouging and lower the costs of housing, groceries, energy, healthcare and child care. She wants to allow Medicare to help cover home care costs for seniors. She supports public schools and workers' right to unionize. She will fight to restore women's right to make their own healthcare decisions. She honors her oath to the Constitution.

Donald Trump would take the ladder of opportunity away. He'd raise taxes on the middle class—and cut taxes for the wealthy (again). Trump's tariffs would kill jobs and increase the prices families pay for everyday items by up to \$4,000 a year. Two-thirds of the economists surveyed by the *Wall Street Journal* say that inflation would be worse under Trump than Harris. Project 2025—the extremist blueprint to “institutionalize Trumpism”—plots out the end of public education. Trump opposes labor rights and legislation like the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act. While JD Vance claims that Trump “saved” Obamacare, the former president relentlessly tried to kill it. And Trump takes credit for the overturning of the constitutional right to make reproductive decisions, giving our kids and grandkids less freedom than my generation had.

Trump has grown increasingly dark and vindictive. Two of his wives immigrated to the United States, yet he demonizes and dehumanizes immigrants, calling them “animals” who are “poisoning the blood” of America—reviving Nazi rhetoric. Trump uses the tactics of dictators, threatening to use the military against Americans he disagrees with and referring to his political opponents as the “enemy from within,” more dangerous, he claims, than countries with nuclear weapons directed at the United States. Trump tries to divide us. But we are not enemies; we are fellow Americans who want a good life for ourselves and our families.

Trump's behavior has called into question his mental acuity and fitness. At the Economic Club of Chicago last week, Trump repeatedly misunderstood how his own economic policies would work. Tune into any Trump rally or interview; he ping-pongs between non sequiturs and insults.

## A better future is within our grasp—but we have to vote for it.

Trump is creating an unreality show full of dangerous lies: Immigrants are eating people's pets. Children are getting gender-affirming surgery at school. The federal government's recent hurricane disaster response purposely neglected areas with Republican voters. The Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol was a day of “love and peace.” And “the big lie”—that the 2020 election was stolen. The truth is that Trump interfered with the peaceful transfer of power, which is the cornerstone of democracy.

Trump's darkness is at odds with what I am hearing as I meet thousands of folks across the country. The yearning for a future of hope,

freedom and opportunity is palpable. People like the policies Harris and Walz are laying out to help families and communities “not just get by, but get ahead.” And my members are fired up to have a teacher as vice president of the United States.

This election is about whether we build a future of opportunity and economic dignity for all, or get dragged into a past of chaos, fear and hate. It's about whether we recognize that the strength of our nation lies in lifting each other up, not pulling us apart. It's about two very different candidates—one sowing fear, the other solving problems.

We live in complex and often dangerous times, with wars on several continents, a global climate emergency, widespread economic inequality, and change happening at breakneck speed. Americans must have absolute confidence that the person who holds our nation's highest office is of sound mind, body and character and will put the good of the country above their own self-interest. That is why hundreds of prominent lifelong Republicans and many former Trump officials have endorsed Harris. And that selflessness is why Joe Biden turned the page and endorsed Kamala Harris.

A better, safer, more equal future is within our grasp—but we have to vote for it. I urge you to vote for Kamala Harris, Tim Walz and candidates up and down the ballot who will fight for a better future for all Americans.



Weingarten speaks at the 2024 canvass kickoff of the Pittsburgh Working Families Party on Sept. 7.

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