


FIVE WAYS TO FIND NEW VOTERS AND NEW ACTIVISTS

In a tweet yesterday, Cook Political Report analyst Dave Wasserman explained how Kamala Harris has changed the dynamic of the Presidential race. Her lead among highly committed voters remains the same as Joe Biden had in May. But she has eaten into Trump's lead among low and mid-engagement voters.

 **Dave Wasserman** ✓
@Redistrict

New @CookPolitical: Harris leads among high-engagement voters by the same four point margin Biden led in May. But the secret to her surge? Narrowing Trump's lead among low/mid-engagement voters from 51%-41% to 48%-45%.



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These voters include young voters, busy working class voters, but also Double Haters whose disgust by their choice of candidate might have led them to sit out.

Understanding that that's how you break up a tie race – by motivating people who otherwise might not to come out to vote – explains a lot about what Democrats have been doing in the one month since Kamala took over from Joe. It explains why Tim Walz joined TikTok – and why Pete Buttigieg is bragging that he already has more followers on TikTok than JD Vance.

Below, I've laid out five ways that the DNC has tried to find ways to reach out to voters last night.

One group they are not fully reaching out to, though, are Muslims and Arab-Americans. At the end of yesterday's convention, multiple people, including AOC, reported that the convention will not allow a Palestinian-American to speak on the main stage. We may learn more about the circumstances of this (I'm sure it doesn't help that Biden and Harris are trying to pressure Bibi Netanyahu to accept a ceasefire *this week*); it was a failure of planning that it didn't happen earlier in the week. We may never know the cost of this. But it is ethically and morally wrong to exclude some voice to speak for the people of Gaza.

Update: The UAW has issued a statement on the import of providing a platform for a Palestinian American to speak.

If we want the war in Gaza to end, we can't put our heads in the sand or ignore the voices of the Palestinian Americans in the Democratic Party. If we want peace, if we want real democracy, and if we want to win this election, the Democratic Party must allow a Palestinian American speaker to be heard from the DNC stage tonight.

Coach Walz

You don't need me to explain why Tim Walz expands the field of potential voters (though polling doesn't, yet, show him helping, much, in rural areas). At the very least, he's virtually guaranteed to ensure Harris-Walz wins the Omaha electoral vote that puts the ticket at 270 in a thin Blue Wall strategy.

There are three things about his speech that merit notice, however. First, bringing Walz' football players on stage was great theater, just like having Kamala and Coach pack a Milwaukee venue and the Chicago convention at the same time. It continues to highlight a different kind of white masculinity, besides the

toxic aggression Trump offers.

The image of Gus Walz weeping for his father is yet another expression of the love that has drenched the Democratic side this year, even as Melania has shied from Trump's kiss.

There's also a line in Walz' stump speech – that Sarah Longwell, the publisher of *The Bulwark* who has been doing non-stop focus groups for the last two months – says works with all swing voters: “We made sure that every kind in our state gets breakfast and lunch every day.” Walz went on, “So while other states were banning books from our schools, we were banishing hunger.” A focus on schools – yes to food and books, no to guns – has the power to make sense of all this.

Notably, in Florida, Ron DeSantis' efforts to pack school boards with people censoring books had a huge setback on Tuesday.

Oprah

After Oprah endorsed Barack Obama in 2007, there were scholarly and polling articles that tried to track the value of her endorsement. The answer was – at a time when she was at the height of her influence – it probably had more impact on the belief of those who might already vote for Obama that he could win, not in convincing others to vote for him. Oprah gave Obama credibility, and the timing and publicity of it gave him a way to match up to Hillary.

Obviously, Oprah's endorsement of Hillary in 2016 was not enough to defeat Donald Trump.

More recently, Oprah's influence has been more important in undercutting those whose careers she had launched, most notably Dr Oz when he ran against John Fetterman. That ought to concern JD Vance, whose *Hillbilly Elegy* Oprah platformed in her book club. Oprah quipped that when a house is in on fire, that homeowner's neighbors don't ask their religion or party before they move to

help. "And if the place happens to belong to a childless cat lady, welp, we try to get that cat out too." Equally important, for a woman who taught Middle America to read again, it matters that she warned against, "People who'd have you believe that books are dangerous, and assault rifles are safe."

I think Oprah did one more thing. She paid tribute to John Lewis and spoke at length of the import of Tessie Prevost-Williams' role in integrating New Orleans schools. Too many white people don't know – haven't had to think about – the import of school integration, or the impact of efforts to reverse it. Oprah used Tessie's story to explain the import of Kamala's role in integrating Berkeley's schools. Oprah, who like Donald Trump built her credibility by joining Americans in their living rooms for years, broke ground for what might be far more focus on the historic opportunity of Kamala's candidacy, including a tribute to Fannie Lou Hamer, like Oprah a Mississippian, who demanded she be seated as a delegate 60 years ago today.

Trump responded to Oprah's speech by releasing the letter Oprah sent almost a quarter century ago when Trump wrote, in a book, that Oprah would be his first choice for a Vice President candidate.

Americans respect and admire Oprah for her intelligence and caring. She has provided inspiration for millions of women to improve their lives, go back to school, learn to read, and take responsibility for themselves. If I can't get Oprah, I'd like someone like her.

I'm not sure how Oprah's polite denial in 2000 helps him, since his description of Oprah as the ideal Vice President sounds so much like Kamala and nothing like JD Vance.

Geoff Duncan

The party has made a concerted effort to do what Trump hasn't for anyone beyond Nikki Haley herself: reach out to Never-Trumpers. On Tuesday, former Trump press secretary Stephanie Grisham described how Trump attacks his supporters as "basement dwellers." Before Geoff Duncan, former Homeland Security aide Olivia Troye described how she – a conservative Latina Catholic of the sort Republicans have been working hard to attract – was terrified if Trump would return to the White House.

Geoff Duncan made voting against Trump a matter of integrity. He looked into the camera and addressed, "the millions of Republicans and Independents that are at home that are sick and tired of making excuses for Donald Trump." As all the Republicans speaking did, he described that voting for Harris didn't make one a Democrat, but instead a patriot – reappropriating the term Trump's thugs have adopted. And he described how, as his family was hunted by other Republicans sent by Donald Trump, his son reminded him of the family motto: "Doing the right thing will never be the wrong thing."

[Update: Spelling of Duncan's first name corrected. My apologies to him.]

Bill Clinton

Bill was self-indulgent, he went long, he occasionally mispronounced Kamala's name, and – as someone younger than both Joe Biden and Donald Trump – he made it easy to understand how age can slow you down. "Let's cut to the chase. I am too old to gild the lily. Two days ago I turned 78. Oldest man in my family for four generations. And the only personal vanity I want to assert is I'm still younger than Donald Trump."

But 25 minutes in, the old white southern spouse

of failed presidential candidate Hillary Clinton warned against getting complacent.

As somebody who spends a lot of time in small towns and rural areas in New York and Arkansas and other places, I want, I urge you to talk to all your neighbors. I urge you to meet people where they are. I urge you not to demean them, but not to pretend you don't disagree with them if you do. Treat them with respect. Just the way you'd like them to treat you.

I'm not Bill Clinton's audience. But right now, Kamala is retaining a surprising amount of older white voters after Biden's drop. And the kind of conversation Bill espouses is the kind of conversation that the Tim Walz pick makes possible, if people are willing to engage.

Pete Buttigieg

Buttigieg's talent is well known from his Fox News appearances (which he joked about), but it was especially apparent in comparison with all the historic speakers at the convention. He still shone.

Buttigieg found a way to attack JD Vance for both his commentary about childless people and his attacks on Walz' military record – by noting that, “When I deployed to Afghanistan, I didn't have kids then. Many of the men and women who went outside the wire didn't have kids either. But let me tell you: Our commitment to the future of this country was pretty damn physical.”

More importantly, he found a way to explain why politics matters. Without ever mentioning he's gay or naming his husband Chasten, Buttigieg reminded that nothing about his nuclear family was possible two decades ago. None of it was possible without the political fight to win equality.

There is joy in it, as well as power. And if all of that sounds naive, let me insist that I have come to this view not by the way of idealism, but by way of experience. Not just the experience of my unlikely career – someone like me, serving, in Indiana. Someone like me, serving in Washington. Someone like me, serving, in uniform. I'm thinking of something much more basic. I'm thinking of dinner time in our house in Michigan. When the dog is barking and the air fryer is beeping and the mac and cheese is boiling over and it feels like all the political negotiating experience in the world is not enough for me to get our 3-year old daughter and our 3-year old son to just wash their hands and sit at the table. It's the part of our day when politics seems the most distant. And yet the makeup of our kitchen table – the existence of my family – is just one example of something that was literally impossible as recently as 25 years ago when an anxious teenager growing up in Indiana wondering if he would ever find belonging in this world.

Since Walz has been chosen, several things have reminded me of my early involvement in a renewed sense of politics since the Iraq War. Like Tim Walz, I attended Wellstone Action. Folks I've known for decades – in VoteVets and from the new political spinoff from Daily Kos, The DownBallot – reminded that they backed Walz in 2006 and 2008, when his win was considered an impossibility. Rayne would kill me if I failed to mention Howard Dean in it all, which is where we got to know each other IRL.

As happened with Obama (and in response to the Iraq War), Kamala's race has the power to convince ordinary Americans that they can be a different kind of citizen, and that kind of citizenship can improve people's lives. There's a lot of Democrats celebrating other Democrats

at the convention. But there's also a real effort to offer something for those low-turnout voters who could decide the race, or novice Democrats who could step up for the first time.