

‘Kamala Harris’s Nomination Is Everything to Me’

The New York Times

August 15, 2020 Saturday 20:06 EST

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Section: OPINION

Length: 1367 words

Byline: Rachel L. Harris

Highlight: For some, the senator's being on the Democratic ticket is about more than just the vice presidency.

Body

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Joe Biden’s selection of Senator Kamala Harris to be his running mate is historic. She is the first Black woman and the first person of Indian descent to be on a major-party ticket and, should Biden win, stands that much closer to becoming the first female president in our nation’s history. It’s no surprise that many Americans are emotional about her being chosen.

We asked readers what seeing Senator Harris on the Democratic ticket meant to them. “She looks like me!” and “It’s about time!” punctuated the most enthusiastic responses. Others talked about the importance of seeing a Black woman in high office after years of experiencing discrimination and racism themselves.

A selection of their responses follows. They have been edited for length and clarity.

‘She represents my story — my past and my future.’

Kamala Harris’s nomination is everything to me, a first-generation Indian-American working mother, fighting for equity and justice each day through education while raising my biracial Indian and Mexican-American sons. She represents my story — my past and my future. She is hope that one day my family and I will be fully visible and seen in our unique beauty. She gives me the courage to dream big! — Anita Thawani Bucio, 39, Glenview, Ill.

She doesn’t accept nonsense and is a total powerhouse. More important, she looks like me! I never thought I’d see the day when my next V.P. shared the same skin color, no-nonsense attitude, and even the same middle name. Here I am in the unrelenting chaos of 2020 finding hope and representation even in the darkest of times. I am so grateful to see this day and can’t wait to see us flood the polls in November! — Shakunthala Devi Shiwnath, 29, Boston

My feelings about Kamala Harris are mixed. It is difficult to reconcile her consistently progressive voting record in the Senate with her more problematic law enforcement record as attorney general of California. Human beings are complicated, and she seems to be a politician whose positions are more fluid.

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For today, however, I'm choosing to be proud of the historical significance of her nomination as a biracial Black, Asian woman. She is the face of the Democratic Party and representative of the changing face of this nation. — Sophia Kwong Myers, 35, Dallas

When you tell people your parents are immigrants, they make a lot of assumptions about you. It's awkward, hurtful and perplexing. I've had close friends tell ethnic jokes in my presence and then say sheepishly, "But that's not your family — you're like totally American." No, not totally.

The upside of experiencing the world this way is that you can't be an ideologue. The nuances are deep in your muscle memory. That insider/outsider perspective can be your superpower. I see that in Harris and I like it. It's about time. — Alexandra Acosta, 60, Chevy Chase, Md.

She reflects 'the most powerful force within the Democratic Party: Black women.'

I am old enough to remember Shirley Chisholm's run for the presidency. I also remember Barbara Jordan's speech at the 1976 Democratic Convention. I also remember the slight when she was not chosen for a cabinet post. We do not have a Black woman on the Supreme Court. It is time to validate that we are a very important part of the political framework of the U.S. — Judy Washington, 63, New Jersey

Senator Harris is already well known to the electorate, and her formidable skills in fighting for the people make her an excellent campaigner and debater, and will extend into her public service and leadership working for Joe Biden. Her deep roots as a child of the civil rights movement so well represent and honor the most powerful force within the Democratic Party: Black women. — Patti Fink, 58, Dallas

This was my first moment of genuine, unreserved joy in 2020. It felt like too much to ask for. I found myself thinking, "Now they will see how we get things done." I am thrilled that an HBCU graduate, and an Alpha Kappa Alpha soror, will be sitting in the heart of America power. — Lydia York, 60, Wilmington, Del.

To me, Harris's nomination means that the country will begin acknowledging Black history and the role that African-Americans have played in building this country on our backs — without the benefit of minimum wage! — Odessa Walker Hooker, 90 in two months, Atlanta

'Representation matters. Role models matter.'

I belong to a grass-roots organization in Indiana. We have two interns on staff, one Indian-American and one Chinese-American, both smart, capable young women who are working hard for white, Black and brown people, helping to move us closer to a multiracial democracy in our state. Senator Harris's inclusion on the ticket lifts my spirit as I see a brighter future unfolding for these young women, one that feels like more of a real possibility, not just a pipe dream. Representation matters. Role models matter. — Georg'ann Cattelona, 61, Bloomington, Ind.

I am a first-generation Indian-American woman. Kamala Harris's nomination is meaningful to me. Representation matters, I acknowledge that. But she is nowhere near as far left as people are imagining her to be. Black and Indian women as demographics are far further to the left than she is on many policy topics that, for me, are deal breaking. She means a lot to me and I will proudly vote for her, but I want to acknowledge the ways in which she has harmed working-class (specifically Black working-class) communities. — Divya Bharadwaj, 27, Seattle

'I like the flare she brings and the fire.'

I feel like I am always having to apologize — for my power, for my decision making, for my ambition, for when things go bad and even for when they go good. It's all on my back. So I've been trying not to do it anymore. Ms. Harris does not come off apologetic. We need to see that. — Eva Lake, 63, Portland, Ore.

I watched Kamala Harris during the Kavanaugh hearing and felt great pride. One of my frustrations with the Democratic Party is how willing it is to be cordial and polite to outlandish and rude members of the opposite aisle. I like the flare she brings and the fire I have been waiting for. — Adrian Perez, 21, Chicago

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'This ticket is a model for men who are used to being in power.'

I am an African-American man. My wife is Sri Lankan. We have an 18-month-old daughter whose ethnic background is reflected on the Democratic ticket in the 2020 election. Biden, to his credit, picked a woman of color who came hard for him on the national stage during the primaries. Instead of holding a grudge or using that as an excuse to pick someone with whom he had a closer relationship, he overcame his ego and said, "I admire what Harris brings to the table, and I think that together we can lead." As a new parent, I appreciate just how much symbols and words, like actions, matter. This ticket is a model for men who are used to being in power, to learn how to share it with strong women. — William K. Stone, 30, New York, N.Y.

'A new infusion of energy.'

Kamala Harris is, like Obama, a person with multiple cultural influences. I think that's great! It means she's likely to be flexible, independent, less dogmatic and more curious about the world. Her presence on the ticket is healing and forward-looking. Finally, 100 years after my grandmother was first able to vote, there's a good chance of a woman becoming president. — Marian De Walt Morgan, 72, London

Kamala Harris is indicative of a shift, a sign that we deserve better than what we've got. She gives me hope. It's time for a new infusion of energy, a fresh legacy, something we as exhausted Americans so desperately need. To put it simply, Harris's nomination has me stoked. Let's do this. — Megan Leigh Venzin, 34, Jersey City, N.J.

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Load-Date: August 16, 2020