Chicago Tribune

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

A DELICATE BALANCE

Party celebrates Biden's presidency as big event arrives amid anxiousness over protests

Delegates cheer Monday during the Democratic National Convention at the United Center in Chicago. **BRIAN CASSELLA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Pritzker gets time in national spotlight — but not as imagined

By Dan Petrella
Chicago Tribune

JB Pritzker has been working toward this moment for much of his adult life.

But when the affable Illinois governor takes the stage Tuesday night at the Democratic National Convention, it will be under vastly different circumstances than he must have imagined when he led Chicago's effort to bring the party's quadrennial gathering to his hometown.

After a raucous political summer, Democrats have arrived in Chicago not to coronate President Joe Biden for a second term but to rally behind their newly crowned standard-bearer, Vice President Kamala Harris.

"This was a sea change," Pritzker said in an interview late last week. "Nobody expected this to happen."

The head-spinning turn of events since Biden's unnerving debate performance in late June has muddied Pritzker's political future, turning a prime-time convention speech that could have been the soft launch of a 2028 presidential bid into something less clear.

Even as he ponders what's next, Pritzker, not even halfway through his second term, is relishing the role of dutiful host, booking John Legend to play an after-party at the Salt Shed following the governor's speech and ordering up specially branded JBeer from a pair of local breweries to serve to guests.

During the summer's tumult, Pritzker, a Biden campaign co-chair, displayed the patience and party loyalty that have been hallmarks of his political career.

While some Democrats wrung their hands and others, including several

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A person is detained after protesters jumped a fence near the United Center in Chicago on Monday. **ARMANDO L. SANCHEZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Demonstrators chant and break fencing, but stay mostly peaceful

By Sam Charles, Megan Crepeau, Stacy St. Clair and Zareen Syed
Chicago Tribune

Chanting and holding signs decrying the Biden administration's support for Israeli military action in Gaza, thousands of pro-Palestine and other demonstrators rallied and marched past the Democratic National Convention headquarters on Monday in what had been billed as the largest of many planned demonstrations during the four-day event.

The day was marred by only one fairly minor skirmish. As protest leaders kept marching later in the afternoon, several protesters broke down the first barrier of the security perimeter along Washington Boulevard just north of the United Center. They faced the police officers in a line, shouting, "Quit your job! Quit your job!"

Officers moved in and formed several lines of defense where the fence was down, while some protesters could be seen throwing their wooden signs at the police. Other officers in riot gear came in from behind the protesters and corralled them back into the park using batons, to keep the situation from escalating.

Volunteers, delegates bring grassroots to DNC

This year's largely ceremonial event sealing Vice President Kamala Harris as the party's presidential candidate depends on the thousands of volunteers and delegates who make it run. **Chicagoland, Page 3**

By Rick Pearson
Chicago Tribune

Democrats opened their national convention Monday celebrating President Joe Biden's keynote address and their decision to move forward with Vice President Kamala Harris as the party's presidential nominee, while pro-Palestinian demonstrators amassed near the United Center to march against U.S. military support of Israel.

The convention's opening, nearly a year and a half in the making, marked an anxious time for the city, its leaders and residents amid talk of random protests and disruptive behavior. But what organizers portrayed as the largest rally of the week, a march on the DNC, didn't produce the tens of thousands of protesters they had predicted. It is uncertain what that will mean for the rest of the week.

The crowd, numbered in the thousands, started marching west on Washington Boulevard shortly before 3 p.m. after more than two hours of speeches in Union Park, which is a few blocks to the east. In one of the most notable incidents, a group of protesters forced open an outer perimeter security fence along Washington about two blocks north of the United Center. Law enforcement officials said personnel were immediately on the scene and contained the situation. At no point was the inner perimeter breached, the officials said.

Inside the convention arena, delegates tried to strike a balance between thanking the 81-year-old Biden for his four years as president and looking forward to promoting Harris, 59, as Democrats aim to retain the White House and prevent former Republican President Donald Trump, 78, from reclaiming it.

A few hours into the evening's activities, Harris made a brief surprise, on-stage appearance to the sound of wild cheers from the delegates and referenced Biden's half-century political career.

"Joe, thank you for your historic leadership, for your lifetime of service to our nation and for all you will continue to do.

Phil Donahue dies at 88

Phil Donahue, whose pioneering daytime talk show launched an indelible television genre that brought success to Oprah Winfrey, Montel Williams, Ellen DeGeneres and many others, has died. **Obit, Page 11**

Nurses walk off job

Hundreds of nurses at University of Illinois Hospital & Clinics walked off the job Monday morning, beginning a strike at one of the closest hospitals to this week's Democratic National Convention in Chicago. **Business**

Prepare to be amazed

David Parr, a magician of immense talent, is the Wednesday night headliner at the Chicago Magic Lounge, a venue as eye-catching and delightful as any in town. The Tribune's Rick Kogan reviews. **Arts & Living**