

Document 1 - Taylor Swift Endorses Kamala Harris

Her Instagram post backing the vice president came shortly after Ms. Harris and former President Donald Trump had stepped off the debate stage.



By [Nicholas Nehamas](#), [Theodore Schleifer](#) and [Nick Corasaniti](#)

The New York Times, Sept. 10, 2024

Look what they made her do.

Taylor Swift, who is one of America's most celebrated pop-culture icons and has an enormous following across the world, endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris late Tuesday after Ms. Harris's debate 5 against former President Donald J. Trump.

The endorsement by Ms. Swift, delivered minutes after Ms. Harris and Mr. Trump had stepped off the debate stage in Philadelphia, offers Ms. Harris an unrivaled celebrity backer and a tremendous shot of 10 adrenaline to her campaign, especially with the younger voters she has been trying to attract.

"Like many of you, I watched the debate tonight," Ms. Swift wrote on Instagram to her 283 million followers. "I will be casting my vote for Kamala Harris 15 and Tim Walz in the 2024 Presidential Election. I'm voting for @kamalaharris because she fights for the rights and causes I believe need a warrior to champion them."

She signed her post as "Childless Cat Lady," a 20 reference to comments made by Mr. Trump's running mate, Senator JD Vance of Ohio, about women without children. The photo that accompanied her post showed

her holding a furry feline, Benjamin Button, her pet Ragdoll.

25 Ms. Swift's endorsement was much anticipated among Democrats. The singer has expressed regret for not having done more to speak out about her opposition to Mr. Trump during his first run in 2016. Since then, she has embraced a more political posture while 30 speaking out on issues such as abortion access. But the precise timing of Tuesday's endorsement was something of a surprise: Ms. Swift endorsed Joe Biden on Oct. 7, 2020, closer to the election.

The impact of Ms. Swift's endorsement may be hard 35 to quantify, but her ability to get supporters to register to vote came into sharp relief just last year. In a brief post on her Instagram account in 2023, Ms. Swift encouraged her 272 million supporters at the time to vote and included a link to the website Vote.org.

40 The site later reported 35,252 new registrations that day, a significant jump compared with the previous year, and an especially significant spike in a nonelection year. On Tuesday, Ms. Swift included a similar link to Vote.gov in her Instagram story.

In her post endorsing Ms. Harris, Ms. Swift also referred to her “fears” about artificial intelligence. She pointed to content generated by the technology that had falsely suggested that she supported Mr. Trump, which the former president promoted on social media. She underscored concerns that Americans would not know where she genuinely stood if she had not spoken out. “It really conjured up my fears around AI, and the dangers of spreading misinformation,” Ms. Swift wrote. “It brought me to the conclusion that I need to be very transparent about my actual plans for this election as a voter. The simplest way to combat misinformation is with the truth.” (...)

Ms. Swift, who has been a star musician spanning country and pop music for almost two decades, is one of the few celebrities with broad appeal and the ability to cut through a crowded media environment. Her romance with Travis Kelce, the star tight end for the Chiefs, has captivated the worlds of football and culture, and she is in the final stages of a head-spinning international tour that has sold out stadiums around the globe.

Karoline Leavitt, a spokeswoman for the Trump campaign, dismissed the endorsement as “more evidence that the Democrat party has become the party of the wealthy elite.”

In 2020, Ms. Swift’s endorsement of Mr. Biden and Ms. Harris generated significant backlash from conservatives who urged her to keep her music career apolitical.

Four years later, her growing political involvement led to fevered speculation from Democrats about whether and when she would endorse Ms. Harris.

For her part, Ms. Harris has embraced pop music in her campaign.

Her rallies have had the feel of concerts as much as political events, with hip-hop stars like Megan Thee

Stallion giving performances and D.J.s warming up dancing crowds of thousands before the vice president walks onstage to Beyoncé’s song “Freedom.”, but rumors of her presence turned out to be false.)

Mr. Biden’s rallies, in comparison, were small and low in energy, often reaching their peak of raucousness when a high school drum line played.

Polls show that Ms. Harris is doing much better with younger voters than Mr. Biden was, a crucial part of a resurgence in her polls that has allowed her to draw even with Mr. Trump. Ms. Swift’s backing of her campaign is a reflection of that appeal.

In making her endorsement, Ms. Swift added that she was “heartened and impressed” by Ms. Harris’s choice of Gov. Tim Walz as her running mate, saying that Mr. Walz had been “standing up for LGBTQ+ rights, IVF, and a woman’s right to her own body for decades.”

Ms. Swift has long pushed for her supporters to do their civic duty, posting a picture of herself in a long line on Election Day in 2016, a photo her fans thought was a cryptic endorsement of Hillary Clinton. (...)

In an interview with Vogue in 2019, Ms. Swift indicated that she had wanted to be more vocal about supporting Mrs. Clinton but had worried that her support could backfire. She said she had feared that Mr. Trump might try “weaponizing the idea of the celebrity endorsement” against her and Mrs. Clinton. Ms. Swift also shared concerns that public criticism of her at the time would be unfairly applied to Ms. Clinton as well.

Ms. Swift continued: “The summer before that election, all people were saying was, ‘She’s calculated. She’s manipulative. She’s not what she seems. She’s a snake. She’s a liar.’ These are the same exact insults people were hurling at Hillary. Would I be an endorsement or would I be a liability?”

Document 2 - Trump posted a fake Taylor Swift image. AI and deepfakes are only going to get worse this election cycle

By Queenie Wong and Wendy Lee, *The Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 21, 2024

A patriotic image shows megastar Taylor Swift dressed up like Uncle Sam, falsely suggesting she endorses Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump.

“Taylor Wants You To Vote For Donald Trump,” the image, which appears to be generated by artificial intelligence, says.

Over the weekend, Trump amplified the lie when he shared the image along with others depicting support from Swift fans to his 7.6 million followers on his social network Truth Social.

Deception has long played a part in politics, but the rise of artificial intelligence tools that allow people to rapidly generate fake images or videos by typing out a phrase adds another complex layer to a familiar problem on social media. Known as deepfakes, these digitally altered images and videos can make it appear someone is saying or doing something they aren’t.

As the race between Trump and Democratic nominee Kamala Harris intensifies, disinformation experts are sounding the alarm about generative AI’s risks.

15 “I’m worried as we move closer to the election, this is going to explode,” said Emilio Ferrara, a computer science professor at USC Viterbi School of Engineering. “It’s going to get much worse than it is now.”

Platforms such as Facebook and X have rules against manipulated images, audio and videos, but they’ve struggled to enforce these policies as AI-generated content floods the internet. Faced with accusations they’re censoring political speech, they’ve focused more on labeling content and fact checking, rather than pulling posts down. And there are exceptions to the rules, such as satire, that allow people to create and share fake images online.

20 “We have all the problems of the past, all the myths and disagreements and general stupidity, that we’ve been dealing with for 10 years,” said Hany Farid, a UC Berkeley professor who focuses on misinformation and digital forensics. “Now we have it being supercharged with generative AI and we are really, really partisan.” (...) Farid, who analyzed the Swift images that Trump shared, said they appear to be a mix of both real and fake images, a “devious” way to push out misleading content.

25 People share fake images for various reasons. They might be doing it to just go viral on social media or troll others. Visual imagery is a powerful part of propaganda, warping people’s views on politics including about the legitimacy of the 2024 presidential election, he said. (...)

Political campaigns have been bracing for AI’s impact on the election.

30 Vice President Harris’ campaign has an interdepartmental team “to prepare for the potential effects of AI this election, including the threat of malicious deepfakes,” said spokeswoman Mia Ehrenberg in a statement. The campaign only authorizes the use of AI for “productivity tools” such as data analysis, she added.

Trump’s campaign didn’t respond to a request for comment.

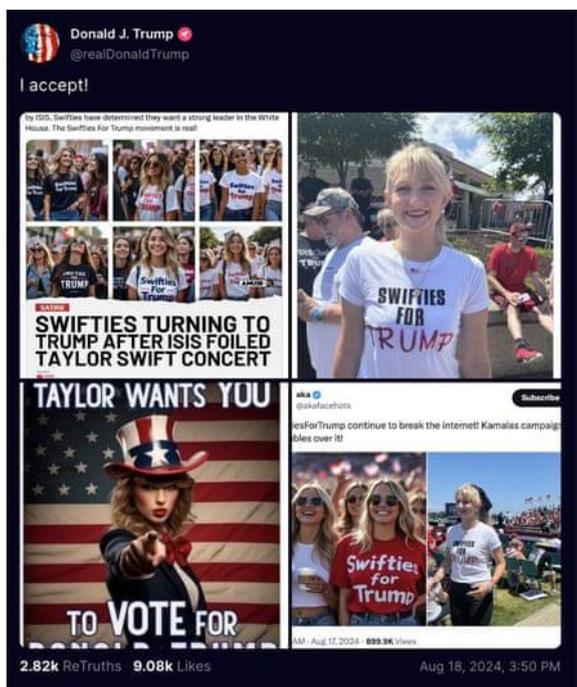
35 Part of the challenge in curbing fake or manipulated video is that the federal law that guides social media operations doesn’t specifically address deepfakes. **The Communications Decency Act of 1996** does not hold social media companies liable for hosting content, as long as they do not aid or control those who posted it.

But over the years, tech companies have come under fire for what’s appeared on their platforms and many social media companies have established content moderation guidelines to address this such as prohibiting hate speech. (...)

With social media platforms facing threats of regulation and lawsuits, some misinformation experts are skeptical that social networks want to properly moderate misleading content.

40 Social networks make most of their money from ads so keeping users on the platforms for a longer time is “good for business,” Farid said. “What engages people is the absolute, most conspiratorial, hateful, salacious, angry content,” he said. “That’s who we are as human beings.”

It’s a harsh reality that even Swifties won’t be able to shake off.



Swift Action Against Deepfakes

In January of this year, fake pornographic images of Taylor Swift, created with artificial intelligence (AI), began circulating on X, formerly Twitter. While some images were taken down, there were so many that eventually the platform simply made searching for the singer's name impossible until the issue was fully dealt with. At the time, USA Today ran the headline "Were 5 Taylor Swift explicit AI photos illegal?" and found that they were in only 10 states. (California and Virginia were among the first states to criminalize them, in 2019.)

Deepfake pornography can be created of anybody, by anybody. All you need to do is drop a photo of someone's face into one of several apps that exist for the purpose. There are even how-to guides on Reddit. The damage it wreaks can be extensive. 10 One Indian journalist ended up at the hospital after a deepfake porn video of her was shared widely online, and her phone number leaked. She was inundated with messages asking for her rates for sex, she wrote in HuffPost.

One of the most popular singers in the world becoming a victim of deepfake pornography was probably the best thing that could have happened to bring attention to a neglected issue, however. It wasn't only Swift's fans who jumped to her defense ("protect Taylor Swift" was a trending term at the time). A flurry of state legislative action followed. In Missouri, a lawmaker 15 in St. Charles even named his bill to allow victims of nonconsensual, sexually explicit deepfakes to seek damages in civil court the "**Taylor Swift Act.**"

That bill, and a second similar one, failed to pass in Missouri. But several others around the country did pass. According to the newly released tracker from the progressive think tank Public Citizen, legislation to regulate what are also called intimate deepfakes now exists in 23 states, and has been introduced in 4 more.

20 The laws, however, are a hodgepodge. In Mississippi and Tennessee, for instance, the legislation only pertains to minors, and states vary in whether they allow civil or criminal suits to be brought, or both. What is really needed is national coverage, since authorities in, say, Virginia, cannot do much to prosecute someone who lives in any of the states where the creation of intimate deepfakes is still legal.

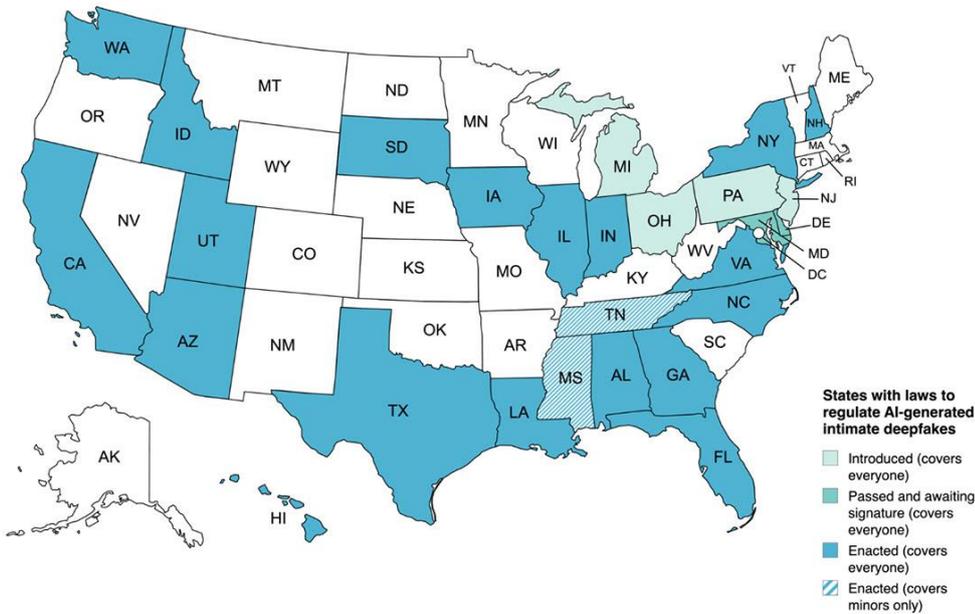
"States don't really have a lot of ability to track down across state lines," Sara Jodka, an attorney who practices data privacy 25 and cybersecurity law, told Wired. "So it's going to be very rare, and it's going to be very specific scenarios where the laws are going to be able to even be enforced."

Two bills have been introduced at the federal level this year: one by Democratic congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and another by Republican Senator Ted Cruz. Both are bipartisan. Ocasio-Cortez's Defiance Act would grant victims the right to sue in civil court, and Cruz's Take It Down Act would require social media sites to take down 30 nonconsensual deepfake pornography and make publishing it a federal crime.

Movement around this issue is just getting started globally as well. As of April, creating a sexually explicit deepfake is a criminal offense in **England and Wales**. In August, **Australia** introduced new criminal penalties for the distribution of sexually explicit deepfakes, and made their creation an aggravated offense. Distribution has been illegal in South Korea since 2020. (The nation is currently embroiled in scandal after several chatrooms, run by teenagers, on the messenger app Telegram 35 were found to be sharing intimate deepfakes of students and teachers at their schools.) **The European Union**, too, has taken steps to criminalize deepfake pornography, although the bill won't take effect until 2027.

Legislation around legal action is just one piece of the puzzle. **Social media companies** should also have more robust systems in place to limit the distribution of nonconsensual videos and photos.

It took some time for nations to even start to catch up with the new harms AI can produce—the story of the Indian journalist, 40 for example, happened in 2018. Perhaps in part because politicians, too, are now being affected by deepfakes of themselves, they are finally moving on the topic with more gusto. **So far, both domestically and abroad, regulating intimate deepfakes has cut through the usual left-right divisions.** Italy's right-wing prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, introduced comprehensive AI legislation in April that would criminalize harmful deepfakes of all kinds.



Document 4 - Will Taylor Swift pay those high rent, gas, grocery, or energy bills?

By Christopher Tremoglie, *The Washington Examiner*, September 11, 2024

.Pop music sensation Taylor Swift made headlines on Tuesday when she gave the least-shocking political endorsement arguably in the history of political endorsements. To no one’s surprise, Swift endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris for president. It’s silly idolatry that really should not hold any relevance.

5 “I will be casting my vote for Kamala Harris and Tim Walz in the 2024 Presidential Election. I’m voting for [Kamala Harris] because she fights for the rights and causes I believe need a warrior to champion them,” Swift posted to her Instagram account. “I think she is a steady-handed, gifted leader and I believe we can accomplish so much more in this country if we are led by calm and not chaos.”

10 The singer’s absurd explanation for endorsing Harris, especially the part in which she connected Harris with “calm and not chaos,” apparently forgetting about the vice president’s support for the destructive Black Lives Matter riots, was posted under a picture of Swift with a cat and concluded with “Childless Cat Lady.” Obviously, this was a dig at Sen. J.D. Vance’s (R-OH) controversial comments.

Swift’s admittedly witty post aside, whoever she supports or endorses for president should be met with just one simple question: Who cares?

15 If voters are selecting their presidential candidates based on the opinions and comments of musicians, then this country is imminently doomed. Forget comparisons to the collapse of the Roman Empire — the United States will set a record of decadent stupidity if Swift’s endorsement actually has legitimate sway. Moreover, if it does, it is indicative of intellectual decay, cultural rot, and a lack of gravitas in our nation.

20 No one should care who Swift wants as president. Will she pay her fans’ rent payments, which have significantly increased since President Joe Biden and Harris were elected? Will she pay for her fans’ grocery bills, which have soared in cost compared to when former President Donald Trump was in office? How about their much higher gas or energy bills compared to the days before Jan. 20, 2021?

25 What about other important issues, such as security? Is Swift going to pay for the protection of young female nursing students in Georgia so they don’t get brutally murdered by illegal immigrants who are only in this country because of the failures of border czar Kamala Harris and the immigration policies she supported? Will she pay to protect innocent people from the murderers and carjackers who were left out on the streets and not put in jail because of the implementation of the kind of criminal justice policies Harris supports?

30 Unless Swift agrees to answer any of the above questions in the affirmative, then, in reality, her endorsement of Harris is moot. The endorsement is little more than a cultlike reaction that is typical of the affluent elitist entertainer class in the country. She will issue public support for Harris but be conspicuously quiet regarding the innocent people who have suffered because of Harris’s political beliefs.

Taylor Swift is free to vote for whoever she wants as president. She's also free to endorse anyone she wants. But to argue that her endorsement is anything more than propaganda is utter nonsense. Let's stop acknowledging it is anything more than that or giving such things any significance.

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Document 5 - Anyone could be a victim of 'deepfakes'. But there's a reason Taylor Swift is a target

Jill Filipovic, *The Guardian*, Wed 31 Jan 2024

Taylor Swift is having quite a month. The singer-songwriter saw her image in disgusting deepfake porn images that were circulated online, prompting a necessary and overdue conversation on how AI and deepfake porn is used to harass, humiliate, degrade, threaten, extort and punish (mostly) women. And then her boyfriend, the football player Travis Kelce, saw his team make it to the Super Bowl, which set off a wave of rightwing anti-Swift hysteria and conspiracy theorizing. The most powerful pop star in the world has everything going for her – and has also become an avatar for widespread anxieties about female power, sexuality and gender politics.

Deepfake porn brings up a whole host of moral, ethical, philosophical and legal questions. Those questions grow even more complicated when applied to celebrities. (...) It's not parody, and the whole point is that it's extremely realistic, difficult or impossible to differentiate from the real thing. And faked, nonconsensual porn videos aren't the only deepfakes to be worried about. If anyone's likeness can be digitally manipulated to say or do anything in a highly realistic video, the consequences are wide-ranging and unsettling to consider: imagine everything from world leaders on video making dangerous pronouncements to average citizens engaged in shocking and offensive behavior that could cost them their livelihoods or even lives, to someone who believes you've wronged them getting revenge by, say, making an explicit video featuring your young child.

Even if you're not a hugely famous female celebrity, and even if you're someone who generally plays by the rules and lives conservatively, deepfakes could come for you. And right now, there are troublingly few protections, and no federal legislation against deepfake porn, though some members of Congress have introduced bills to ban the sharing of deepfakes without consent of those depicted.

Some legal observers still argue that deepfake porn, and other deepfake videos, are generally protected by the first amendment. That is, to put it mildly, up for debate,

and our laws are notoriously slow in evolving to address rapid technological change.

I won't pretend to possess the legal expertise or individual wisdom to craft the kind of legislation that would both protect first amendment freedom of expression interests and crack down on dangerous and abusive deepfakes. But it is very obviously long past time that robust discussions on how to do just that were at the fore of public debate and discussion, including in Congress, in every state legislature and on the pages of every newspaper. (...)

Animating the current discussion of deepfake porn, though, is the growing and frankly bizarre rightwing hostility to Taylor Swift. The right is rife with Swift conspiracy theories, including that she's a Pentagon asset, that she's part of an election interference psy-op, that the Super Bowl is rigged, and that the Swift-Kelce relationship and his team's recent victories are all a part of a broad plan to reinstate Joe Biden in office.

And many of these conspiracy theories aren't coming from the lunatic fringe, at least insofar as many mainstream conservatives are lunatics but are not on the fringes – some of them have been disseminated by the former Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy, Fox News hosts and other influential conservative figures.

The rightwing problem with Swift is part of a greater conservative hostility to a culture that conservatives feel has left them behind. While conservatives have in many ways captured American politics – dominating the US supreme court, taking over state legislatures and governorships, passing vastly unpopular far-right legislation including broad abortion bans – rightwing gender traditionalism, misogyny, homophobia, xenophobia, authoritarianism and religiosity have been generally rejected in the way people actually live and in the media Americans consume.

Swift is in many ways a uniquely potent embodiment of this dynamic. She's an attractive Caucasian woman whose blond hair, blue eyes and country music roots

once led white supremacists to turn her into an icon of Aryan womanhood (through no action of her own, to be clear), but who now is unmarried in her mid-30s – normal for many highly educated, successful and financially secure women living in large cities, but the sources of great consternation for conservatives who believe a woman’s chief duty in life is to submit to a man and start having babies in her teens or 20s.

There’s more: she uses her music to speak to the complex feelings of women and girls, and tells those same women and girls that she understands their confusion and longing but also sees their power. She clearly has the pretty normie liberal politics that are standard for women her age (pro-abortion-rights, pro-voting, anti-Trump, probably pro-Biden), but is also dating a man who is thriving in a sport that is particularly revered in conservative circles.

In contrast to a megastar like, say, Beyoncé, the conspiratorial right seems particularly incensed at Swift

because she does exemplify at least some markers of “their” culture: she spent much of her early years in Tennessee, got her start in country music, initially sang about her longing for love and a traditional relationship, and is currently dating a white football player who also reads on first look as the golden boy of a Republican family. (...)

And so too many conservatives who simply cannot accept that their views and values are wildly out of step with the American norm are trawling around for some alternate explanation. Those same conservatives are angry that the only way they can impose their unpopular views and values is by minority authoritarian rule, and seek to punish anyone whose liberalism has wider appeal. (...)

Now is the time to call on Congress and state legislators to act – not just on deepfake porn and not just for Taylor Swift, but on the perils of AI more broadly, and for a more secure future for every person on the planet.

Who Do Voters Really Like? Taylor Swift.

The pop star Taylor Swift has endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris — and is far more popular among Democrats and independents than Republicans.

Taylor Swift's Favorability Among Likely Voters



Based on a New York Times/Philadelphia Inquirer/Siena College poll of 2,437 voters nationwide conducted from Sept. 11 to 16. • By The New York Times

The New York Times, July 10, 2024

By George Clooney

Mr. Clooney is an actor, director and film producer.

I'm a lifelong Democrat; I make no apologies for that. I'm proud of what my party represents and what it stands for. As part of my participation in the democratic process and in support of my chosen candidate, I have led some of the 5 biggest fund-raisers in my party's history. Barack Obama in 2012. Hillary Clinton in 2016. Joe Biden in 2020. Last month I co-hosted the single largest fund-raiser supporting any Democratic candidate ever, for President Biden's re-election. I say all of this only to express how much I 10 believe in this process and how profound I think this moment is.

I love Joe Biden. As a senator. As a vice president and as president. I consider him a friend, and I believe in him. Believe in his character. Believe in his morals. In the last 15 four years, he's won many of the battles he's faced.

But the one battle he cannot win is the fight against time. None of us can. It's devastating to say it, but the Joe Biden I was with three weeks ago at the fund-raiser was not the Joe "big F-ing deal" Biden of 2010. He wasn't even the 20 Joe Biden of 2020. He was the same man we all witnessed at the debate.

Was he tired? Yes. A cold? Maybe. But our party leaders need to stop telling us that 51 million people didn't see what we just saw. We're all so terrified by the prospect of 25 a second Trump term that we've opted to ignore every warning sign. The George Stephanopoulos interview only reinforced what we saw the week before. As Democrats, we collectively hold our breath or turn down the volume whenever we see the president, whom we respect, walk off 30 Air Force One or walk back to a mic to answer an unscripted question.

Is it fair to point these things out? It has to be. This is about age. Nothing more. But also nothing that can be reversed. We are not going to win in November with this president. 35 On top of that, we won't win the House, and we're going to lose the Senate. This isn't only my opinion; this is the opinion of every senator and Congress member and governor who I've spoken with in private. Every single one, irrespective of what he or she is saying publicly.

40 We love to talk about how the Republican Party has ceded all power, and all of the traits that made it so formidable with Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, to a single person who seeks to hold on to the presidency, and yet most of our members of Congress are opting to wait and 45 see if the dam breaks. But the dam has broken. We can put

our heads in the sand and pray for a miracle in November, or we can speak the truth.

It is disingenuous, at best, to argue that Democrats have already spoken with their vote and therefore the 50 nomination is settled and done, when we just received new and upsetting information. We all think Republicans should abandon their nominee now that he's been convicted of 34 felonies. That's new and upsetting information as well. Top Democrats — Chuck Schumer, 55 Hakeem Jeffries, Nancy Pelosi — and senators, representatives and other candidates who face losing in November need to ask this president to voluntarily step aside.

All of the scary stories that we're being told about what 60 would happen next are simply not true. In all likelihood, the money in the Biden-Harris coffers could go to help elect the presidential ticket and other Democrats. The new nominee wouldn't be left off ballots in Ohio. We Democrats have a very exciting bench. We don't anoint 65 leaders or fall sway to a cult of personality; we vote for a president. We can easily foresee a group of several strong Democrats stepping forward to stand and tell us why they're best qualified to lead this country and take on some of the deeply concerning trends we're seeing from the 70 revenge tour that Donald Trump calls a presidential campaign.

Let's hear from Wes Moore and Kamala Harris and Gretchen Whitmer and Gavin Newsom and Andy Beshear and J.B. Pritzker and others. Let's agree that the candidates 75 not attack one another but, in the short time we have, focus on what will make this country soar. Then we could go into the Democratic convention next month and figure it out.

Would it be messy? Yes. Democracy is messy. But would it enliven our party and wake up voters who, long before 80 the June debate, had already checked out? It sure would. The short ramp to Election Day would be a benefit for us, not a danger. It would give us the chance to showcase the future without so much opposition research and negative campaigning that comes with these ridiculously long and 85 expensive election seasons. This can be an exciting time for democracy, as we've just seen with the 200 or so French candidates who stepped aside and put their personal ambitions on hold to save their democracy from the far right.

90 Joe Biden is a hero; he saved democracy in 2020. We need him to do it again in 2024.