

2004 The Democratic Convention

Howard Dean

I was hoping for a reception like this. I was just hoping that it would be on Thursday night, instead of on Tuesday night.

I may not be the nominee, but I can tell you this: For the next hundred days, I'll be doing everything I can to make sure that John Kerry and John Edwards take our country back for the people who built it. Because tonight, we're all here to represent the Democratic wing of the Democratic party.

I'm proud of John Kerry's leadership, and I intend to stand shoulder to shoulder with him as we fight for the things Harry Truman promised in 1948: health insurance for every American, a real jobs plan to create jobs instead of destroy them. Standing up for middle class and working Americans who got a tax increase, not a tax cut. And a foreign policy that relies on telling the truth to the American people before we send our brave American soldiers to fight in foreign lands. I'd like a commander-in-chief who supports our soldiers and our veterans, instead of cutting their hardship pay when they're abroad, and their health benefits when they get home.

I'm Howard Dean. And I'm voting for John Kerry.

I'm voting for John Kerry and John Edwards because I'm tired of seeing hard-working Americans struggling with jobs that pay less than they did four years ago. I'm voting for John Kerry and John Edwards because I want a president and vice president as good and as strong as the American people. And I'm voting for John Kerry and John Edwards because I want to see America restored as the moral leader of the world.

America's greatness rests on far more than the power of our arms. Our greatness is also measured by our goodness. It is in the capacity of our minds, the size of our hearts, and the strength of our democracy.

As I've traveled America, I've seen that strength. I've seen it in the people I've met and their desire to take our country back for the American people. I saw it in a college student in Pennsylvania who sold her bicycle and sent us a check for \$100 with a note that said, "I sold my bicycle for democracy." I saw it in a woman from Iowa who handed me \$50—all in quarters. She saved it from her monthly disability check, because she wanted to make America well again. And I saw it in the 19-year-old from Alabama who had never been involved in politics before he got in his car and drove up to Vermont, because he didn't feel like he was being heard in Washington.

He was just one of so many. They learned that politics was too important to be left to the politicians. They didn't just pack their bags—they backed their hopes that we can take our country back. And you know what? We will.

We're not going to be afraid to stand up for what we believe. We're not going to let those who disagree with us shout us down under a banner of false patriotism. And we're not going to give up a single voter, or a single state. We're going to be proud to call ourselves Democrats, not just here in Boston. We're going to be proud to call ourselves Democrats in Mississippi, proud to call ourselves Democrats in Utah and Idaho. And we're going to be proud to call ourselves Democrats in Texas.

Never again will we be ashamed to call ourselves Democrats. Never. Never. Never. We're not just going to change presidents, we're going to change this country and reclaim the American dream.

To everyone who supported me—you've given me so much, and I can't thank you enough. But this was

never about me. It was about us. It was about giving new life to our party, new energy to our democracy, and providing hope again for the greatest nation on earth.

And so, today, even though you have already given so much—I want to ask you to give one more thing: Give America President John Kerry. Together, we can take our country back. And only you have the power to make it happen.