

# DNC climate events highlight call for action

Groups conduct tours, speeches and voter party

By Nara Schoenberg  
Chicago Tribune

The visuals were first-rate: an all-electric camper van customized with images of wind turbines turning against an orange sky. There was swag: post-cards, fans, buttons and posters. And there was a passionate speech by a leading voice for climate action in the U.S. Congress: "There is a stark choice facing us," said U.S. Rep. Kathy Castor of Florida. "Are we going to continue to help people afford the heating of the planet and all these extreme (weather) events? Or are we going backwards?"

But this wasn't the Democratic National Convention. In addition to the standard meetings and workshops at McCormick Place, climate groups are holding a range of events in Chicago this week: at least two news conferences, a tour of an all-electric home in North Lawndale, a happy hour and watch party at the Salt Shed, and a "little climate voter party" in the West Loop that was attended by actress Julia Louis-Dreyfus.

The message at two events attended by the Tribune was clear: The climate crisis is urgent, real people are already suffering, and President Joe Biden's signature climate bill must not be rolled back. Former President Donald Trump has criticized the climate bill — the Inflation Reduction Act — saying it is the "biggest tax hike in history" and calling incentives for electric vehicles "one of the dumbest (decisions) I've ever heard."

He's also voiced support for fossil fuels, the top source of planet-warming greenhouse gases, saying "We will drill, baby, drill," during his convention speech. The Democratic nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris, is a strong supporter of the Inflation Reduction Act, the biggest climate bill in U.S. history.



Homeowner Tekuila McGee stands alongside her all-electric heating and cooling system Wednesday in Chicago. She swapped out her fossil-fuel powered appliances and heating system with the help of Elevate's electrification program. VINCENT D. JOHNSON/FOR THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

A recent government report found that in 2023, more than 3.4 million American families saved \$8.4 billion from Inflation Reduction Act consumer tax credits on home energy technologies. The tax credits can save up to 30% off heat pumps, insulation, rooftop solar, and other clean energy technologies.

A news conference Tuesday morning in the West Loop featured the Climate Action Campaign's all-electric camper van, which is on a six-week, six-state tour to raise awareness about climate change.

Climate Action Campaign Director Margie Alt noted that this is the first presidential nominating convention to be held in Chicago in 28 years.

"A lot of things have improved in the past three decades, but the climate crisis is not one of them," she said. "Extreme weather has gotten dramatically worse. We all know it's fueled by the climate crisis and already in 2024 we have

experienced 19 \$1 billion or more events, totaling more than \$49 billion in devastating damage." Castor talked about extreme heat and flooding in Florida, and the importance of the Inflation Reduction Act in helping ordinary people cope with a hotter planet. "Americans have drawn down billions of dollars provided through the Inflation Reduction Act to lower their electric bills, make those electric vehicles more affordable, those heat pumps, weatherizing their homes, upgrading their doors and windows," she said. "These are real for people."

Among the other off-campus events: the Chicago sustainable energy company Invenery was co-sponsoring a Clean Power Happy Hour on Wednesday at the Salt Shed in the Goose Island neighborhood. "We've got over 30 federal and state policymakers for the event, so we think it's going to be the premier

energy-related event outside the convention center," said Invenery President and corporate business leader Jim Murphy. Invenery has some competition. Illinois Environmental Council Executive Director Jen Walling said a "little climate voter party" Tuesday in the West Loop drew hundreds of people, including Louis-Dreyfus.

At a news conference Wednesday at Elevate, the Chicago-based clean and affordable energy nonprofit, local and regional clean energy leaders assembled, including U.S. Rep. Sean Casten of Illinois, Chicago Chief Sustainability Officer Angela Tovar, Walling and Elevate CEO Anne Evens.

White House National Climate Advisor Ali Zaidi appeared in his personal capacity, as he did at the earlier electric camper van news conference. "All eyes are on Chicago and Illinois during the Democratic Convention

this week, and I'm proud to say, they should be," Walling said. "Thanks to the leadership of the Biden-Harris administration, Gov. (JB) Pritzker and his administration, and Mayor Brandon Johnson and his administration, and countless advocates — many of whom are in the room today — Illinois is a blueprint for clean energy progress and environmental protection nationwide." Casten said that 15 years ago, Illinois was known as a coal state; that was where our power came from.

"We are now a state that depends on nuclear, on wind, yes, some gas but Illinois is decarbonizing because we're smart. We're doing it because we put science first. And we also are doing it because we are greedy," Casten said, laughing. "It is really nice to not have to pay a lot of money for energy."

In most of the United States, onshore wind and solar power are the cheapest sources of energy.

Tovar said Chicago is benefiting from the alignment of city, state and national climate policies. Illinois has a major state climate bill, the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, which sets a path to 100% clean energy by 2050 while prioritizing economic opportunities for disadvantaged communities.

Through CEJA, the state is investing in initiatives such as workforce training programs and pre-apprenticeship programs, Tovar said. There are also city programs, such as Green Homes Chicago, which offers free home energy and efficiency upgrades — including insulation, and heat pump heating and cooling systems — to some income-eligible homeowners.

After the news conference, there was a tour of an all-electric home in North Lawndale.

Homeowner Tekuila McGee, who swapped out her fossil-fuel powered appliances and heating system with the help of Elevate's electrification program, said that she was always interested in electrification, but didn't know where to start.

"I was so excited when Elevate reached out to me because I care a lot about protecting the environment," said McGee, an insurance claims examiner.

She said she's most excited about her all-electric heating and cooling system, because her home didn't have central air and was sweltering in the summer, especially upstairs.

But she also appreciates the improved air quality in her three-bedroom brick home, the chance to increase her home value, and the opportunity to eliminate her gas bill.

"I'm proud that I can play an important part in reducing carbon emissions in my neighborhood. I'm excited that Elevate is going to continue this work in North Lawndale, and I can't wait to see what else is possible in the future," she said.

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# Pelosi on Biden exit: Aim was protecting his legacy

By Ray Long  
Chicago Tribune

Former U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Wednesday said Democrats need to hold the White House and win majorities in both the House and Senate to defend democracy against Republicans led by former President Donald Trump, a belief that underscored her concerns about President Joe Biden's reelection bid. While reiterating she thinks Biden is a "very, very consequential president," she hinted many of his accomplishments were in jeopardy if he continued his presidential bid against Trump.

"I wanted very much to protect his legacy ... and what it meant to the American people," Pelosi said at an appearance at the University Club of Chicago, noting that legacy ranged from getting a massive infrastructure program passed to cutting the costs of prescription drugs.

Pelosi rebuffed efforts to explain more about her interactions with Biden that precipitated the president's

decision to withdraw from the campaign and endorse Vice President Kamala Harris as the Democratic nominee.

Pressed for more details during an invitation-only discussion with Democratic political strategist and CNN commentator David Axelrod, Pelosi declined to offer many. Axelrod joked at one point Pelosi was "filibustering" rather than telling the entire story of her conversations with Biden.

"My point was only, 'We need a better campaign,'" she said during the interview promoting her new book, "The Art of Power: My Story as America's First Woman Speaker of the House." While stating she knows policy, she said, "I know my politics too. So I want to see certain things, those things. The president made his decision."

She quickly added, "He made a decision to pass the torch with great selflessness." Pelosi was one of the most high-profile Democrats to signal publicly that Biden should step aside from the campaign trail following

his halting June 27 debate performance against Trump that reignited questions about the 81-year-old president's viability. Biden withdrew from the race less than a month later and backed Harris, who is set to celebrate her nomination in Chicago on Thursday at the Democratic National Convention.

"I have very serious concerns about the preceding president," Pelosi said, refusing to mention Trump by name. "It was essential for our country, for our democracy, for us to be able to win this election."

Asked to go beyond the politics and discuss what it meant to have those difficult conversations with Biden, Pelosi said: "We won't be having that conversation right now. What we're doing now is to say, 'Great sacrifice was made here.' ... Right now it is about winning the election."

She acknowledged she "cried over this, I'm sad about it, but we take an oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. That's who we are. We take a pledge to the flag



Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi speaks with Democratic strategist and CNN commentator David Axelrod on Wednesday at the University Club of Chicago. TESS CROWLEY/TRIBUNE

every day, liberty and justice for all. That's who we are."

Instead of talking about "who said what when, where and how on how we got to this decision," Pelosi said Biden's decision "increases the odds that we can protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Speaker off and on for eight years beginning in 2007, Pelosi held the Democratic leadership role during key moments in the nation's history, from the passage of Obamacare to the Jan. 6, 2021, Trump-inspired insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

She likened the importance of winning in November to the words of "The Star-Spangled Banner" made famous by Francis Scott Key, who wrote how he saw "proof through the night" that the American "flag was still there" after British bombardments during the War of 1812.

"And this is part of the night that we have to 'proof through,'" she said, drawing applause.

Pelosi maintained winning the House and making Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries of New

York speaker is critical to the nation's future and lamented how Republicans too often today only accept the results of an election when they win.

"Where'd that come from? What's that?" she said, adding, "You have to make ... a decision to win and you have to make every decision in favor of winning."

"You have to not waste any time. You cannot underutilize any resource, and you cannot have one regret the day of the election that you could have done (something differently)," she said.

# Open Letter from Retired U.S. Military Leaders in Support of Israel



Given our experience as retired American military leaders, we are very concerned about the security impacts of increasingly strained U.S.-Israel ties as Israel becomes a growing source of domestic division. We therefore feel compelled to declare that a strong Israel is vital to the United States national security, and it is imperative that America unequivocally stand by this indispensable ally.

Amid surging antisemitism in America and the world, following the largest one-day loss of innocent Jewish life since the Holocaust, U.S. support for the only Jewish state should be clear, unwavering, and not conditioned. The benefits of this partnership for the American people and this important region are many, and too valuable, to forsake.

America must support Israel as it restores its security, shattered on October 7, against Iran and its terrorist proxies in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen that all seek to destroy the Jewish state. These forces are also enemies of the United States and everything we stand for. This Iranian-backed axis of terror, as well as other adversaries and allies around the world, are watching closely to see whether the United States will stand by one of its closest allies fighting in self-defense, even when the going gets tough.

Against these barbaric enemies, Israel stands on the front lines of the fight for civilization, the lone stable, democratic American ally in a critical, yet tumultuous, region. Israel is a visceral part of the West with its liberal democracy, ethnically diverse population, and support for individual rights. Even in facing adversaries who respect neither the laws of war nor human life, we believe Israel has fought in accordance with the laws of armed conflict.

Outside the United States, Israel arguably has the most innovative economy in the world. It is a leader in nearly all the key technologies that will determine whether the global balance of power in the 21st-century continues to favor U.S.-led forces of freedom and democracy.

Israel also has one of the most capable military and intelligence services in the world, to America's benefit. Our militaries work hand in glove, sharing intelligence and military lessons, and co-developing cutting-edge defense technologies. More than any other American ally, Israel has always sought to defend itself by itself. Still, U.S. forces recently helped defend Israel against an Iranian onslaught. Israel's military and intelligence services have also often protected U.S. soldiers and citizens and provided critical intelligence.

Israel has traditionally been the source of overwhelming bipartisan support. So it should remain. We can disagree, as all allies do, but signs of public division only embolden the forces of violence, instability, and extremism that threaten both America and Israel. When we stand together, however, peace and regional stability become possible.

In these challenging times, we reaffirm our friendship and bond with the State of Israel—and urge all Americans to stand by our close friend and partner.

- Gen Frank McKenzie, USMC (ret.), Commander, U.S. Central Command
- Gen Philip M. Breedlove, USAF (ret.), Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Commander US European Command
- Gen Kevin R. Chilton, USAF (ret.), Commander, U.S. Strategic Command
- ADM Timothy J. Keating, USN (ret.), Commander, U.S. Pacific Command
- Gen Duncan J. McNabb, USAF (ret.), Commander, U.S. Transportation Command
- Gen C.T. "Tony" Robertson, Jr., USAF (ret.), Commander, U.S. Transportation Command, and Commander, Air Mobility Command
- GEN David M. Rodriguez, USA (ret.), Commander, United States Africa Command
- GEN Walter L. "Skip" Sharp, USA (ret.), Commander, United Nations Command, ROK-United States Combined Forces Command, and United States Forces Korea
- GEN James D. Thurman, USA (ret.), Commander, United Nations Command, ROK-United States Combined Forces Command, and United States Forces Korea
- Gen James F. Amos, USMC (ret.), 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps
- Gen James Conway, USMC (ret.), 34th Commandant of the United States Marine Corps
- ADM Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr., USN (ret.), Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
- GEN Frank I. Gross, USA (ret.), 27th Chief of the National Guard Bureau
- ADM Jonathan W. Greenert, USN (ret.), 30th Chief of Naval Operations
- Gen Robert Neller, USMC (ret.), 37th Commandant of the United States Marine Corps
- ADM Paul Zukunft, USCG (ret.), 25th Commandant of the United States Coast Guard
- Gen William Begert, USAF (ret.), Commander, Pacific Air Forces, and Air Component Commander for the Commander, U.S. Pacific Command
- ADM Bruce Clingan, USN (ret.), Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe/Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Africa/Commander, Allied Joint Forces Command, Naples
- Gen Donald G. Cook, USAF (ret.), Commander, Air Education and Training Command
- ADM Mark Fitzgerald, USN (ret.), Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe/Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Africa/Commander, Allied Joint Forces Command, Naples
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- ADM Jerome L. Johnson, USN (ret.), Vice Chief of Naval Operations
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- Gen Charles Wald, USAF (ret.), Deputy Commander of United States European Command (EUCOM)
- LT Gen Marcus Anderson, USAF (ret.), Air Force Inspector General
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- LT Gen Tad Oelstrom, USAF (ret.), Special Assistant to the Commander Air Force Space
- LTG Raymond Palumbo, USA (ret.), Director for Defense Intelligence
- LT Gen Frank Panter, USMC (ret.), Deputy Commandant for Installations and Logistics, Headquarters Marine Corps
- VADM Joe Rixey, USN (ret.), Director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency
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- LTG Thomas W. Spaehr, USA (ret.), Director, Office of Business Transformation, Headquarters, Department of the Army
- VADM Sandy Stosz, USCG (ret.), Deputy Commandant for Mission Support
- LTG Guy Swan, USA (ret.), Commanding General of U.S. Army North/Fifth Army

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- RADM Brian L. Losey, USN (ret.), Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command
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- MajGen Jarvis Lynch, USMC (ret.), Commander, Eastern Marine Recruiting Depot
- RADM Edward Masso, USNR (ret.), Commander, Navy Personnel Command/Deputy Chief of Naval Personnel
- RADM Terry McKnight, USN (ret.), Commander, Expeditionary Strike Group 2
- RADM William F. Merlin, USCG (ret.), Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District
- RADM Mark Milliken, USN (ret.), Director, Navy International Programs Office
- MG William C. Moore, USA (ret.), Director for Operations, Headquarters
- Maj Gen Lenny J. Richoux, USAF (ret.), Director of Manpower and Personnel (DJ-1), The Joint Staff
- MajGen Dave Richwine, USMC (ret.), Headquarters, USMC, Chief Information Officer and Director of Intelligence
- RADM Scott Sanders, USN (ret.), Deputy Director for Reserves, J7, Joint Staff
- Maj Gen Lawrence Stutzriem, USAF (ret.), Director, Plans, Policy, and Strategy, North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command
- RADM Jeremy D. Taylor, USN (ret.), Director Naval Aviation Plans and Requirements, Staff of CNO
- MajGen Larry Taylor, USMCR (ret.), Commanding General, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing
- MG William J. Walker, USA (ret.), 23rd Commanding General, District of Columbia National Guard
- MajGen Kenneth W. Weir, USMCR (ret.), Commanding General 4th Marine Air Wing
- BGen Michael Mulqueen, USMC (ret.), The United States Military Entrance Processing Command

# CTA is adding more Blue and Green Line service for the DNC

By Lizzie Kane and Sarah Freishtat  
Chicago Tribune

The CTA is adding more Blue and Green Line train service for the Democratic National Convention, the agency said Tuesday.

The CTA is running extra Green and Blue Line trains after each evening's events at the DNC, as well as more Green Line trains before the events. Travelers will see additional Blue Line

service through the rest of the week.

The announcement comes after train trackers showed scheduled trains running as long as 27 minutes apart shortly after the convention concluded Monday, though the CTA said the wait times were, in reality, lower. The CTA said Monday's extra Blue Line trains were used earlier in the day to recover from a service suspension due to an unplanned motorcade.

Normal service was restored before the convention concluded, the agency said.

CTA said in a statement Wednesday afternoon that it made the decision to add service on various rail lines "weeks" before the start of the DNC but knew the agency would need to be "flexible regarding overall service increases until we got closer to the event and had a better pulse on event plans, as well as staffing

availability." "Based on ridership demand from the first day we further adjusted service, which is typical for us during any major event," the statement said.

The Tribune previously reported that the CTA planned to add some additional "L" runs to handle the influx of convention visitors, though the agency provided few specifics about the service. As part of their prepara-

tions for the convention, the CTA and city officials celebrated the long-awaited opening of a new Green Line station at Damen as a key accomplishment. Located blocks from the United Center where the convention is taking place, the station was initially planned to be finished in 2020 and was completed weeks before the DNC began.

CTA riders are contending with bus reroutes

around security perimeters surrounding the convention sites. The agency also committed some equipment to DNC use, though CTA President Dorval Carter promised aldermen the transit agency would be able to run buses and trains during the convention with minimal effects on everyday passengers.

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