



Chair Address

2022 Franklin County Democratic Party Convention

Fellow Democrats,

Welcome. It is wonderful to see so many of you here at the convention today. Your presence here is true testimony to your interest in our country's future, and the energy that you are willing to invest in its security and well-being.

Our county conventions are carried out each year to do some party housework, electing some representatives, passing some Resolutions, you know, really exciting stuff. Well, not really exciting, but necessary. And we will do all of that today.

But this year is different. We gather today at a momentous time in American, even world, history. We are currently facing simultaneous worldwide catastrophes combined with the greatest danger to American democracy since the Civil War. Consider:

- We are now (hopefully) at the tail end of a pandemic that has killed almost 1 million Americans.
- War in Europe has displaced millions of people, left thousands of innocents dead, disrupted the global economy, and now threatens the world's food supply.
- Our planet is warming much faster than predicted and throwing historically bad weather at us in the form of disastrous storms, droughts, and fire. The oceans are rising.
- As if all that was not enough, an ongoing coup attempt in the US threatens to replace our democratic republic with an autocracy headed by a lunatic, with one third of the nation viewing him as "Dear Leader".
- And of immediate concern to all of us, we face a concerted effort by Republicans to establish permanent, one-party rule nationally, in North Carolina, and in Franklin County. If they are successful, the entire Democratic Party would be completely sidelined and left unable to participate in government for decades to come.

It seems like too much, doesn't it? And yet, here we are, called to meet these issues head on. Democrats just like us are meeting this morning all over North Carolina and, in the coming weeks, all over the United States. We are the ones called upon to carry our country, and our state, and our home in Franklin County, to safety. It is our job to ensure that everyone in our county is kept safe, that our schools continue to provide good education, that civil rights are respected, that our air and water are kept clean, and that our democracy, our right to vote, and our right to be heard, are all protected and secure.

It's on us to do this, and we can do this, by working to put our Democratic candidates in office in this year's elections. How can this be accomplished?

There are thousands of voters in Franklin County who have not yet registered to vote, or who have been inactive for some time. We need to get them registered and to the polls.

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There are thousands of voters in Franklin County who do not really understand the threat we all face. Who do not get it that if the Republicans take over, their intent is to do away with the America we have known all our lives and replace it with a social and economic wasteland. We need to help these voters see and understand that very real threat.

There are thousands of voters in Franklin County who do not know the amazing job that Democrats under Joe Biden have done in the past year. The news media have largely ignored this so, we need to make our stunning record clear. After all, look at what we've accomplished:

We have protected America from COVID 19

- The President set up an historic vaccination program that allowed more than 200 million Americans to be fully vaccinated. That includes almost 75% of all adults and millions of teenagers and children
- We closed the racial equity gap in COVID vaccinations among adults.
- About 96% of schools remain open

We have put people back to work

- President Biden has grown the economy more in one year than ever on record with 6.4 million jobs
- For the first time in 20 years, the U.S. economy has grown faster than China's.

The American Rescue Plan and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law are rebuilding our crumbling Infrastructure.

- These programs will provide clean drinking water, and upgrade our roads, airports, and rail. It will bring us the broadband internet access we so desperately need.
- We are providing a critical boost to clean energy.

President Biden has re-established America's place on the international stage.

- His ability to almost instantly create a worldwide consensus against Russian aggression in Ukraine has been nothing short of masterful.

Taken all together, this is the **most impactful legislative agenda ever for a first year President.**

And Democrats got all of this done in the face of unprecedented crises and despite continual obstruction and opposition from Congressional Republicans.

We can all be proud that Democrats have gotten so much done for the American people during President Biden's first year. We need to get word out about the beneficial impact we've had, so that all of the voters in Franklin County can give us their support.

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So here we are, all of us, called upon to support the national Democratic agenda where we can, to protect the courts and democratic institutions of North Carolina, and to safeguard our schools, our right to vote, our civil rights, and our cultural norms here in Franklin County. We cannot by ourselves solve the world's problems, but we can make certain that Franklin County does not fall under the control of those who would bring ruin to us all.

So, I thank you all for being here today, to take part in the seemingly mundane work of a County Convention, to elect a few representatives, and pass a few Resolutions. This may not seem like a lot, but it is an important step in this electoral year of many steps and it will serve to move us forward just a bit further.

I call upon all of you to join in this great work that lies ahead of us, to bring our Democratic candidates to victory in November, so that we are well-prepared for the bigger battle ahead, in 2024.

Gary Evans
Chair of the Franklin County Democratic Party
March 19, 2022