

Obama seen as ideal to rally Black voters for Kamala Harris, but some see limitations

Gerren Keith Gaynor | THE GRIO

(OPINION) - Former President Barack Obama is bringing his star power to the Harris-Walz campaign in the final days before Americans cast their votes for the 47th president of the United States.

Many Democrats see Obama, the 44th president and America's first Black commander-in-chief, as an effective and, perhaps, necessary surrogate for mobilizing the broad and diverse coalition of voters he garnered in both the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections. He is especially deployed this election cycle to talk directly to Black voters.

Austin Davis, the lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania, a crucial battleground state that Obama will visit next week, told theGrio that former President Obama is "probably the most effective surrogate we have in the Democratic Party today ... He can move numbers."

As the predecessor of Donald Trump, Obama has a level of understanding about the former Republican president's record and can "educate" Black communities about why a second Trump administration is a threat to them, says Jamarr Brown, executive director of Color of Change PAC.

He told theGrio, "Barack Obama, being our first Black president, still sits very well in our community."

Brown added, "So President Obama campaigning in places like Las Vegas, campaigning in Arizona and Georgia, going to Wisconsin ... it's going to be super important."

Tolulope Kevin Olasanoye, the executive director of the Georgia Democratic Party, told theGrio that he and Democrats in the Peach State are "fired up and excited" to hear from Obama when he joins Vice President Kamala Harris for a campaign rally in Atlanta on Thursday night.

"You'd be hard-pressed to find another person who has the capacity to fill up a large stadium with folks and fire them up quite like the former president," said Olasanoye. "There's no doubt in my mind that people show up when he's around, and people listen to what he has to say when they're there."

But not everyone is convinced that President Obama can completely move the needle with Black voters, particularly young Black male voters who say they will vote for Trump or stay home.



"The typical Democratic messengers, even Obama, are not who people are responding to," Angela Angel, senior advisor at Black Lives Matter PAC, told theGrio.

Angel has been engaging with Black voters on the ground in an effort to mobilize them to the polls. However, she said she is concerned about the number of Black voters, mostly Black men, who are turned off by the Democratic Party.

"That disconnect is very, very real, and, in some ways, it almost feels like it's growing," said Angel.

Looking back, some Black voters say they revere Obama as a historical Black figure but are left jaded by his presidency. Obama himself admitted during a Harris campaign rally in Detroit on Tuesday, "There was a bunch of stuff I didn't get to" during his eight years in office.

Angel, a former Maryland state delegate, said feelings of frustration among some Black voters, likely driven by the idea that a Black president would solve all the issues impacting Black communities, is partially a result of political leaders not doing a "good enough" job of explaining to voters the limitations of the presidency.

"President Obama was limited in what he could do, you know, especially after we lost Congress," she told theGrio. "They have this disappointment because they expected Obama to be a savior in ways that he actually could never have been."

However, Angel also criticized the political elite, noting that during the Obama presidency, "we threw a lot of parties in the White House, but didn't do a lot of policy."

She continued, "We finally had access to the White House, but what it also set up in this country was a divide of a political class of people that get to go to things and get to benefit, but they left behind the rest of America."

While Obama may remain a beloved and untouchable figure among older Black Americans, Angel says millennials who were "old enough to be excited" about his presidency, "when the economy and things took a turn, you were also old enough to understand, well, wait, this ain't what I thought it was gonna be."

"President Obama was a very popular figure

at the end of his term," said Dr. Alvin Tillery, CEO of the Alliance for Black Equality and founder of the data firm 2040 Strategy Group. "But even then, we saw polls that were saying some Black folks were saying their economic circumstances and the lived experiences of their communities didn't change under him."

Tillery's polling of 20,000 to 30,000 Black voters this election cycle consistently shows young Black men breaking away from Democrats. He tells theGrio that the main reason is that they are "under tons of stress."

"They have economic precarity. They're working very hard, and the Democrats weren't speaking to them," he argued.

Tillery explained, "The young Black swing voters that we're trying to reach were somewhere between 10 and 16 years old when Barack Obama left office."

The pollster encourages the Harris-Walz campaign to stop relying on older surrogates like Obama and instead tap younger voices, whether they be online influencers or musicians.

"I don't think any 63 [or] 64-year-old is the right messenger. I think that's another weakness of the Democrat campaign — they're deploying these Gen X and Boomer messengers," he said.

Former Wisconsin Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, who is a millennial, said of Obama being the best surrogate this election cycle for Black voters: "I don't know who a better one will be."

"I still have the deepest respect and admiration, but I'm now old," said Mandela, now a senior fellow at People For the American Way. "I can't say who this generation's Black political leader will be that will have the sway that would change the minds of whoever still might be on the fence."

"[Obama] is still the party's best messenger by far," he added. However, he admitted, "It is different now that he's not in office."

Travis County Healthcare District d/b/a Central Health
1111 E. Cesar Chavez Street
Austin, TX 78702

Request for Bids (RFB) # 2510-001 General Contractor for Select Interior Demolition of Cameron Center
Due Date: 11/21/2024 by 2:00 PM CT

Central Health seeks to obtain Bids from qualified General Contractors for demolition. The project site is located at 7901 Cameron Road, Austin, TX 78754 and consists of three (3) buildings. Building 1 is two-story with approximately 16,202 square feet. Building 2 is three-story with approximately 49,055 square feet. Building 3 is three-story with approximately 51,836 square feet.

Bid Documents can be downloaded from:

<https://www.bidnetdirect.com/texas/traviscountyhealthcaredistrictdbacentralhealth>;
<http://www.centralhealth.net/finance/purchasing>; or
<https://www.txsmartbuy.com/esbd>

Travis County Healthcare District d/b/a Central Health
1111 E. Cesar Chavez Street
Austin, TX 78702

RFP 2510-004 Flexible Spending Account and Health Savings Account Administration

Due Date: Thursday, November 14, 2024 by 2:00 PM CT

Travis County Healthcare District D/B/A Central Health is seeking proposals to administer the full Health Care and Dependent Care Spending Accounts. The maximum limits are currently \$3,200 for the Health Care Flexible Spending Account and \$5,000 for the Dependent Care Account. Central Health currently utilizes a debit card for both accounts and a \$640 carry-over/2.5 month grace period for the Health Care Flexible Spending Account. Central Health is adding a qualified High Deductible Health Plan in 2025. The proposer must offer the ability to administer a limited purpose Health Care Spending Account and post deductible Health Care Spending Account.

Ordering Instructions: Package can be downloaded from:

<https://www.bidnetdirect.com/texas/traviscountyhealthcaredistrictdbacentralhealth>
OR <http://www.centralhealth.net/finance/purchasing>
OR <https://www.txsmartbuy.com/esbd>

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RFP 2510-006 - Life & Disability

Due Date: Thursday, November 14, 2024 by 2:00 PM CT

The purpose of this Request for Proposals is to assist Central Health with identifying solutions and benefits for life and disability insurance to meet the objectives listed below:

- Provide Central Health employees with high-quality and valuable benefits at affordable pricing.
- Provide full consideration and review of current plans compared to new and enhanced benefit options available.
- Contract with vendors that can offer superior service and resources to employees and benefits staff.
- Offeror must quote on all requested coverages – Basic Life & AD&D, Voluntary Life & AD&D, Employer Paid Short-Term Disability, Voluntary Short-Term Disability, and Employer Paid Long-Term Disability.

Central Health is seeking to bundle their Life and Disability coverages with the same vendor but will contract with separate vendors for these coverages, should that be most advantageous. The chosen vendor will allow a one-time open enrollment for all Employees, including Late Enrollees, with no underwriting up to the Guarantee Issue amount. Central Health requires the chosen Voluntary Life vendor to "grandfather" existing enrollees at current benefit amounts, with no underwriting required

Ordering Instructions: Package can be downloaded from:

<https://prod.bidsync.com/central-health>
OR <http://www.centralhealth.net/finance/purchasing>
OR <http://www.txsmartbuy.com/sp>



^NORTH LAS VEGAS, NEVADA - OCTOBER 19: Former U.S. President Barack Obama speaks during a get-out-the-vote rally as he campaigns for Democratic presidential nominee and U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, and Nevada Democratic candidates on the ballot on the first day of early voting at Cheyenne High School on October 19, 2024 in North Las Vegas, Nevada. (Photo by Ethan Miller/Getty Images)



**PUBLIC NOTICE
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
JOERIS GENERAL
CONTRACTORS, LTD.,**

Joeris General Contractors will be accepting competitive Proposals from Subcontractors and Suppliers for **Texas State Esperanza Hall**, until 2:00PM on **Thursday, Nov. 21, 2024**. Proposals will be received by email at bidsAustin@joeris.com or by fax.

Pre-Bid Meeting: TBD – Information will be available through Building Connected. Please visit our website at Joeris.com for access.

Project Description: This Bid Package includes remaining balance of trades not bid in BP1 and BP2.

Plans may be reviewed at:
Joeris Website - www.joeris.com
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C.L.P No.: **13232.002**

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**CITATION BY PUBLICATION
THE STATE OF TEXAS**

**TO UNKNOWN HEIRS OF GAIL DEWAYNE NORMAN, DECEASED
IN PROBATE COURT #1, TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS.**

CAUSE NO. C-1-PB-24-002211


James E. Shaw, Jr filed an Application to Declare Heirship and for Letters of Administration in the above-numbered and -entitled estate on September 17, 2024, requesting that the Court determine who are the heirs and only heirs of Gail Dewayne Norman, Deceased, and their respective shares and interests in such estate.

All unknown heirs and any other persons interested in this estate are cited to appear before this Court to file a written contest or answer to this application if they want to do so. The Court may act on this application at any time at the Probate Court #1, Probate Courthouse, 200 West 8th Street, Austin, Texas 78701, on or after 10:00 a.m. on the first Monday after the expiration of ten days from the publication date of this citation. Therefore, to ensure consideration, any contest, answer, or other response must be filed with the Travis County Clerk in cause number C-1-PB-24-002211, styled IN THE ESTATE OF GAIL DEWAYNE NORMAN, DECEASED on or before the above-noted date and time.

If this citation is not served within 90 days after it is issued, it must be returned unserved.

Given under my hand and seal on this the 18th day of September, 2024.

DYANA LIMON-MERCADO
County Clerk
Travis County, Texas
200 West 8th Street, Ste. 140
Austin, TX 78701
P.O. Box 149325
Austin, Texas 78714-9325

By: 
J. JAIMES

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