

News

In South Carolina, Harris Urges Students to Vote in Midterms

By MEG KINNARD
Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris visited two historically Black colleges in South Carolina to push for voter registration as she focuses on places and demographics that will be key to Democrats' chances to hold on to Congress in the midterm elections.

In remarks Tuesday to first-year students at South Carolina State University, an Orangeburg HBCU where President Joe Biden addressed graduates last year, Harris highlighted what she characterized as the need for young voters to participate in political pushes to protect voting rights and oppose efforts to restrict abortion.

"Once again, your na-

tion turns to you," Harris said, highlighting the fight for civil rights by House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn — a S.C. State alumnus and South Carolina's lone congressional Democrat — when he was arrested during protests while in his early 20s. "Because to move America forward, we need you. We need your passion, your purpose and your excellence."

The South Carolina trip, Harris' third to the state as vice president, is part of her increased travel schedule ahead of the midterms. She talked reproductive rights in Chicago on Friday, and she's heading to Wisconsin on Thursday to speak at the Democratic Attorneys General Conference. Earlier this month, she traveled to Houston for the National Baptist



Vice President Kamala Harris speaks to students at Claflin University, one of two historically black universities she visited in Orangeburg, S.C. on Tuesday, Sept. 20, 2022. Harris pushed for voter registration as her party seeks to hold onto majorities in Congress.

Convention.

Harris' trips are designed to prevent, or at least limit, any drop-off

in turnout among voters of color and young people, important parts of the Democratic coalition. Earlier Tuesday — National Voter Registration Day — she participated in a roundtable with students at Claflin University, another HBCU, where she touted the administration's actions around race and education and emphasized the need to invest in mental health.

"We recognize that over the last couple of years through the pandemic, we literally told people to isolate, which means people were literally by themselves," Harris said. "Suffering from all that the pandemic represented in terms of loss of life, loss of normalcy, for so many people, loss of job. And so the effects of that all still linger in a very profound way."

In South Carolina, which holds the first presidential balloting in

the South, Black voters play an outsized role in the Democratic voting electorate. During a June visit to the state, Harris expressed appreciation for South Carolina Democrats, whose key support for Biden in the first-in-the-South primary in 2020 helped turn around his campaign and build momentum in later contests that led to the party's nomination.

Harris' arrival in South Carolina follows shortly after Biden's noncommittal response to CBS' "60 Minutes" when asked if he would run again in 2024.

"My intention, as I said to begin with, is that I would run again," the president said during a wide-ranging interview that aired Sunday. "But it's just an intention. But is it a firm decision that I run again? That remains to be seen."

Biden noted in the interview that declaring his intention to seek reelection would put him afoul of campaign finance laws, which could have complicated spending by the Democratic National Committee

ahead of the midterms.

White House officials said Biden is continuing to lay the groundwork for a 2024 run. Allies, though, acknowledge that he could always decide against seeking reelection before a formal announcement, which is expected in the first half of 2023.

Earlier this year, Biden committed to tapping Harris as his running mate for the 2024 reelection campaign. Her visit comes as Republicans considering White House bids of their own — including former Vice President Mike Pence, former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis — continue to criss-cross the state.

Some native South Carolina Republicans have also been testing the 2024 waters. Nikki Haley, who served the state for six years as governor before joining the Trump administration as U.N. ambassador, lives in the Charleston area and has been visiting other early voting states, as has U.S. Sen. Tim Scott.

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Nikes cont'd from pg 2

ality for lots of Chicago public school students. Jose talked about the ritual of tossing someone's shoes over a wire . . . if he's shot, if he's killed.

He wrote:

"One of my friends he got stabbed with a pencil because he was in a gang, but now he isn't in a gang because he doesn't want his family to see his shoes dangling from a telephone wire. And he wants to go back and fix all the things he has done wrong and now he never wants to have a relation with a gang member. Now he is in my house to

play video games."

Since then, yeah, every now and then I'd see it . . . grief and shoelaces hovering above the city. Maybe the shoes had been tossed as a joke or a prank, not a memorial, but how could I know? All I know is that the city is not the same anymore — it's more than bricks and lawns and sidewalks, traffic lights and convenience stores. It's a mortal being, in quiet pain this very moment, as I walk home.

And it's speaking to me, in a language I learned from a 12-year-old boy.