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**The Honorable Debra Haaland
United States Representative from New Mexico
Democratic National Convention
Thursday, August 20, 2020
Remarks as Prepared for Delivery**

Good evening. I'm Congresswoman Deb Haaland. I'm grateful to be with you, here on indigenous land. The promise of this country is older than our Constitution. Over 500 years ago, thousands of Indian tribes were vibrant, democratic societies with rich cultures and traditions, in communities that had sustained them for millennia, on lands they loved and respected.

My people, the Pueblo Indians, migrated to the Rio Grande Valley in the late 1200s to escape drought. We were led to the Great River and its tributaries, where we established an agricultural tradition that continues to this day.

My people survived centuries of slavery, genocide, and brutal assimilation policies. But throughout our past, Tribal Nations have fought for and helped to build this country. There were those like my Laguna grandparents, who worked on our country's railroad. And those like my mother, a Navy veteran, who served this country with honor.

I stand here today, a proud 35th generation New Mexican, and one of the first Native American women ever elected to Congress. I'm a symbol of our resilience as the embodiment of America's progress as a nation.

I know we can't take our democracy for granted, especially now, as people are dying, as our land is abused, as our Constitution is under attack. We must work for it by getting involved, by registering voters, by voting. Voting is sacred; my people know that.

We weren't universally granted the right to vote until 1962, and that fundamental right is more important than ever. Whether your ancestors have been here for hundreds of years or you're a new citizen, know this: whether we vote, and how we vote will determine if our nation's promise of social, racial, and environmental justice will outlast us.

Joe Biden and Kamala Harris respect our past and understand our present. They will see us through this crisis of leadership that is plaguing our country, and they will help us to build a better future. Thank you.

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