

When I was, I took a day off from kindergarten, to go St. Patrick's Day 1977 to go to Clinton Town Hall in Clinton, MA where President Jimmy Carter gave his first town meeting as president. And he stayed at my mother's bowling partner's house, and so we waited along the rope line as he walked from the house down to the town hall, and I remember meeting him there. And then a few years later, I remember my parents sitting us down on the den floor to watch Senator Kennedy's concession speech at the 1980 presidential convention, which was one of my really earliest memories, which is kind of funny that now, 32 years later, here I sit as the CEO of the Democratic National Convention. But those memories really were based on our parents teaching that being involved in politics, being involved in the government and what happens in and around our community was really important. They really wanted to expose us to that stuff pretty early on.

We received the bid pack at the RFP from the DNC. What they do is, there's a request for proposals. So the DNC puts together a request for proposals, which is really a large list of questions. How many seats do you have in your basketball arena, how many hotel rooms do you have, what is, you know, your emergency plan, and how do you expect to do this, how do you expect to do that, and it's a really large document for the 2012 convention it was 77 pages. I don't remember how long it was for 2004, but it was a sizable document. And it takes the will of a city, of a mayor or a leading elected official like Senator Kennedy to really roll up your sleeves and decide that you're going to dip into it, because it takes an awful lot of time and energy to fill one of those out and prove to the DNC that you actually want to host the convention. So it starts with that request for proposals document. We dove into it, the mayor's staff and myself to really make sure that we present Boston in the best possible light, and we think we did pretty well. And then it goes, you go about convincing and lobbying the members of, at the time they had a site selection committee that actually voted and chose where the convention was gonna take place. So we went about trying to make sure that we put on the best show possible for the people of that committee, to make sure that Boston was chosen.

*[Interviewer]* And the committee's senior members, of the DNC?

Sure, yeah, it's senior members, it's party leaders from all across the country. They did it differently in 2002 for the 2004 convention than we did it this cycle. But in 2002 it was a lot of party leaders from all across the

country, folks who had worked on conventions in the past, folks who were active in the party, and our job really was to convince the DNC that Boston was the right place for them to hold a convention. And this was before, remember, we knew that John Kerry was our nominee, it was two years before that, but it was really critical for us to show the DNC that the Democratic Party should come to Boston. Really we called it “coming home” to the core of the party, really helping our nominee, whoever that was, in July of 2004 launch their general election campaign the best way possible. And we worked hard to convince them that Boston was the right place for them to do that.

*[Interviewer]* Do you remember when and how you heard the news that you had won the bid?

I do, I do. We were, I was, I was in my, uh, when we first unofficially heard I was in my office and I got a call from the mayor’s office that they had been called to send one representative to Washington for secret negotiations on the contract. And I went in and I told the Senator that that was happening, and very few people knew, and he got that classic Ted Kennedy smirk across his face, and then said “Let’s keep making phone calls to convince people we’re the right place to go.” And when I said, “Well, we’re not, we’re done, we don’t have to make any more phone calls,” he said, “Nope, we’re never done, never done until this is over.” And so we kept on working, but we officially found out some time after the midterm elections in 2002. It was pretty amazing.

What happens after the bid, and once you get the convention, is the city sets up a host committee. So the committee is there, then responsible for basically fulfilling all the promises you made in your bid. So, showing people that you do have all those hotels, you do have all those things. And then, working with the DNCC team, the Democratic National Convention Committee team, that is appointed by the party, to pull the convention off. And so that’s what we did from 2003 all the way through the convention in July of 2004. And my job was to oversee everything from our staff, to our volunteer program which had 15,000 volunteers, to our budget of \$49.5 million, I mean there was an awful lot of tasks to be done. All with the eye toward making sure that it was the best convention possible for the Democrats, but also that when people left, they saw Boston as not just that city you can go to see historic sites, but that it’s a vibrant world class city that they would want to bring their family and friends back to for vacation.

Because really, a convention for a city can be a huge travel and tourism boost, because they get a chance, especially now that we're going into medium sized cities and smaller sized cities, it's a huge boom because most of the world hasn't had a chance to, you know, "kick the tires" as I say of a city that size. And it's a great shot for them to show the world that they are able to pull off a convention like this, which means that they can schedule other conventions of that size and scope in their community, but also that they're a really great, interesting, vibrant place to visit.

I started in September 2009 working on the site selection process, so that bid packet that we received way back in '01 and 2002 to bid for the convention, I was responsible for putting together and doing all that stuff and working with the cities that were interesting in bidding. So we did all of that up and through the site visits in 2010, which a site visit is when you come up with a final list of cities, say four or five cities, this time we had four, we go visit those cities with our 10 or 12 people, they show us the arenas, they show us the hotels, and we meet with their public safety officials, and they really give us a chance to look under the hood and kick the tires and see whether they are able to host us in a couple of years. And we did that in 2010, announced our finalist city here in Charlotte, North Carolina February 1 of 2011, and have been rolling ever since.

My job everyday, and this started from the very beginning of this convention process, is to fulfill the president's vision of having an open and accessible convention, the most open and accessible convention we've ever had. And what does that mean? That means creating a convention like no other, creating opportunities through social media, new media to engage young people and people all across the country in this convention. We have an I'm There campaign to get folks to pledge that they'll be following the convention and watching on our live stream or following us on Twitter or Facebook or doing Google Hangouts or whatever it is to make sure they're a part of our convention. We want folks to know that you don't just have to come here to Charlotte to be a part of it. We also want people here in North Carolina to know that you don't just have to have a credential or to be a delegate or a member of the press to participate in it as well. So we've shortened the convention by a day and we're having a festival on Labor Day, September 3, to really celebrate and kick off the convention with a family-friendly opportunity for tens of thousands of people, and then on Thursday night we're throwing the doors open to 80,000 people to come to the stadium up here in uptown Charlotte to really see a great historic

moment when the President of the United States accepts our nomination. So, how I explain my job to my family is that I work hard each and every day to do whatever the President needs me to do to make sure this is a successful convention.

When I worked for Senator Kennedy we had three desks in the early 90's, three desks out of 104 that had what we called the worldwide web on them. Now there were about four pages to look at on the worldwide web, but that, and that wasn't that long ago, that was, you know, 20 years ago. As I said the App Store launched one week before the 2008 Democratic Convention, it seems like we couldn't live without the App Store now. But frankly the devices that are within my iPhone or Blackberry far outweigh what was in my laptop or my desktop in 2004. It just, the technology parts allows us to do things so much more creatively, allow us to engage people. You know we used to have to depend on people turning on their television in the primetime hours and watching that news coverage, or turning it on at 6 o'clock and 11 to catch the news the next day. This gives us the opportunity now to push out content, to make sure that we can really get our message out to folks, and in a very targeted way if we want to. We can reach younger folks, we can reach folks in their communities who want to do watch parties or Google Hangouts or Skype parties to make sure that everybody is watching this convention and seeing what this party is all about. This isn't just about renominating the President, you know remember a convention does that, yes, it's very important that we do that, but we also reaffirm the party platform, which is the core beliefs of our party, and who we stand for, and what it means to be a Democrat.

*[Interviewer]* Could you talk a little bit about the platform?

Sure, yeah. We appoint a platform committee, which was appointed a couple of months, gets appointed a few months before the convention, they meet, they draft a platform which just is a statement of beliefs, of who we are as Democrats, how we, what issues we believe in, what our convictions are, and what our views are. And then the platform committee presents the platform to the full convention on the first day, this year it will be on the first day. And then there's an opportunity for any delegate to stand up and speak about it, and get an opportunity to vote affirmatively, or negatively if they'd like, on any part of that platform. So it really is the core of the Democratic Party's views because the next four years, that is the official statement of what the Democratic Party stands for. And we want folks all

across the country to get involved and engaged, that's why we've been reaching out to them from the very beginning. When we first announced we were coming to Charlotte, we did it in an email from the First Lady to all of our followers all across the world to say "Here's why we're coming to Charlotte and here's why we want you to get involved and engaged." And we've had tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of people sign up to be involved and technology has been critical to that. We couldn't, otherwise we'd be doing it rubber hitting the road and licking a lot of stamps and technology has made, just like the campaigns, has made reaching people that much easier and that much more challenging though, because they're always expecting more and interesting content.

*[Interviewer]* And for people who are watching, they say "Why do politics matter?" Maybe you could talk a little but about why, you know, people should be interested and active in politics, and a little about your own experience.

Yeah, and young people should be involved in politics and should be engaged and should care, because it's their future that gets debated today. You know it's a very popular political line to talk about our children and our grandchildren and the burden we're giving them, but in large measure it's true. We need young folks to get involved because young folks have been at the core of all major advancements and movements in our country's history, back to the revolution. You know, I'm from New England, back from the revolution, where so many young men and women stood with their parents and their grandparents and their brothers and sisters and said "Enough." The abolition movement, suffrage movement, anti-war movements, the issue for job safety, civil rights, you name it, it's a huge part of what young people give to this country is their energy and their enthusiasm and their commitment to moving our country forward. So the decisions that affect their lives are being made today. You know you look at the decision on student loan rates, you know right now, there are discussions that are going on, the last few months over student loan rates and whether or not to double them, that's not going to necessarily impact guys my age because our student loans are paid. It's gonna impact the folks who are yet to enter college or the kids who are in college. So it's up to them to stand up, it's their democracy, and get involved and get engaged. It's too easy for them to see that there's no connection between what happens in government and their lives, but there is more connection now than there ever has been before, and it's critical. The Affordable Care

Act, there's so many young people who can stay on their parents' insurance because of that act, but if folks don't get involved, if folks don't get engaged, don't knock doors, don't realize that this is an important part of being an American, then they are damned, or doomed rather, to live with that.