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Democratic Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz is pictured in a June 3, 2020, photo. Vice President Kamala Harris announced Aug. 6, 2024, that she has selected Walz as her running mate on the Democratic ticket for the 2024 presidential election. (OSV News/Lucas Jackson, Reuters)

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Vice President Kamala Harris selected Gov. Tim Walz, D-Minn., as her running mate on the Democratic Party's ticket Aug. 6.

Harris secured her party's nomination for president shortly after President Joe Biden's historic announcement July 21 that he would end his own reelection bid and endorse her.

"I am proud to announce that I've asked (Walz) to be my running mate," Harris wrote in a post on X, formerly Twitter. "As a governor, a coach, a teacher, and a veteran, he's delivered for working families like his. It's great to have him on the team."

Walz, a former public school teacher, a former member of the Army National Guard and a former Minnesota representative in the U.S. House, was elected governor of Minnesota in 2018 and reelected in 2022. In his official biography, Walz's website touts his work on issues such as providing free school lunches and some paid family leave, but also efforts to expand legal protections for abortion.

Walz and his wife, Gwen, married in 1994 and have two children. He is Lutheran.

"It is the honor of a lifetime to join (Harris) in this campaign," Walz wrote in a post on X. "I'm all in. Vice President Harris is showing us the politics of what's possible. It reminds me a bit of the first day of school."

Walz gained attention online with some of his media appearances after Biden ended his bid to run for president with Harris, including viral comments calling former President Donald Trump and his running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, "weird."

David Barrett, a presidential historian and professor of political science at Villanova University, told OSV News that Walz "obviously has made a great impression" on some Democrats in those interviews.

"He seems to excite people more on the left wing of the party," Barrett said, which could be both "a help and a hindrance."

Walz made a good impression on Democrats as a surrogate for Harris, Barrett said, adding that some see Walz as a "breath of fresh air."

"He kind of talks in a way that's refreshing," Barrett said of arguments made by Democrats in Walz's favor.

Reported finalists considered by Harris for her running mate also included Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania, who is scheduled to campaign at the Philadelphia rally where Harris will introduce Walz as her running mate.

Robert Schmuhl, professor emeritus of American studies at the University of Notre Dame, who critically observes the modern American presidency, told OSV News, that Walz "brings governing experience to the Democratic ticket as well as several terms in Congress."

"He knows the worlds of administration on the state level and legislation in the Washington context," Schmuhl said. "His years in the military as well as his teaching and coaching career also make him attractive in a non-elite way. Moreover, his folksy, down-home manner will have appeal, particularly with rural voters across the country."

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Schmuhl said Harris' choice shows she "didn't pick a running mate based on one state — as seemed to be the possibility with Gov. Josh Shapiro."

"She picked Walz for the greater potential that he'll contribute to the ticket from key constituencies in the critical battleground states," he said.

John White, a professor of politics at The Catholic University of America in Washington, told OSV News the selection "initially strikes me as a 'do no harm' pick."

"The key here is that three-quarters of Americans don't know who he is," White said of Walz. "Thus, the next few days are going to be important in terms of how he is defined and who does that."

Karoline Leavitt, press secretary for the Trump campaign, said in a statement, "It's no surprise that San Francisco Liberal Kamala Harris wants West Coast wannabe Tim Walz as her running-mate — Walz has spent his governorship trying to reshape Minnesota in the image of the Golden State."

Walz, she argued, "is obsessed with spreading California's dangerously liberal agenda far and wide."

"If Walz won't tell voters the truth, we will: just like Kamala Harris, Tim Walz is a dangerously liberal extremist, and the Harris-Walz California dream is every American's nightmare," she said.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, which works to elect pro-life candidates to public office, said in a statement, "Kamala Harris and Tim Walz make up the most pro-abortion presidential ticket America has ever seen. There is no daylight between them on this issue."

"Walz is no moderate when it comes to abortion," Dannenfelser said. "Last year Walz signed the 'PRO Act,' what was at the time the country's most extreme law enshrining abortion on demand throughout pregnancy as a 'fundamental right' without limits of any kind. He then signed further legislation grossly expanding taxpayer-funded abortion, stripping away the state's informed consent protections, and significantly weakening protections for babies born alive."

"With Harris and Walz as standard-bearers, the Democratic Party has become the 'Shout Your Abortion' party, with no limits for any reason even in the seventh, eighth or ninth month," Dannenfelser argued, saying that in contrast "President Trump, JD Vance and the GOP ... support the right of the people to set limits on abortion and provide real options for mothers in need."

Trump and Vance both moderated their previous public positions on abortion as they became their party's nominees. Trump issued a statement in April saying he does not support federal abortion restrictions, preferring to delegate the issue to individual states. The Republican Party subsequently revised its platform in July to reflect Trump's position, eliminating a longstanding call for a 20-week abortion ban — a national minimum standard that would have affected little more than 1% of all abortions in the U.S.

During his U.S. Senate bid, Vance said he supported a 15-week federal restriction on abortion, but shortly before Trump's selection as his running mate, Vance made public appearances to align with Trump's position citing "political reality" and supporting mifepristone, a pill commonly used for abortion, "being accessible."

This story appears in the **Election 2024** feature series. [View the full series.](#)