

WHY COULDN'T POPULAR ARTISTS HELP KAMALA HARRIS BECOME  
PRESIDENT?

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POP MUSIC AND ELECTIONS

by

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## **Abstract**

This magazine article examines the role which popular musicians – and celebrities in general – played in the 2024 presidential election. During the campaign months the endorsements from artists such as Taylor Swift, Bruce Springsteen, and Beyoncé got a lot of publicity, and some experts seemed to be confident that those names could help Kamala Harris become President. However, that didn't happen, and some researchers think there is a simple explanation for that: celebrity endorsements don't matter in the presidential election.

This article starts with a reportage from Kamala Harris' rally which had Bruce Springsteen and John Legend performing in her support. Then it explores the reasons that the support from popular artists didn't matter in the presidential race as much as some experts thought they would. It goes through the history and the possible future of the celebrity endorsements in the U.S. elections and gives an insight about why politicians are keen to having famous artists supporting them and why the public is so interested in celebrities affecting the outcome of the elections. Also, this article gives an insight about the actions that politically active fans of specific artists are planning to engage during Donald Trump's presidency.

## Chapter One: Introduction

On a large stage in a huge arena, a 70-something man stands before thousands of people with a guitar in his hand. He starts to play the first chords of a song.

“I get up in the evenin’ / And I ain’t got nothin’ to say...”. The crowd reacts immediately with a wild scream.

Bruce Springsteen performs an acoustic version of his hit song, “Dancing in the Dark,” at a rally for Kamala Harris in the Liacouras Center in Philadelphia, just a week before the 2024 U.S. presidential election. Another famous artist, John Legend, performed on the same stage just before Springsteen. Legend now stood in the audience with his wife, model Chrissy Teigen. Behind Springsteen is a large screen with text in all-caps that reads: “WHEN WE VOTE WE WIN.”

When Springsteen gets to the chorus, it’s time for the climax; he rouses the crowd into a loud sing-along.

“You can’t start a fire / You can’t start a fire without a spark / This gun’s for hire / Even if we’re just dancin’ in the dark.” The crowd roars so loudly that Springsteen doesn’t need to do anything other than just play the chords.

After Springsteen's performance, Barack Obama takes the stage to praise Harris. The former president seems to be at least as popular as Springsteen among the crowd. After his speech, he walks down the stage and shakes hands with people in the front row. Everyone wants a chance to say hi.

Before performing one of his most popular songs, The Boss gave a long speech as well.

"I'm Bruce Springsteen, and I'm here to support Kamala Harris and Tim Walz. And to oppose Donald Trump and J.D. Vance," he said. "I want a president who reveres the Constitution, who does not threaten but wants to protect and guide our great democracy, who believes in the rule of law and the peaceful transfer of power, who will fight for a woman's right to choose, and who wants to create a middle-class economy that will serve all our citizens."

He continued: "Donald Trump is running to be an American tyrant."

Springsteen wasn't the only major musician taking a stand: just a few days before the election, Beyoncé appeared with Harris at a rally in the singer's hometown of Houston. In her speech, Beyoncé said she wasn't there as a celebrity, but as a parent: "A mother who cares deeply about the world my children and all of our children live in, a world where we have the freedom to control our bodies, a world where we're not divided."

Kamala Harris garnered a huge number of endorsements from the most famous, visible and popular musicians in the months leading up to the election. In addition to Springsteen and Beyoncé, Harris's supporters included Ariana Grande, Bad Bunny, Billie Eilish, Cardi B, Charli XCX, Cher, Enimem, Foo Fighters, Jennifer Lopez, Jon Bon Jovi, Katy Perry, Lady Gaga, Megan Thee Stallion, Olivia Rodrigo and Ricky Martin, among others.

However, even with all these endorsements, there was one artist supporting Harris who got way more attention than any other – even though she didn't perform at any of Harris' rallies.

Of course, that artist is Taylor Allison Swift.

Swift is the biggest pop star in the world. Her "Eras Tour" ran for almost two years, from March 2023 to December 2024, spanned 149 shows across five continents and became the highest-grossing tour of all time. It was a cultural and socio-economic phenomenon that may have never been seen before in the world of pop music. So, when Swift endorsed Harris and told her fans to register to vote after the debate between Trump and Harris in September, it became breaking news all over the world.

An endless amount of analyses were written about Swift's endorsement. Some experts and researchers were so sure about Swift's potential impact that they predicted she actually could change the outcome of the election. "There are reasons to think Swift could have an Oprah-like effect, but in the general election," [a CBC story reported](#), referring to Winfrey's endorsement of Obama in the 2008 Democratic primary. "How Taylor Swift's endorsement of Harris could change the election end game," [ABC headlined](#) its story around the same time.

Ashley Hinck, associate professor at Xavier University in Cincinnati, who has long studied online fan communities and political discourse, predicted to the CBC that Swift's fans will "take the official endorsement and run with it."

"My sense, doing this kind of research in mostly Midwestern states, is that fandom is powerful in small towns and big towns," she said. "Whether that fandom is Swift or football or something else, it does affect political actions."

Probably one of the reasons for some experts to believe that Swift could have an "Oprah-like effect" was the fact that after she shared the link to the voter registration site in September, hundreds of thousands of people visited the site.

But in the end, Swift and Beyonce — the two biggest pop stars in the world — plus a host of other hugely popular artists, couldn't help get Harris to the White House.



Which begs the question: do celebrity endorsements matter?

## Chapter Two: Before the election

Popular music and politics have a long intertwined history dating back to the 1920s.

One of the first connections mentioned in history books was when the popular singer Al Jolson supported Republican candidate Warren G. Harding during his presidential campaign in 1920. Frank Sinatra – alongside his friends Sammy Davis Jr., Dean Martin, and Peter Lawford – campaigned for John F. Kennedy in 1960. (Later, Sinatra and Kennedy’s friendship fell apart and Sinatra switched his allegiance to the Republican party.) And of course, Marilyn Monroe was a vocal supporter of Kennedy, performing the legendary “Happy Birthday, Mr. President” at Madison Square Garden in 1962.

Politicians like to play famous songs at their rallies – sometimes even [for too long](#). On the other hand, some musicians and celebrities have been hesitant to be involved in politics at all (“Republicans buy sneakers, too,” Michael Jordan famously declared in 1990, when asked if he would make an endorsement in a U.S. Senate race in his home state of North Carolina; he recently said the statement was made in jest.) Especially after Donald Trump’s first term as President of the United States, more artists have stepped in to oppose him. Multiple musicians [have objected](#) to Trump using their music at his rallies. However, after Trump’s second win, some artists, such as Kid Rock, the Village People, and Snoop Dogg, have been more willing to perform on his behalf.

Bruce Springsteen is a good example of a musician who hasn't been afraid to take a stance. He has been supporting Democratic candidates in every presidential election since 2008, performing in rallies for Obama, Hillary Clinton, and Joe Biden.

Celebrity endorsements have been a hugely debated topic for decades. Candidates of course love to have endorsements from famous musicians because they believe it will help lure votes from the artists' huge fanbases.

"This same thing happens every presidential election cycle. Celebrities are important for candidates towards fundraising, and they are valuable to attract bigger crowds in rallies," said Michael Cobb in a phone interview. He's a former Professor of Political Science at North Carolina State University. In 2010, he and student Kaye Usry [published a study](#) that concluded celebrity endorsements don't help political candidates.

More recent studies take a different approach. In 2024, Harvard University's Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation [published a study](#) by civic engagement and political expert Ashley Millane. The study states that there is "rigorous evidence that [celebrity] voices are incredibly powerful" in promoting civic engagement and altering polling numbers.

When people talk about celebrity endorsements and their effects on election results, it's often mentioned how Oprah Winfrey helped Barack Obama with her endorsement in

2008. Sometimes those same people forget that Winfrey's case is different; her biggest proven effect wasn't in the actual presidential election, but rather in the primaries.

According to economists Craig Garthwaite and Timothy Moore of the University of Maryland, Winfrey's endorsement probably gave Obama a boost of about [one million votes](#) in the primaries and caucuses, which definitely helped him become the Democratic candidate.

In primaries, said Cobb, "endorsements can matter a lot because people are choosing between the same party candidates. When Oprah as an Afro American woman chose her candidate, that was a cue for a lot of people who didn't know about Obama. In the actual presidential election, people are voting for the party."

One big question is also what defines a celebrity. It's clear that huge mainstream artists such as Swift, Beyoncé, and Springsteen are celebrities. But what about social media influencers, podcast hosts, and other types of people — those who might be huge stars for specific people, but completely unknown to the larger masses?

"In my opinion, celebrities should be universal; most people should know their name," Cobb said. "Nowadays we have a lot of famous people who, for example, my kids think are celebrities, but I don't have any clue who they are. So, how do you know whether celebrities are influential in elections if you can't be sure who is defined as a celebrity? Also, people can be famous without being a celebrity. I don't think politicians are

celebrities, so Barack Obama is not a celebrity, at least in the U.S. And I don't see Elon Musk as a celebrity; he was previously famous for being the richest man in the world, and now he's part of the government."

In 2024, Kamala Harris' campaign team put in a lot of effort to get as many big artists on board as possible. It seemed like in the final days before the election, the campaigning was as much about popular musicians as about Harris herself. "When we vote we win" concerts were held in every battleground state leading up to the election.

Philadelphia wasn't the only place where Springsteen performed and praised the candidate in speeches. "The Boss" performed in Atlanta alongside Harris just a couple of days prior to the Philadelphia event. The other concerts had names such as Jon Bon Jovi, Maggie Rogers, Gracie Abrams, and Mumford and Sons. Latino voters were courted with bands including Maná and Los Tigres del Norte.

There were also concerts for Harris that weren't organized by the Vice President's campaign team. One of the most noticeable was a live streamed concert on National Voter Registration Day that was run by a group called Musicians for Kamala. It had more than 40 artists, including Evanescence, Moby, and Maggie Rose performing in support of Harris. Charles Miller, senior digital strategist of the company Green Room Strategy, was part of the group organizing the concert. He said the idea started at a grassroots level.

“It was a couple of friends [saying], *Well, we should do something,*” said Miller on a Zoom call, referring to co-organizer John Lecchetti. “This election is too important. We work in the music industry, and we had seen that there were things like the Comics for Kamala and the White Dudes for Harris. All these really incredible grassroots groups were making a difference, raising money, spreading the word. And we thought, well, we could do that.”

The two main goals for the concert were to raise money for Harris’ campaign and to get people registered to vote. Miller wouldn’t share the amount of money they raised but said more than 6,000 people registered to vote thanks to their event.

But Taylor Swift was expected to have the biggest impact on the election. It seemed obvious that even Harris’ opponent, the usually highly self-confident Donald Trump, was worried about Swift. After her endorsement of Harris, Trump stated in a Fox News interview that he never was Swift’s fan — even though earlier he had gone on record saying he liked her music. A few days later, Trump posted a message on his Truth Social platform that left nothing to speculation. “I HATE TAYLOR SWIFT,” [he wrote](#) in his trademark all-caps style.

Quinnipiac University associate professor Ari Perez taught a class about Swift in the summer of 2024, which has earned him the nickname of “Swiftie Professor.” He

thinks there were two main reasons why Swift's endorsement got so much more attention than anyone else's.

"One of them is the obvious one; she's just the biggest star in the world right now," Perez said in a Zoom call. "If Planet Earth has had a main character the last couple of years, it's definitely been Taylor Swift."

"The other thing is that Swift's political journey has been very interesting. When she was young, she saw the then-Dixie Chicks canceled for speaking out against George W. Bush. The lesson she learned from that is, if you speak about politics, everything you have ever worked for will be snatched away."

Perez went through Swift's political history in detail: how she didn't comment on anything political for years, and even said she didn't want to take part in that discussion. That started to change years later when the Breitbart website published fake news articles about Swift being a white supremacist. Initially, Swift didn't comment on those either, probably because she didn't want to give more publicity to those fake claims. In the 2016 election Swift didn't endorse either of the candidates, but clearly Trump's presidency was the time when she started to become politically more active. In 2018, she endorsed two Tennessee Democrats in U.S. Senate and House races, which led to her endorsing Joe Biden in the 2020 election. Already before that, Swift had been much more vocal, particularly about her feminist views. Perez thinks that in 2020 her

alignment with Biden wasn't a huge surprise to anyone, even though her roots are in Tennessee, and she started her career as a country artist.

In 2024, for a while it seemed as if Swift's support would actually help Harris. [More than 400,000 people](#) visited the voter registration site after Swift shared the link. And it wasn't just because of Swift herself and her one post on Instagram. Two months before the actual endorsement, the singer's fans had founded a group called Swifties4Kamala to encourage her fans across the country to vote for Harris.

That all started when 22-year-old University of Texas at El Paso student Emerald Medrano learned that Biden was dropping out of the election. At that moment, he decided to post on his X account. [He wrote](#) to his 70,000 followers: "I feel like us U.S. Swifties should mass organize and help campaign for Kamala Harris and spread how horrendous Project 2025 would be to help get people's butts down to the polls in November."

Months later, when Medrano reflects on how things unfolded, the feeling is surreal.

"Under 48 hours after I posted on X, we had founded a group and things were rolling," he said in a phone interview. "It was very cool how fellow Swifties immediately jumped on board. I think there was a huge anxiety among Swifties after the first debate in July. How could this happen? How is Trump the presidential candidate?"



During the months leading up to the election, Swifties4Kamala organized pop-up events and social media campaigns, published a newsletter, shared information about Project 2025 and Harris' economic plans, and crafted friendship bracelets. The main goals were to activate Swift's fans to vote and to raise money for Harris' campaign. Medrano says they raised more than \$236,000. The more difficult question is how many Swifties they were able to persuade to vote for Harris, but Medrano says he had multiple conversations with first-time voters who made up their mind thanks to his group's work.

"I talked to a lot of people who said they were a little bit unsure who they were going to vote for, or that they had previously been Republicans," Medrano said. "It is really weird to think about how much we impacted the election and how many people we encouraged to vote for the first time."

The entire team behind Swifties4Kamala worked voluntarily. Medrano spent all his available time for the cause while trying to complete coursework.

"For the first month, I was thinking about the project for 24 hours," he recalled. "I dreamed about it. But I'm really grateful I did it. If someone had told me that you're going to lead a project that takes 20 hours per day, I would have not believed it."

## Chapter Three: The election

On Nov. 5, 2024, Medrano didn't want to believe something else: what he was witnessing while watching the election results.

“For hours I was delusional,” he said. “Even though it started to seem clear that Trump was winning, I still hoped for the best. I kept telling myself and others that there's still a chance. When the result finally hit, our response was chaotic, very emotional. I cried.”

Many experts had predicted that the battle between Harris and Trump might be as tight as it was between Biden and Trump in 2020. People were prepared to wait for the results for days. In the end, Trump's win was certain after just a few hours. All the endorsements Harris got were not enough to help her become president.

Donald Trump became the 47th president of the United States with a clear victory. He won the Electoral College vote by 312 to Harris' 226. He also won the popular vote with 49.8 percent. He won in every swing state: North Carolina, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Nevada, and Arizona. Those were the same states Harris' campaign team targeted with the “When we vote we win” tour just days before the election.

Before election day, some analysts argued that endorsements by Taylor Swift and other huge pop stars might give Harris just enough extra votes in the swing states to help her

defeat Trump. It was speculated that a couple of thousand additional votes might be enough to turn the tables in a really tight race. In the end, Trump beat Harris in each swing state with a surprisingly clear margin. The closest race was in Wisconsin where Trump beat Harris by a 0.9 percent margin (29,397 votes).

“Arizona and Georgia are the two states that were super close in 2020,” Quinnipiac professor Ari Perez said. “Georgia went to President Biden just by 10,000 votes. If Taylor Swift were able to get 10,000 people to register in Georgia, all of sudden that would be a very significant number.”

Emerald Medrano and his colleagues in Swifties4Kamala knew this. That’s why they tried to target their campaign to areas that mattered the most.

“Our focus was trying to flip the swing states,” Medrano said. “We did a lot of campaigning — phoning, texting — for example in North Carolina.”

Three days before the election, rock icon Jon Bon Jovi, R&B artist Khalid, country singer Britney Spencer, and soul duo The War and Treaty performed in Charlotte in a Harris support concert.

“It seems like we may have had an impact on some counties in North Carolina, turning them blue,” said Medrano, “but it wasn’t enough.”

It wasn't clear before the election whether Swift and other pop stars could activate voters, especially young ones, who had never voted in a presidential election. Groups such as Swifties4Kamala hoped they would make people care about politics just enough so that they would do their part and vote for Harris. It is believed the big reason for Biden's victory in 2020 was that so many people who were normally uninterested in politics came out to vote. The turnout in 2020 was 66.6 percent, which was the highest rate in a U.S. presidential election since 1900.

This time, the voter turnout dropped, but it was still the second highest since 1900: 63.9 percent. More than 155 million Americans voted, and Trump got more than 77 million votes, which is three million more than he got in 2020, and an astounding 13 million more votes than he got in 2016, when he first became president.

The support from celebrities didn't help Harris get enough votes from young people. It seems as if most young voters just weren't interested in this election. Maybe the celebrity endorsements activated mostly those people who were already active.

"I think there was an element of preaching to the choir," Ari Perez said of Swift's endorsement.

Voter turnout among 18-29 year-olds [was 42 percent](#), significantly lower than in 2020 when it was estimated to be 52–55 percent. Even though young voters were more active in key battleground states (50 percent on aggregate), it wasn't enough for Harris.

“People who are open to be persuaded are also less likely to be voters,” said former North Carolina State University professor Michael Cobb. “If you don't know who you're going to vote for, you're not paying attention. Are you then going to vote just because Taylor Swift tried to engage you?”

In total, Harris [got 51 percent](#) of the votes from voters ages 18-29 and 50 percent from voters ages 30-44. However, she lost clearly in older age groups who were also more active. A majority of women aged 18-44 (54%) voted for Harris, as did women over 44 (51%). But among men aged 18-44, only 45% voted for her, and even fewer (42%) over the age of 44.

Harris' numbers were much worse than Biden's in 2020. Trump got only 36 percent of votes from young voters in 2020; this time he got 47 percent. Trump doubled his share of young Black men and became more popular among Latino men too.

Probably the biggest factor was that 60 percent of white men voted for Trump. They didn't care about Taylor Swift, Bruce Springsteen, or any other celebrities who were supporting Harris. Probably most of them didn't care about any celebrities, but if they

did, the names were completely different from the biggest pop stars or Hollywood actors.

“The fact is that we didn’t have access to young male voters,” said Swiftie fan Emerald Medrano. “Most of them don’t care about Taylor Swift. Instead, they are people who say really mean things about her and Swifties. It would’ve needed a movement like football fans for Kamala or just white young men for Kamala to get them interested. But there wasn’t anything like that.”

## Chapter Four: After the election

In retrospect, it's easy to say that the signs were already there in Philadelphia while Bruce Springsteen was performing "Dancing in the Dark."

In theory, the "When We Vote We Win" event was a success for Harris. The Liacouras Center was packed, the atmosphere was boisterous, the artists gave great performances and Barack Obama's speech was energetic as always. The crowd chanted Harris' name and "We will win" for three hours.

On the other hand, it begged the question: Did this concert convince any indecisive voter or Trump supporter to vote for Harris? Everyone I interviewed had already made up their mind, most of them a long time ago. They weren't in The Liacouras Center to consider their options.

Actually, most of them weren't there to see Springsteen, John Legend or not even Obama. Some said they didn't care about the artists' performances. Almost all of them also wanted to make clear that their choice hadn't been impacted by any celebrity endorsements.

"We want to vote for who we feel is right," said attendee Siobhan Jarman. "Even if Kamala didn't have endorsements by all the people she got, she still got my vote."

For these Harris' voters in Philadelphia, the rally was just another great event in their town where they could show support for their candidate.

"I'm here because of the state of the country," said another audience member, Levi Combs III. "I'm here because of what our options are. And they're very few. So, I'm here because my children's future depends on it. And they pick a candidate who is well qualified and who is untainted with corruption."

"I like Bruce Springsteen, but I don't really care who he's going to vote for," said attendee Karen Leander. "I'm here simply because I support Kamala Harris."

The people I interviewed hoped that support from artists such as Springsteen could help Harris. At the same time, none of them were able to mention a single person they knew that would've changed their mind because of endorsements by popular musicians or other celebrities.

"I think this campaign cycle is all about hearing from people you trust what you should do," said attendee Sally Russell. "And so when people like John Legend, Bruce Springsteen and Barack Obama stand up, then people hear that in a different way. And that's why it's so important right now."



Political science professor Michael Cobb agrees that celebrities are mostly preaching to the choir. If that's the case, why are campaign teams so enthusiastic about getting huge artists to their events?

"The main thing is to maintain people's interest in that campaign," Cobb said.

"Springsteen doing a concert is a more effective way to spend money than many other ways to keep people talking about the campaign. It might not affect people's voting choice, but it makes people talk about the candidate."

Since the election, there has been discussion about whether Harris' campaign team focused on the right names. [The Hollywood Reporter](#) suggested that support from all these wealthy celebrities, representing the so-called elite, may even have made Harris less likable for voters in areas such as the Rust Belt, despite Springsteen's career-long appeal to the working man.

The case probably isn't that simple. Last May, the Democratic public-opinion research firm Blueprint [conducted a poll](#) targeting young voters to determine which celebrity endorsements would most influence their presidential vote. Nearly a quarter of young voters said an endorsement from the actress Zendaya would make them more likely to support a candidate. She didn't publicly endorse either candidate. There wasn't any reporting whether Harris' campaign team sought her endorsement.

Donald Trump didn't have a long list of Hollywood celebrities behind him, but it did him no harm. Instead, his appearance on [Joe Rogan's podcast](#), which has been viewed more than 50 million times on YouTube, may have helped him more than anyone could have predicted. Rogan was one of the biggest stars in podcasting to endorse Trump, in addition to names such as Jake Paul, Hulk Hogan, Dana White, Dr. Phil, Kid Rock — and, of course, Elon Musk.

There were negotiations between Harris' and Rogan's teams for her to appear on the podcast as well but they failed. According to the book *Fight: Inside the Wildest Battle for the White House* written by journalists Jonathan Allen and Amie Parnes, obstacles set by Rogan's team derailed the interview. Rogan [has denied the claims](#) made in the book.

Results of the Blueprint poll predicted that endorsements by Musk, Paul and Rogan would actually make more young voters less likely to vote for the candidate. Maybe the Democratic public-opinion research firm didn't contact the right voters.

Or maybe they just forgot what Donald Trump was in the first place: a celebrity as big as anyone who endorsed Harris.

"People voted for Trump because they thought 'The Apprentice' was real," said political science professor Cobb. "So, being a celebrity can clearly help you to become the president of the United States. Or [become] the governor of California and Minnesota, in

Arnold Schwarzenegger's and Jesse Ventura's cases. But I'm dubious about whether any support from other celebrities can matter for the actual results. I believe they matter more than nothing, but it still doesn't help them to win the elections."

Cobb doesn't believe that even support from names such as Musk and Rogan were a critical reason for Trump's victory.

"Trump won because Harris did worse than Biden," he noted. "Democrats weren't enthusiastic to vote, and at the same time Republicans stayed as active as last time. It's more about the whole political situation than anything else. How could any celebrity change that?"

Cobb believes that celebrities won't ever change the results for the highest office in the land.

"A presidential election is shiny and easy to see, but it's not the place where it's going to happen," Cobb said. "Local elections might be a different thing. Some local celebrities could actually help people get elected, but we're not following that the same way as the presidential election. We are looking for where it's least likely to happen."

Quinnipiac professor Ari Perez thinks that, in this election, the margin between the candidates was so wide that no celebrity endorsement could make the change, not even by Taylor Swift.

“If the margins had been razor thin like we had in 2020, something like an endorsement could’ve made a difference,” Perez said. “The conditions were just right for Trump to get a huge victory, and whatever effect Swift was going to have on the election — I’m sure she did have one — but it was just washed out. But I don’t think that Taylor Swift endorsing Kamala Harris was a lost cause completely”

On the other hand, Cobb doesn’t believe that celebrity endorsements could’ve changed the outcome, even with tight margins.

“Both sides have their own celebrities who are rooting for the candidate, and I think they cancel each other out,” Cobb said. “But of course we can’t be sure, because doing research about it is very difficult.”

It’s also important to remember that celebrity endorsements aren’t targeted only to new voters or to people who could change their mind. One of the biggest goals during the campaign season is to remind people to actually cast their vote, even if they know who they are supporting. With that in mind, preaching to the choir could’ve helped Harris. However, that seemingly wasn’t the case this time.

A few weeks after the election, I attended a Taylor Swift tribute concert in Los Angeles to ask Swifties whether their vote was affected by her endorsement. I spoke with a few dozen people, and all of them said that Swift's support didn't have any effect on their decision. Most of them said they had already made up their mind before Swift endorsed Harris in September. However, many of them also stated that they wouldn't have changed their mind even if Swift had endorsed another candidate.

So why had Harris' team hoped that Taylor Swift, Bruce Springsteen, and many others could convince people to vote for her? Probably one of the biggest reasons is that U.S. politics has a long history of celebrities campaigning for candidates. As Michael Cobb said, celebrities are good for attracting bigger crowds and raising more money. But as the presidential election in 2024 proved again, there's a long way from fundraising and gathering attention to actually making people vote for your candidate.

Swift and Springsteen are great examples of artists who could have made a difference — in theory. Springsteen is a working-class hero who has been loved both in red and blue states for decades. Swift has risen to superstardom in recent years, has more than 282 million followers on Instagram, and at the same time has roots deep in the red state of Tennessee.

In the end, “The Boss” preached to the Democratic choir in Philadelphia and Swift may have activated voters in states that were already going for Harris. As Cobb said, Swift didn’t do any kind of targeted support for Harris in the swing states — maybe because she didn’t want to be too active politically. After her one Instagram post in September, Swift didn’t make any other political comments during the campaign.

“That was odd to me that she had a very big opening move and then kind of followed up with not a whole lot,” said Ari Perez. “Maybe she got back to her previous mindset and thought, *If I go out there, I might do more harm than good.* Maybe she decided she wanted to make just one big move, so that people who might be persuaded by this knew where she stood.”

Perez thinks it’s possible that the huge backlash Swift got from her endorsement on conservative social media might have caused her to think whether her support for Harris could actually “fuel the other side.”

Maybe one of the key problems with Swift, Springsteen and most of the other celebrities supporting Harris was that they weren’t seen as any kind of surprise. Springsteen has been a strong supporter of Democratic politics for years, so his Republican fans already knew what to expect from him. The same can be said for Swift. A working-class hero and Nashville country girl have become a part of the Democratic elite that Republicans oppose.

Even though the biggest pop stars of the world didn't have the impact that the Democratic party had hoped for, this definitely won't be the last election where the importance of celebrity endorsements are debated. Perez says it's important that celebrities think carefully about how they use their power.

"Anybody that has this amount of power [like Swift] should be all tied up in knots about whether they're doing the right thing or not," Perez said. "I think there are other artists, entertainers, politicians and famous people that do have this level of power, but they're a little bit more reckless about it [than Swift]."

And maybe the impact of celebrities is not counted just by the number of votes they gather for one candidate. Thinking about the bigger picture, it's possible that stars such as Swift and Springsteen have made a lot of their fans interested in politics. Probably some of them wouldn't have otherwise cared about what is happening in the country.

Swifties4Kamala is not going to stop their work just because Harris lost the election. After a couple of months to recoup, Emerald Medrano and the other key members of the group came back together and started to think about what they could do during Trump's presidency.

“We spent so much time for months with this thing that started suddenly, so after the election we all needed a breather to adjust our mental health,” Medrano said. He had hoped that the endorsement from Swift would’ve had a bigger impact but wasn’t too surprised that there were people in the Swiftie community who were vocally supporting Trump. “It was a little bit disappointing but there’s always going to be people who have different opinions. The worst part was seeing people lose their friends because of their different political opinions.”

“Right now, it feels like things are even worse than after the election, because Trump’s presidency has been worse than we expected,” Medrano said. “Personally, I’m hanging in there, barely.”

In March, Swifties4Kamala announced their new plans; they are changing their name to Swifties4Hope.

[The group stated](#) on Instagram: “Hope is not passive — it’s a discipline. In a time of uncertainty, fear, and relentless attacks on our rights, choosing hope is both radical and necessary. But hope isn’t just a feeling — it’s fuel. It’s an act of defiance against despair, a reclamation of a joy in the world tells us to harden. It builds power, drives action, and sustains movements that refuse to be ignored. We are here not to sit on the sidelines. We are here to organize, to fight, and to shape the future we deserve.”



The group's main goals are to make people care about democracy and educate people about current political events in very simple and understandable language. Most importantly, the group wants to empower other Swifties and spread positivity in difficult times. That also means they're doing things slower this time, so they don't get burned out.

"We want to continue our work, but this time we're making this healthier for us," Medrano said. "This has to be something that adds to our lives and doesn't suck out of it."

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