

*ABC News Live Prime with Linsey Davis*

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2 minutes and 42 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: DNC Releases Report on 2024 Election Loss]

LINSEY DAVIS: And let's turn to the release of the Democratic National Committee's autopsy report, which found that the White House did not do enough to elevate Vice President Harris and detailed some, but not all, of the moments that led to her loss in 2024. Have you had a chance to read it? If so, what were your takeaways?

CONGRESSMAN JAMES WALKINSHAW (D-VA): I've had a chance to — to skim it. Look, I don't think we can really draw any meaningful conclusions from this report, which clearly was haphazardly done, incomplete, left out significant issues. It's obviously disappointing and frustrating that the DNC couldn't figure out how to put together a solid, comprehensive report to take a look at what happened in the 2024 elections. But we're focused on the future. We're focused on the midterm elections coming up, and Democrats are going to be presenting to the country a solid, coherent, simple agenda of what we will do on day one if the American people put us in charge here in the Congress.

DAVIS: Was it a mistake for the DNC chairman, Ken Martin, not to release this sooner?

WALKINSHAW: Yes. Look, I think if you're going to release it, you should have released it right away. The mistake was not getting a solid, comprehensive, fulsome report completed that could actually produce some meaningful guidance for us moving forward. That was the fundamental mistake, quite frankly. It's too late to — to fix that mistake, but it should have been released immediately, so that we wouldn't have had this months long back and forth about why it's not being released.

DAVIS: Do you have faith in Ken Martin when you look at this and the DNC's fundraising challenges, does the party need a new chairman for this critical moment ahead of what could be a messy primary process in 2028?

WALKINSHAW: I'm going to reserve judgment on that for the time being. Look, I'm frustrated at the pace of fundraising there. I'm frustrated with this handling of the report. On the other hand, the DNC has been engaged in states like Virginia and across the country and special elections that we've seen, so they clearly have work to do. The good news is there's time for them to turn it around before the midterm elections in November.

DAVIS: This report made no mention of the debate in the party over support for Israel and the war in Gaza. How big of an issue is that for the party today?

WALKINSHAW: I think it continues to be an issue. Foreign policy is an important issue. That's one of the, I think, glaring omissions that deserve some consideration in the report. But look, at

the end of the day, the focus for the Democratic Party today is addressing the cost of living crisis that the American people are facing, and that Donald Trump and this Republican Congress are making worse. We got to be laser focused on that each and every day and make sure the American people know they put us in charge of the Congress. That's going to be our focus.

(...)

8:09:16 p.m.

2 minutes and 16 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: DNC Releases Audit on the 2024 Election]

DAVIS: The Democratic National Committee has released its audit on the 2024 election, a document many within the party have been calling to be made public for months. For a look at what was learned, we bring in ABC political director Avery Harper. Avery, what were the most important takeaways from the report?

VERY HARPER: Yeah, we didn't learn anything dramatically new, but it did put a finger on some of the most painful realities that helped cause some of those losses up and down the ballot for Democrats in 2024. The first was that the report claimed that Democrats did not do enough to build Kamala Harris up as a presidential candidate before she became the nominee, and that it struggled to make an affirmative sort of case for her candidacy, relying instead on anti-Trump messaging — the idea that Trump was unacceptable as a candidate. And then it also, under that, the party underestimated just how much economic anxiety there was out there and how much a cultural issues were hurting them with key voting blocks.

DAVIS: And walk us through why it took so long for this report to become public.

HARPER: Yeah, there was some back and forth about when this was actually supposed to be released. The chair of the Democratic Party, Ken Martin, opted not to release the autopsy. He didn't want to distract, he said, from some of the victories that we saw for Democrats in off year elections in November of 2025, instead claiming that the party wanted to look ahead to the coming elections in which they are favored to — to score some points there. But he also said that this report was not ready for prime time, called it sloppy. Because it had been posted online, he ultimately decided to just release it himself, saying that the secrecy behind this whole report started to overshadow and be overblown, you know, of the report itself.

DAVIS: Anything in there that surprised you?

HARPER: You know, it surprised me that it does not mention the issue of Biden's handling of Israel and Gaza. We know that that was an incredibly important issue, particularly for young voters, for Arab American voters in places like Michigan, key battleground states. This report makes no mention of it.

DAVIS: Avery Harper, our thanks to you.

HARPER: Thank you.