

Rachel Palermo: The Third-Year Law Student Appointed to the White House



Picture Courtesy: [@RachelEPalermo](#)

Rachel Palermo, a third-year law student at Notre Dame Law School has been appointed as the Assistant Press Secretary to Vice President Kamala Harris. She joined the White House staff after President Joe Biden assumed office on January 20. Before assuming her current position at the White House, she was a remote member of the Biden-Harris Transition's Communications Team.

In 2016, Palermo worked with the press team of the Democratic National Committee, where she was the Director of Women's Media and the Assistant Press Secretary. She has also worked as a legal extern on former South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg's presidential campaign during the second-year of her law school. At Notre Dame Law School, she has been actively involved in extra-curricular activities as well. She served as the President of the Women's Legal Forum and Managing Articles Editor for the Journal of Law, Ethics & Public Policy. She is also a member of the Moot Court Board. She also worked as a senior associate at SKDKnickerbocker in Washington, D.C.

Palermo remarked, "When I was in college, I interned at the Department of Justice, which opened my eyes to the importance of public service." In 2013, she worked as an Undergraduate Legal Intern with the Department of Justice. Apart from this, she has also been a Summer Associate at Faegre Baker Daniels LLP and Faegre Drinker. Before pursuing law, Palermo graduated from St. Olaf College with a degree in Political Science and Economics. At St. Olaf, she was the Student Body President and a member of the Political Awareness Committee.

Commenting on the role of her law school in preparing her for the new role, Palermo said, "Notre Dame Law School has prepared me for my new role because there is an important intersection between law and communications. In both fields, I've learned how to write persuasively and communicate compelling messages. Law school has refined my research, writing, and advocacy skills, which will allow me to bring a unique perspective to the work of the Vice President."

Palermo expressed her happiness by tweeting, "Absolutely elated to be joining the press team for Madam Vice President [@KamalaHarris](#). There is a lot of work to be done, and I'm grateful to be a part of it. Can't wait to get started."

Commenting on Palermo's appointment, Professor Christine Venter, Director of Notre Dame's Legal Writing Program said, "Rachel embodies the best of Notre Dame Law. Her commitment to public service, her intelligence, her skills in both written and oral communication, her work ethic, and her warm collegiality will make her an asset to the Biden-Harris Administration. While completing the last semester of law school and working full-time in a demanding position might seem daunting to some, I have the utmost confidence that Rachel will not only succeed but do so brilliantly".

Palermo's appointment is one of its kind, where a law student has been appointed to the White House while still pursuing her studies. Her choice to embark on a non-legal career also points [towards the availability of alternative careers paths for law graduates](#).