

Good morning, and welcome to Miami-Dade County's first-ever fully virtual *State of the County Address*!

I want to thank Chairman Pepe Diaz for the warm introduction, Vice-Chair Oliver Gilbert for that wonderful invocation, Commissioner Joe Martinez for sharing his talented daughter Joana with us, and the entire Board of County Commissioners for their partnership as we navigate these unprecedented times.

And thanks to all of you for tuning in. I'm grateful to you and all the people of this great county that entrusted me to lead us forward. I will honor that trust by serving you with honesty, transparency, relentless determination, and a spirit of collaboration.

Gracias a todos ustedes por unirse hoy. *Mw-en Reko-neh-sa poo oo mem a toot moon na Miami Dade Kun-ti*

Les agradezco a todos los residentes del condado que confiaron en mi para esta labor. Honraré esa confianza, sirviendo con honestidad, transparencia, determinación y un espíritu de colaboración.

This virtual gathering underscores the fact that our community, and communities everywhere, continue to fight against a global pandemic, which has upended so much in our lives that we used to take for granted.

While the virus has separated us, it has also brought us together to work in common purpose to protect one another.

That's the Miami-Dade I know. Our story is one of resilience; throughout our history, no moment of crisis has proven too great. We are a people that has always done great things under pressure.

I know that THIS chapter will be no different. And that by working as one united community, we CAN and we WILL move past this season of loss and lay the groundwork for a brighter and better future for all who call Miami-Dade County home.

We CAN tackle this moment not just as a crisis but a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to rebuild. And we WILL build back stronger than ever by investing in EQUITY, our ECONOMY, our ENVIRONMENT, and renewed ENGAGEMENT with the residents we serve.

Over the last year we have lost nearly 5,000 members of our own community, and over 400,000 people all across the nation, to coronavirus – grandparents, children, friends, loved ones.

Please join me for a moment of silence for all the loved ones taken from us this year.

[pause]

There is not a single person listening who hasn't made sacrifices over the last year.

My husband and I contracted the virus, and recovered. We are so fortunate. Yet, we have not been able to hug or kiss our own small grandchildren for nearly a year which has been enormously hard, a struggle I know is shared by so many others.

Through this hard time, we have also seen our community meet this moment with extraordinary strength and great generosity.

Our first responders and frontline healthcare workers continue to care for others despite the risk it poses to their own families.

Our tireless teachers adapted and learned new skills to continue educating our children and youth.

Essential workers including County employees at departments like Transit, Water and Sewer, and the airport continued to deliver services and keep our economy running through this pandemic. We owe all of you a debt of gratitude and must provide you the protections you need and deserve.

Small businesses, especially restaurants and hotels, introduced new measures and technologies. You kept thousands of people employed while keeping our community safe.

And the nearly 30,000 public servants who make up the County workforce stepped into new roles with grace and caring hearts, while adjusting to a new normal in your own lives.

Y los casi 30,000 servidores públicos de la fuerza laboral del condado asumieron nuevos roles con solidaridad y afecto, mientras entraban a una nueva normalidad incluso en sus propias vidas.

You kept county government running strong while building entirely new programs from scratch – like our senior meal delivery service. Thanks to the leadership and quick work of CAHSD Interim Director Annika Holder, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Chief Alan Cominsky, and many community partners, that program now serves nearly 50,000 seniors each week and has provided almost 20 million meals.

Miami-Dade County Public Libraries Director Ray Baker and his team reimaged the function of a library system, adapting to meet our changing needs and making libraries a lifeline. Our libraries distributed more than 120,000 unemployment applications, and helped our children adjust to online learning by providing more than 20,000 free virtual tutoring sessions.

County team members stepped up far outside their job descriptions – like Animal Services Director Alex Munoz who served as the point person for our County's SURGE teams, distributing COVID safety kits to hardest hit neighborhoods.

Our Board of County Commissioners created new programs to distribute nearly a billion dollars of federal CARES Act funding to stimulate our economy and provide relief.

In total, we've allocated \$108 million dollars to our cities across Miami-Dade for weekly food distributions and other relief programs.

All our County leaders and teams stepped up in new ways to serve and protect our residents during this crisis, and I look forward to highlighting some of those many contributions today.

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From day one on the job, a little over two months ago, I made protecting the lives and livelihoods of our residents my top priority.

Y desde el primer día, proteger la vida y el sustento de nuestros residentes es mi prioridad.

My first act as Mayor was to appoint our first- ever Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Peter Paige of Jackson Health System, who has worked closely by my side for the last two months to help craft a public health response and economic recovery plan grounded in data.

Now, the vaccine has arrived, and with it our opportunity to finally put this pandemic behind us.

Since the very first person was vaccinated in Miami-Dade, the Office of Emergency Management, led by Director Frank Rollason, has been working to build a countywide vaccination operation. Together we administer over 20,000 vaccines per week, and we are prepared to scale up to several times that number once we have the supply.

We continue to demand more vaccines from our state and federal government to get us the supply our people desperately need.

We are ready to put shots in arms: We just need the vaccine.

And while we have quickly put systems in place to distribute vaccines EFFICIENTLY and SAFELY, we must also ensure they're being distributed EQUITABLY to protect all our communities and to move forward together.

**That is why my administration is soon rolling out a new centralized registration process for vaccine distribution. This platform – which will be accessible online and by phone – will allow all seniors 65+ to sign up to**

**receive a vaccine. A one-time registration – no need to constantly re-apply. And it will allow us to fairly allocate vaccines as quickly as we receive new supplies.**

The bottom line is this: your access to a computer, or the zip code where you live, should not determine how quickly you can get vaccinated.

That's why we are also partnering with nonprofit, community- and faith-based organizations, to get the vaccines to those who are hardest to reach.

And this is why, since December, we have been distributing vaccines directly to vulnerable seniors in public housing and those under county care.

We've worked to overcome barriers of trust and credibility with the vaccine by investing in a messaging campaign, to reach directly into underserved communities, to listen, answer questions, and seek to educate and inform.

We need all our seniors, and all of those most vulnerable to this disease, to share in the newfound freedom and hope the vaccine brings – and with it, hope that we can kickstart our full economic recovery.

This won't happen overnight. But I'm committed to leading our community through this critical final chapter of the pandemic. We CAN protect our community with this lifesaving vaccine and we WILL move forward together!

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As we look to the future, building a more resilient Miami-Dade means not just weathering this crisis but rearranging the foundations so that we can rebuild better.

Working together to overcome challenges like we have never faced before also gives us the chance to re-imagine a safer, more just, and more prosperous future.

We cannot just go back to how we were before: We CAN and we WILL create a stronger, more resilient Miami-Dade with these four Es:

- **A commitment to EQUITY**
- **a sharp focus on invigorating our ECONOMY**
- **key investments in our ENVIRONMENT**
- **and greater ENGAGEMENT with and input from the people we serve.**

How will we equitably improve the quality of life of our residents and ensure every part of our community is thriving?

- We will dismantle barriers to opportunity and take on social injustices;
- We will invest in small business and tackle affordability and mobility;
- We will protect our clean water and safeguard our community against rising seas;
- And we will engage directly with the community to bring new ideas into our decision-making and deliver a more compassionate, caring, connected government.

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It all starts with putting access and opportunity at the core of the work we do as a government.

Leveling the playing field for all our families has been my life's work as a social worker, public interest attorney, and public servant.

Crear oportunidades para todas nuestras familias ha sido el trabajo de mi vida.

Since taking office two months ago, I took immediate action to make these principles pillars of my new administration and I have assembled a team to shepherd this change.

I appointed a new Senior Advisor for Innovation and Performance, Rahel Weldeyesus, to departments and drive innovation within all the functions of County government, to engage directly with the public to bring new ideas from outside government, and to help us measure the progress and performance of these initiatives.

I'm also creating Miami-Dade's first *Office of Equity and Inclusion* to tackle disparities in contracts awarded to minority-owned businesses and establish guidelines for equity in budgeting, hiring, and procurement.

And under the leadership of our new Chief Public Safety Officer JD Patterson and first-ever Chief Community Services Officer Morris Copeland, we are taking a comprehensive new approach to building stronger communities through violence prevention, early intervention, and re-entry programs. Chief Copeland, who previously helped build Miami-Dade juvenile services into a nationally-recognized model, will lead the work to make sure our community has "no wrong door" – meaning that no matter your point of entry into County service delivery, you can easily access a full spectrum of safety net and life-enriching programs.

We must also make sure our neighborhoods are safe for ALL our children. My office will work hand in hand with law enforcement, the Community Relations Board, advocates and experts to implement a comprehensive public health approach to reducing gun violence, while investing in programs to better engage and create pathways for our at-risk youth.

And as the mother of a gay daughter, I'm committed to collaborating with our LGBTQ organizations fighting for equality and justice, and we will work together to root out youth bullying. This effort is more important than ever as we work to ensure every resident no matter who they love is treated fairly.

Safer and more equitable communities also depend on building greater trust between residents and law enforcement.

Miami-Dade Police Director Freddy Ramirez has already taken significant steps to put community policing first and make sure MDPD is at the forefront of national best practices. And I have asked Chief Patterson to work closely with him and our Corrections Director Daniel Junior to continue driving positive innovation within law enforcement and to promote accountability and transparency through the Independent Civilian Panel.

The Corrections Department under Director Junior expanded the *Video Visitation Program* to ensure visitation rights for inmates and their attorneys.



In collaboration with grassroots organizations, our award-winning Juvenile Services Division under Director Cathy Burgos provides vital support to families during the pandemic including mental health resources, reducing repeat offenses.

By innovating to help the most vulnerable, we are striving for equity.

That's what Medical Examiner Dr. Lew and her team did when they used new technology to identify drugs infiltrating our community. The data they produced on opioid-related deaths is helping save lives.

And Miami-Dade's Homeless Trust under Director Victoria Mallette administered more than 12,000 PCR tests to sheltered and homeless people and created new sheltering sites, including one dedicated to homeless seniors who were not able to quarantine safely.

But equity is not just a finite list of initiatives. It's a sustained approach to governance. And it must be a team effort. That is why I'm asking for your collaboration and input. To our county employees, if you have an idea on how to make your work, your department, or any part of our county government more equitable for the residents of Miami-Dade County, please bring those ideas forward. I make the same ask of those who do business with the county and our residents: Work with me to build a more equitable and just community. We CAN. And We WILL!

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As for our Economy, we need to create a framework now so that as our economy recovers and rebounds, no one is left behind.

We have already invested nearly \$70 million dollars in federal CARES Act funds for small business relief that has helped so many bridge the gaps during this downturn.

Under the leadership of Director Tara Smith, the Internal Services Department found creative ways to put these dollars to work, including distributing *Back to Business Boxes* to over 700 small businesses to help them reopen safely.



Now is the time to double and triple down on investment in small businesses. We are creating programs to expand entrepreneurship and infuse resources small businesses through initiatives like incubators connecting firms with capital, training, and back-office support.

Major infrastructure projects also lay the foundation for growth and help attract new business, while creating jobs that will help Miami-Dade families move forward. Under the leadership of our new Chief Operating Officer Jimmy Morales, we will accelerate these projects, fund them, and get our residents in the pipeline for good-paying jobs, and this effort is already underway.

I'm also working with industry leaders to create a more resilient local economy by diversifying our sectors – investing in agriculture, manufacturing, tech, finance, and others.

Growing tech, finance and Green Industries not only means greater access to the high paying jobs of the future. It's also an opportunity to partner with innovators on some of our greatest challenges, like climate change, transportation, mobility, and affordability.

My administration is moving these efforts forward alongside partners like the Beacon Council, which has engaged leading tech and finance companies to relocate to or expand in Miami-Dade for years, with recent high-profile successes including Blackstone, REEF, Jumptuit, and others. We are working together to build on these efforts with new momentum to drive long-term growth.

But we can't reap the benefits of this growth without a bottoms-up approach – investing in the people and businesses already here like our agriculture – which has been overlooked in the past, but remain a key pillar of our economy and one that deserves greater investment.

We must also expand workforce training and apprenticeships. And any efforts to grow our tech economy must be rooted in collaboration with a diverse coalition of leaders who have championed this movement for years – to ensure that this growth is shared and diversity is first, not an afterthought.

And while small business is the backbone of our economy, our workforce is its beating heart.

That's why our vision for economic growth must include serious investments in TRANSIT and HOUSING people can afford, to better connect our community and create new opportunities AND the means to access them.

We need to work together at all levels of government to realize the full vision of our SMART transit plan. We will soon move forward on the 20-mile South corridor to connect residents from Florida City to the Broward line, while we advance all legs of the SMART Plan and seek new funding streams. I want to thank outgoing Department of Transportation and Public Works director Alice Bravo for her work as a driving force behind the SMART Plan's implementation.

We also need to advance important shorter-term wins like making our current bus system more efficient by implementing the community-powered recommendations of the Better Bus Network. Thank you to the nonprofit Transit Alliance for your partnership.

And we need a broad view of mobility that prioritizes the safety of our pedestrians and bicyclists. DTPW just completed a Complete Streets Collaborative report, and we will be creating a pedestrian-first Transportation Master Plan.

Our affordability crisis is another fault line in the foundation for prosperity.

That's why I have continued the eviction moratorium, which has saved lives by keeping people safely in their homes, preventing the spread of the disease, and preventing homelessness. At the same time we need to make hurting landlords whole.

We just received 60 million dollars in federal money to make this a reality, which will help tenants and landlords.

Our road map for affordable housing starts with constructing more affordable and workforce units and increasing first-time homebuying programs.

We are aggressively pursuing the goal of constructing 10,000 new affordable housing units each year, and through public private partnerships we are redeveloping public housing units – while creating new homeownership opportunities for public housing residents too.

Director Michael Liu and our entire Public Housing and Community Development Department not only continued to house and care for so many of the most vulnerable over the last year but significantly expanded their footprint – closing on 730 million dollars of housing projects and providing tax credits to benefit low-income households.

Home ownership remains a central pillar to prosperity. We are revamping the guidelines of the Homebuyer Loan Program to make it easier for residents to access funds to purchase their first home.

Over the last year, our Economic Advocacy Trust under Executive Director John Dixon worked to make this dream a reality for more families by providing hundreds of loans for down payments, and closing cost assistance to first-time home buyers.

We've worked together to keep our people safe in order to keep our economy moving forward.

Hand in hand with business leaders, cities, and health experts, we launched a community wide messaging campaign to help prevent the spread of the virus over the holidays – our We Can, We Will campaign, to help our community adapt and thrive through crisis.

Thanks to Director Maria Nardi and her team we became the first parks system in the country to reopen after the initial COVID-19 shutdown and have kept our facilities open for residents and visitors to safely spend time outdoors, especially during the holiday months.

And our road back to full economic recovery must include strengthening and safely reopening our tourism sector.

Miami-Dade County has worked closely with the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau and CEO Bill Talbert to promote open-air activities and open spaces, and I am excited to move forward with the *Miami-Land Program*, which will bring new visitors to Miami-Dade County's many outdoor attractions.

Despite weathering an unprecedented economic storm, there are still big wins to celebrate from our trade and tourism sectors.

Miami International Airport has been a leader in keeping passengers and crews safe during COVID, and was the first airport in Florida, second in the U.S. and third in North America to be accredited under a national Airport Health Accreditation program.

Both the Airport and Seaport set records for cargo trade.

JetBlue and Southwest announced that they would begin daily service to Miami. The economic impact of Southwest alone is projected to generate more than 853 million dollars in annual local revenue and create nearly 7,000 new jobs.

Our Port team completed new Cruise Terminal B, home to Norwegian, and broke ground on other terminals for companies including Virgin Voyages and Carnival Cruises – laying the groundwork for significant growth as we usher in the safe restart of cruising, and creating thousands of good-paying jobs. More exciting news with other partners is also forthcoming.

I want to thank Aviation Director Lester Sola and Seaport Director Juan Kuryla for their innovation and dedication to growth even during this challenging time – we all benefit from your friendly competition vying for the number-one spot as our community's best travel hub.

As you can see we all have a role to play in building an economy that works for everyone.

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And perhaps no issue is more important to our economy and prosperity than our precious natural environment.

Rising seas and increased pollution have taken their toll. Biscayne Bay has reached a tipping point, as we witnessed the alarming retreat of seagrass meadows, harmful algae blooms, and fish kills which brought this turmoil to the surface.

The road to recovery for Biscayne Bay will be a long one, and I wasted no time setting us on this path.

In December I released Miami-Dade County's first annual Biscayne Bay Report Card – which illustrates our Bay is in trouble. The report card, which we will be crafting into an interactive website, provides an important tool to communicate about our progress toward saving the Bay, and educating our residents on how they too can contribute to solutions.

One of those critical solutions is a comprehensive plan to discontinue the use of septic tanks – especially in low-lying coastal areas suffering from chronic flooding – and connect those properties to our sanitary sewer system. My office recently released the follow-up Septic to Sewer Report which is helping us to prioritize the areas that create the greatest pollution impacts to the Bay.

Together with the state of Florida we launched a \$20 million joint venture to fund priority projects, repair aging infrastructure, kickstart our septic to sewer transition, and more.

As always, being able to measure the success of these initiatives is just as vital. Our Regulatory and Economic Resources Department under the leadership of Director Lourdes Gomez has helped to make this possible by developing an innovative Geographic Information System to provide data and analysis on ground and surface water quality.

I was also very proud to appoint Miami-Dade's first Chief Bay Officer, Irela Bague, to a new role overseeing our efforts to protect and restore the Bay. She will work alongside our county departments and Chief Resilience Officer Jim Murley to ensure the vitality of our environment for generations to come.

These efforts are also supported by our Water and Sewer Department under Interim Director Josenrique Cueto, which is deploying \$480 million dollars to upgrade several wastewater treatment facilities to prevent Bay pollution.

Miami-Dade is on the frontlines of the global climate crisis, and we cannot sit on the sidelines.

That's why I was proud to lead the charge as Commissioner to accelerate our clean energy future. I worked to add major climate change goals to the Comprehensive Development Master Plan, like getting to zero carbon from energy and supplying 30% of our countywide energy needs from solar by 2030.

And I know we can become carbon neutral by 2050 if not sooner. We will:

- Ramp up solar energy production and use throughout the County
- Continue to invest in making buildings more energy efficient and sustainable
- Expand public access to electric vehicle charging stations
- Invest in public transit, and
- Reduce our waste.

Last month, we placed 420 brand new buses that run on Compressed Natural Gas into service, and we will continue the transition away from diesel by replacing another 140 buses, due to arrive this Spring.

Our first electric buses will be put into service this year as we accelerate our transition to zero carbon transportation with at least 50% of our bus fleet being electric by 2035.

We also need to streamline permitting and fast-track environmentally friendly, sustainable, climate resilience infrastructure.

This is how we'll meet this moment on our environment.

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And while we invest in these three pillars of EQUITY, ECONOMY and the ENVIRONMENT, all this work is supported by greater ENGAGEMENT between



government and those we serve – by delivering a more connected, compassionate, and caring government.

To solve our biggest challenges, we need a bigger table that brings ideas and input from the people we serve directly into the process of governing.

We CAN bring government closer to the people, and together we WILL make sure our residents are heard and that your voices drive our priorities.

I'm very proud to share that the County, in partnership with the Miami Foundation, will soon be launching a new countywide civic engagement initiative, Thrive305. This effort will directly engage people across the community through a survey and series of workshops to inform my administration's "Action Plan" – a bottoms-up, community-driven policy framework. That's how government should work, incorporating feedback from the public we serve into our priorities, policies, and budget.

I also recently hosted my first virtual town hall focused on transit to gather the input of our transit riders, and look forward to hosting many more town halls on topics including housing and procurement.

It's this type of collaboration that will be key to our success. And we should lift up where that's already happening.

We must continue to collaborate with companies, schools, and nonprofits like CareerSource to train our local workforce for new jobs.

We will continue working hand in hand with the many, many leading nonprofits, and community and faith organizations – too many to name – who move us forward on equity, our economy, the environment, and civic engagement. Thank you to all who have and continue to guide me.

We need to dialogue directly with business leaders AND the residents who make up our workforce. I was proud to recently host my first labor summit, where labor leaders and my administration came together for healthy and open discussion about how we lift up and support our workers to tackle the challenges ahead.

Our County departments continue to demonstrate a commitment to compassionate services that recognize our community's needs during this new normal.

Christina White and the elections department sent out a record number of Mail-in Ballots to give our residents the opportunity to safely participate in our democratic process, shattering turnout records even during a global pandemic.

Our County Communications and Customer Experience Department under Director Inson Kim has worked around the clock since the very beginning of this pandemic. Not only did they provide a voice to our residents on our scope of services and critical COVID updates, they processed a 300% increase in service requests as residents made testing and vaccine appointments.

Our Solid Waste Department avoided a single day of service disruption when this pandemic put even our most basic services at risk, and I thank Director Michael Fernandez for his work to make this possible.

Engagement is also rooted in trust and transparency. This means being GOOD STEWARDS not just of the public's trust but the public dollars, more so than ever during financial crisis.

Creativity and collaboration are key to ensuring we use every dollar wisely. We have invested nearly a billion dollars of federal funds to provide critical services. and With expanded collaboration with the state and the new federal administration, we will bring down more resources to expand vaccine distribution and navigate this final chapter.

Thanks to the team at the Office of Management and Budget, led by interim Director David Clodfelter, we provided advance payments to 140 community-based organizations providing services during the peak of the pandemic.

Our Finance Department under the leadership of CFO Ed Marquez helped our County save \$391 million in taxpayer dollars by refinancing bond issues and reducing debt payments to help us through this tough time.

Thanks to our Cultural Affairs Department led by Director Michael Spring we created an Arts Support program, which helped 280 organizations and nearly 900 artists through devastating pandemic-related disruptions.

The Audit Management Services Department under Director Cathy Jackson worked tirelessly behind the scenes to keep the County's finances in order as well, enhancing operational effectiveness to save \$2 million.

**Engagement also means caring for the employees who care for and serve our community.**

Our IT Department, under the leadership of Angel Petisco, spearheaded Miami-Dade County's *work from home* program to keep employees safe, successfully transitioning 7,500 employees to home work in just six weeks. We once again congratulate Angel on his 41 years of service and wish him a wonderful retirement.

Thanks to Arleene Cuellar and the creativity of our Human Resources team, we developed all new virtual services for our County employees from New Hire Orientation to "Wellness on the GO" tools.

We've also continued to protect the lives of our four-legged friends, thanks to the work of our Animal Services Department, which achieved its sixth consecutive 90% save-rate for animals in our shelters.

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And of course, the greatest direct engagement happens between residents and the elected officials they voted to represent them. I'm so very proud to serve our community alongside the panel of entrepreneurs, activists, and lifelong leaders who make up the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners.

Me enorgullece servir a nuestra comunidad junto con el panel de empresarios, activistas y líderes locales que integran la Junta de Comisionados del Condado de Miami-Dade.

Vice-Chairman Gilbert and Commissioner Keon Hardemon come to this Commission after serving as Miami Gardens Mayor and Chairman of the City of Miami Commission. Both of them are working to improve collaboration between Miami-Dade County and all 34 of our municipalities.

Commissioner Jean Monestime brings the personal experience and voice of a small business owner to our Commission, and provides great leadership on housing, urban and economic development.

Commissioner Kionne McGhee and Senator Rene Garcia bring their years of experience in the Florida legislature to County Hall, helping inform our policy on issues like healthcare and public transportation and building our collaboration with the State.

Commissioner Sally Heyman and Senator Javier Souto have been two of our greatest champions when it comes to protecting our parks, beaches, and neighborhoods, making Miami-Dade County more livable for all our residents. Thanks also to Commissioner Heyman for leading on justice issues including the new courthouse.

And when it comes to ensuring that Miami-Dade County uses hard-earned taxpayer dollars wisely, we can count on Chairman Jose Diaz and Commissioner Joe Martinez to be voices of reason. We are also thankful for the leadership they've both provided to our community's veterans and law enforcement..

Commissioners Danielle Cohen-Higgins and Raquel Regalado hit the ground running, reaching across the aisle in pursuit of the greater good and fighting for protections for our most vulnerable in their first two months.

Commissioner Eileen Higgins went from an underdog special election candidate in 2018 to a key advocate for public transit, and is now leading us forward on transportation, mobility, and more livable, connected neighborhoods.

And Commissioner Rebeca Sosa, who has advocated on behalf of our children and the elderly for so many years, stepped up once again to lead the Commission through a successful transition period. And we salute you as a champion of efforts to save our beloved Bay and adapt to rising seas.

I'm eager to work with all our Commissioners on their new plans outlined yesterday under the new committee structure.

United we stand, divided we fall.

Unidos avanzamos, divididos nos caemos. *Uh-sum noo kumpeh, Di-vi-zeh noo tum-beh*

As your Mayor, I will work tirelessly to bring everybody to higher ground, so that we may build common ground for the road forward.

Como su alcaldesa, trabajaré sin descanso para elevar a todos en la comunidad y que podamos construir un camino en común para el futuro.

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We wouldn't be here today without generations of leaders who worked together with relentless determination to transform our community from an early trading post to a place synonymous with opportunity and resilience.

From founders like Julia Tuttle and Mary Brickell working together to incorporate the city of Miami, to leaders like Athalie Range, Maurice Ferre, Ruth Shack, Shirley Gibson, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and many, many more who never held a title.

And we honor the original inhabitants of these lands and waters, the Miccosukee, who continue as watchful stewards of our natural heritage.

There has never been a challenge we could not overcome when we work together in common purpose.

In the wake of Hurricane Andrew nearly 30 years ago, we came together to rebuild: house by house and block by block.

We have weathered many other storms, economic downturns, and hard times together.

**That's why I can say confidently that the state of our county is strong because our people are strong and we are resilient!**

**Por eso puedo decir con confianza y sin duda que el estado de nuestro condado es fuerte porque nuestra gente es fuerte!**

It's with this sense of history and responsibility for the work ahead that I am proud and humbled to serve as your Mayor – and to continue the legacy of so many pioneers and all the people, past and present, who love Miami-Dade and have put in their sweat and tears to make it better.

We must and we will continue this work and meet the challenges of today with the same relentless determination.

Podemos y lo haremos.

Thank you. Gracias. Merci. (meh-si)

