

Good evening, everyone.

Buenas noches a todos.

Bon-swah toot moon.

Welcome to the magnificent Miami Senior High School! I am so proud to be here with all of you in this historic gem in the heart of our county. I can't imagine a better backdrop for us to celebrate everything that makes Miami-Dade special, vibrant, and strong.

Before we begin, I want to take a moment to express our deep condolences for all those we lost in last night's tragic plane crash in DC. Please join me in a moment of silence for those we lost and their loved ones.

Thank you to our Miami-Dade County Public Schools Chairwoman Mari Tere Rojas, Superintendent Dotres, PRINCIPAL Valdes and the entire Miami Senior High team for your hospitality. We are especially proud to have students making tonight possible – from the fabulous opening act to those backstage helping produce our show!

I want to thank our Board of County Commissioners Chairman Anthony Rodriguez and Commissioner Eileen Higgins, whose district we are in, for their warm welcome and all the commissioners here tonight. I look forward to working alongside you for the next four years to continue getting big things done! And thanks to our performers, faith leaders, honor guard, poet laureate, the Girl Scouts, and our amazing MC.

My family is also here tonight - including the star of the show my grandbaby Leila - thank you all for your constant love and support.

Thank you to our county team for your tireless work to serve our residents. Whether you're enjoying a county park, turning on your kitchen faucet, calling 311, hopping on a bus, or using any of the services we provide, our 25,000 employees are working every day to deliver excellence.

And of course, THANKS TO ALL OF YOU who came in person or are tuning in online. Thank you for entrusting me with the greatest honor of my life - to serve as your mayor for not one but TWO TERMS!

This is my fifth state of the county address as your Mayor. Over the past five years, I've delivered this message in all corners of our county – from a park in North Miami Beach, to Tropical Park in the West, and Zoo Miami down South – and today we gather in Little Havana. It's truly a privilege to represent our richly diverse county and to work every

day to build a government that represents ALL people, from Aventura to Homestead, from West Kendall, Hialeah and Miami Gardens to Miami Beach, and everywhere in between.

Through it all, my goal has always been to create a more responsive, agile, and accountable county government that WORKS FOR YOU – to DELIVER on your priorities, IMPROVE your quality of life, and EARN YOUR TRUST.

In our first term, we KEPT our PROMISES and tackled our biggest challenges head on.

Through the pandemic, our economic rebound, the affordability crisis and the Surfside building collapse – we never wavered in the face of adversity.

We have grown our economy to new heights and made historic investments in housing, infrastructure, transit, small business, and more.

Now it's time to dream even BOLDER and build even BIGGER.

Miami-Dade's next chapter is ours to write together, and we are TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS!

That doesn't mean just literal business. It means taking care of the issues that families are discussing every day around the dinner table.

Taking care of business is taking care of the COST OF LIVING.

Taking care of SMALL BUSINESSES.

Taking care of YOUR TAX DOLLARS.

Taking care of our ENVIRONMENT.

And it's taking care of our NEXT GENERATION and OUR SHARED FUTURE to build a Miami-Dade where all people can thrive!

We are also facing the biggest transformation in our government's history, the transition to new constitutional offices. I'm enormously proud that Miami-Dade has modeled democracy in action through a smooth and seamless transition to our new elected leaders.

As we look to the future, it's more important than ever that we invest our resources wisely. For EVERY dollar we spend, EVERY program we invest in and EVERY policy we put forward, we must answer with clarity and conviction: Does it make us more affordable? Does it make us safer and more resilient? And is it a good use of your hard-earned tax dollars?

In the next four years, I pledge to roll up my sleeves and reach across the aisle as I always have – to continue building a County government that helps more people not just GET BY, BUT GET AHEAD.

En los próximos cuatro años me comprometo a trabajar de sol a sol y a colaborar con todos para seguir construyendo un gobierno que ayude a más personas - no solo a sobrevivir, sino a salir adelante.

Nah caht ah-nay, kap-vee-nee YOH, mweh pla-ni-fieh, trah-vahy, pee dee ahk toot moon. Poo bah-tee yohn, goo-veh-muh, kee eh-deh, noo toot.

When I took office in 2020, our future was uncertain. But we jumped into action to save lives and rebuild our economy. Now, our unemployment rate in Miami-Dade is among the lowest in the nation.

Families across our county are WORKING HARD to earn a decent living, become homeowners, and leave a better life for their children. But for too many – it still feels like they have been left behind.

An economy that REALLY works for all is one in which...

people can live affordably,
get good jobs,
get around easily,
AND businesses can prosper.

That's why people must be able to AFFORD TO LIVE HERE – to not just survive, but thrive. We're making historic investments in housing, transit, and the economy to BRING DOWN the cost of living.

By incentivizing developers, we've built MORE housing people can afford in my first term – in fact, there are almost 17,000 affordable and workforce units in the pipeline!

We DOUBLED the dollars invested in affordable housing projects from \$128 million in early 2021 to \$242 million in 2024.

We opened the Office of Housing Advocacy to KEEP PEOPLE in their homes. We ran one of the nation's most successful emergency rental assistance programs and provided legal support to prevent evictions.

We also are keenly aware of the condo crisis that many are facing. Our first-of-its-kind condominium special assessment loan program has helped more than 1,000 families

make critical and costly repairs through ZERO interest loans – like Magalys Vazquez from Hialeah, who is here tonight. She is a condo owner who, like so many, was hit with a large unexpected bill for her building's special assessment. Through our program, she received a loan of more than \$12,000, and we provided more than \$200,000 total to residents of her building!

We drew down an unprecedented \$80 million in federal grants to build large affordable developments in Overtown and Goulds... and we're providing funding to help developers KEEP older buildings SAFE and AFFORDABLE in communities like the West Grove.

Rents are already beginning to stabilize – but there's more to be done. We'll keep tackling the housing crisis head on.

Through our HOMES Program, we made funds available for developers to complete housing projects despite increasing construction costs. Thanks to this fund, 17 projects remain on track for completion in the next two years.

We also secured a \$2.5 million federal grant to expand eviction diversion and legal outreach to prevent homelessness.

We are looking at building more housing ON COUNTY PROPERTY – completing an inventory of all available land.

And we're supporting major employers to build on their underused land – like Jackson Health System, the School Board, and local churches. Thank you to Commissioner Bastien and the housing committee for your unanimous approval for 800 units of workforce housing to be built on Jackson property, near transit! This will be one of the largest housing projects of its kind led by a health system. THESE are the innovative solutions we need.

A stronger economy also needs good transit – that CONNECTS people to opportunity and makes SURE they can get to work on time. We heard loud and clear that mobility is a top priority – Commissioner Gilbert, a fierce champion of transit, sponsored a straw poll that showed 80% of residents want to invest in expanding rapid mass transit.

Construction on the South Dade Transitway, the longest battery-electric bus rapid transit system of its kind in the nation, is COMPLETE and service will start this year!

We've secured major funding for the North, Northeast and East-West Corridors.

We delivered the largest community-led redesign of our bus network in 40 years, improving reliability, frequency and quality of life.

That means FEWER cars on the road, safer commutes, and less congestion. And I'm proud to share that bus ridership has grown almost 10% and we are now the 10th largest bus system in the nation.

We also NEED SAFER STREETS. We secured nearly \$17 million last year in federal earmarks for road safety to reach our goal of ZERO traffic fatalities.

And get ready for your commute to have a new look. We are fully upgrading the Metromover and renovating ALL bus passenger shelters.

In the past four years, Miami-Dade has truly become a hub for technology and innovation.

We have embraced it to IMPROVE LIVES and turn our toughest challenges into opportunities.

Out of 31 tech hubs across the nation, we were named the ONLY climate tech hub in the country and were awarded more than \$20 million to make us climate ready.

We aim to create more than 20,000 new high-paying green jobs, generate 9 billion dollars in new revenue, and position South Florida as a global leader in the over 1 trillion dollar climate tech market.

We launched Future Ready Scholarships at Miami Dade College so that ALL residents can complete an associate degree at ZERO cost - and we have already supported 2,000 students! Thank you to MDC President Pumariega who is here tonight!

We are working with our business leaders to strengthen public-private partnerships – and we launched the Miami-Dade Innovation Authority, to bring private sector solutions to bear on some of our biggest challenges.

We are investing in high-growth industries like aerospace, alongside Commissioner Gonzalez who is pushing to create more opportunities in this field.

We all know that small business is the backbone of our economy. My administration is set to reach 75% of ALL small businesses in Miami-Dade this year with STRIVE305, our flagship program that grows skills, capital, and networks. And we launched new online platforms, workforce.miami and STRIVE305Hub.

We're making investments to keep growing our real estate, agriculture, film, and tourism sectors to diversify our economy from north to south.

We're also working hard to plan for the future as our community continues to grow – thank you Commissioner Bermudez for working with us to prioritize smart planning.

When it comes to tourism, we are attracting marquee events that invite millions from around the globe. Last year, working with the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, we brought the Latin Grammys back home. And we look forward to welcoming sports fans for the World Cup and World Baseball Classic next year!!!

Al invertir en vivienda, transporte, innovación y en nuestras pequeñas empresas, ¡estamos construyendo una economía que funciona para todos!

Nahp eh-vis-tee poo yohn, e-co-no-mee, kee trah-vahy poo TOOT moon!

Taking care of business in our next chapter also means moving government at the SPEED of business.

It means SAFEGUARDING YOUR TAX DOLLARS to make the county more efficient. And we've been doing just that in the last four years.

We kept tax rates historically low for two years in a row to put more money back in YOUR pockets.

We restructured our financing to receive five credit rating upgrades, saving hundreds of millions in future debt payments. These award-winning bond ratings save YOU money and PROTECT our long-term fiscal health.

In the next four years, we will CONTINUE to leverage innovation and streamline our operations to build an even more efficient, effective county government – to save money, cut red tape, and continue earning your trust.

That's why tonight I am proud to announce our **WISE305 agenda** – a series of actions my administration will follow as we continue leading with fiscal stewardship.

First, the **W in WISE**: We will roll out WORKPLACE initiatives that empower our employees to get rid of inefficient rules that slow us down. My administration is doubling down on our promise to invest YOUR tax dollars wisely. EVERY policy championed, EVERY program established, EVERY real estate deal pursued and EVERY contract

proposed should get the HIGHEST return, while making Miami-Dade more affordable, secure, and resilient.

The I is for Investments in Tech! We will continue to leverage new technology to expand access to services and information. Like Fortune 500 companies, we will continue introducing automation in areas like customer service and data management to enhance efficiency. And we look forward to the release of updated permitting systems to create greater accountability while speeding up review times. Investing in technology will make it faster, easier and less expensive to do business in and with Miami-Dade!

S is for Savings for businesses and residents. We will SAVE taxpayer dollars by consolidating services and contracts to better leverage EVERY DOLLAR SPENT. We already merged Internal Services and Human Resources to streamline these functions, and our incredible department directors have been charged with eliminating redundancies to conserve taxpayer resources wherever possible. We're already working on an initiative to further streamline our IT department and increase revenue opportunities.

And finally, the E stands for Efficiency Review. We will complete a review of outdated policies to create maximum efficiency for residents and small businesses. All policies passed more than a decade ago will be carefully reviewed for ways to sunset outdated rules, cutting unnecessary red tape.

I look forward to working with our Board of County Commissioners to implement these initiatives and especially Chairman Rodriguez, as making our government more effective and efficient is one of his top priorities.

Esta noche estoy lanzando la iniciativa WISE305 para tener un gobierno del condado aún más eficiente: para ahorrar dinero, reducir la burocracia y seguir ganando su confianza.

Mweh luh-say yohn, ee-nees-ya-tihv WISE305 - poo e-co-no-mee-ZEH lah-jah, AK coo-peh de-pahnss.

WISE305 is my promise that we are working HARDER THAN EVER so that our best days are ahead – and that we maximize every dollar. Our wise investment will pay off today AND tomorrow.

Miami-Dade is growing faster than ever – and our infrastructure has to keep up. **Having world-class travel hubs and infrastructure takes care of business by boosting business.**

I'm proud that we drew down more than 1 billion dollars of state and federal funding just in the last four years to support infrastructure! Looking ahead, we will seek all opportunities to work with President Trump and our state leaders to continue making our infrastructure truly world-class, while we continue building bridges with the private sector to bring additional investment.

Our hometown airport, MIA, served a record-breaking nearly 56 million passengers just last year. We are the fastest growing hub airport in the country and #1 in international cargo!

So we're making historic investments to keep pace. MIA's 9 billion dollar Future-Ready Modernization plan is TRANSFORMING the entire airport.

From replacing ALL bathrooms, to modernizing elevators and escalators, building new structures and renovating old ones, you will see a whole new MIA in the next 4 years. And there's a culture shift happening too. Our I AM MIA campaign is training nearly 40,000 employees to improve traveler experience and rapidly respond to maintenance concerns.

We are prioritizing growth while also protecting our environment – **because taking care of our environment is everybody's business.**

PortMiami, the cruise capital of the world, has become the FIRST major cruise port on the eastern seaboard to launch SHORE POWER! This nationally leading technology allows up to five ships to plug into our power grid at one time while docked, reducing emissions.

Thanks to federal investment, the port is also finding ways to better manage CARGO, while building the WORLD'S LARGEST CRUISE TERMINAL, to open next year!

FUTURE-PROOFING our environment and REDUCING RISK to people and property are essential. Thank you to Commissioner Cohen Higgins for always fighting to protect our precious environment and Everglades.

We are taking on the largest water infrastructure project in Florida's history, using the latest technology - because WATER IS LIFE!

Through Connect 2 Protect, we're converting failing and vulnerable septic tanks to the County's centralized, reliable sewer system. This not only prepares homes and businesses for rising seas but also protects Biscayne Bay – the blue heart of our economy – from pollution. With more than 11,000 connections in progress, we have already connected 1,000 properties in neighborhoods like Little River, Ojus, and more.

This benefits homeowners like Monica Arenas and Cesar Sanchez, who are here tonight. Their home's septic tank had damage and needed costly repairs. Through Connect 2 Protect, we connected their home to sewer, avoiding health risks and harm to their property.

We're getting WEATHER-READY for worsening storms, heat, and flooding. Major improvements in our flooding system earned us a higher rating from FEMA, and BIG INSURANCE savings for residents and businesses.

We continue to address flooding hand in hand with our cities. In partnership with Commissioner Steinberg, we convened our first-ever flooding roundtable with city leaders.

To shield us from extreme heat, we're planting more native trees, first in neighborhoods with less tree cover. This not only cools our streets but reduces energy costs and increases property values.

And we continue to invest in beautiful parks and public spaces, which enhance quality of life for families everywhere.

We're also investing in CLEAN ENERGY and LESS WASTE, saving your tax dollars and making our facilities more efficient. That includes cutting down on plastic pollution – just last year Commissioner Higgins introduced the county's bold new policy to eliminate single-use plastics at our facilities!

We installed THREE large solar energy systems on County buildings with more to come, added more than 250 electric vehicles to our fleet, and rallied participation of nearly 200 private buildings in our challenge to cut energy costs.

Finally, we are building a SAFE and HEALTHY community that takes care of people.

I am so proud of everything we achieved in my first term to make Miami-Dade one of the safest communities in the nation. Now we're embarking on an exciting new chapter with our new sheriff at the helm.

But our priorities haven't changed – TO KEEP RESIDENTS AND VISITORS SAFE.

We launched the first of its kind Peace and Prosperity plan, a 20-year, \$90 million dollar investment in crime reduction that creates opportunities for young people and targets

the root causes of violence. Thank you Commissioner Hardemon for spearheading this program and your support of neighborhood revitalization.

We're doing everything we can to build a bright future for our kids and support mental health.

Last year we launched Zero Drownings Miami-Dade, a partnership with our schools, the Children's Trust, and other community partners to TEACH MORE KIDS TO SWIM – a life saving skill!

We continue to support older adults too, including with a taskforce to protect seniors from elder abuse and exploitation alongside Commissioner Garcia and our State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle.

For the first time in our history, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue achieved a Class 1 insurance rating – the highest possible rating. Class 1 means that our fire rescue uses state-of-the-art practices – AND it brings down your insurance premiums.

MDFR team, please stand to be recognized!

With the support of the commission, the county will open the new Mental Health Center THIS YEAR, bringing to life Judge Steve Leifman's vision of serving the most vulnerable. The Center will bring a collaborative continuum of care by providing mental health, substance abuse, and other services. Thank you to Commissioner Regalado for championing this effort.

And of course, we are taking care of our four-legged friends too – expanding spay and neuter efforts to tackle overpopulation. Thank you to Vice Chairman McGhee, for your work to get more pets into their forever homes.

We couldn't do any of this without our incredible 25,000 County employees. You are the engine that powers us every day, 365 days a year – so that we can get to work, have our trash picked up, drink clean water, and so much more.

You not only deliver excellent services but go ABOVE and BEYOND – like our Bus Operator Jeffery Heredia. While on duty, he noticed an elderly blind man on the corner who needed help crossing the street. He safely stopped the bus, and got off to take him by the arm to cross. Thank you, Jeffery, for showing us what it means to be a government that CARES. Please stand!

This is how MIAMI-DADE STANDS WITH YOU, our residents.

Miami-Dade está contigo!

Miami-Dade kahn-peh avec oo!

We have always worked alongside our labor leaders to invest in our employees and build an even stronger workforce. Commissioner Cabrera, you have been a strong voice on the dais for our women and men in labor.

It is truly the honor of my life to serve as your mayor alongside the public servants dedicated to making Miami-Dade one of the strongest, safest, most vibrant communities in the nation.

Miami-Dade, TOGETHER we are writing the next chapter in our story.

At a time when, all around the world, we see division and hyperpartisanship – here we have shown that we can BUILD BRIDGES and REACH ACROSS THEM.

I believe that you can TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS and drive REAL RESULTS while still leading with COMPASSION, KINDNESS and COLLABORATION – we proved it.

My mom, who I sadly lost just before the new year, would have turned 91 today. She was the one who taught me compassion, peace-making and reverence. I am especially reminded of her in all the work we do to find compromise and common ground – to rise above not DESPITE our differences, but BECAUSE of our connectedness.

So, I'm looking ahead, hopeful and determined, not only for the next four years but beyond.

Thank you to all of you who are a part of our story.

Our businesses, faith leaders, nonprofits, educators, and other partners in shaping the future.

Our 13 County Commissioners, each bringing different expertise and passions, working together to build a stronger county.

Our constitutional offices, including our newly elected clerk and comptroller Juan Fernandez-Barquin and elections supervisor Alina Garcia who have joined us tonight along with others who are represented, our school board, and our state and federal leaders.

Our 34 municipalities, in every corner of our community.

Our nearly 25,000 county employees who go above and beyond to serve.

And of course, our nearly 3 million county residents. As I have done since day one – I pledge to come to work each and every day to put YOU first, and to build a government that earns your trust, one of which we can all be proud.

Together, we will TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS. We will continue to rise. Because the STATE OF OUR COUNTY IS STRONG and our best days are yet to come!

¡El estado de nuestro condado es fuerte!

Eh-ta kon-tay noo-ahh so-leed.

May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless Miami-Dade County.