

Hello, Santa Fe!

Mayor Pro Tem, Councilors, City Leaders from each of our 19 departments, and all of our distinguished guests, <<PUEBLO GOVERNOR PLACEHOLDER>>, <<STATE LEGISLATIVE PLACEHOLDER>>...we are honored that you could be here this evening.

And to all my fellow Santa Feans, thank you all so much for joining us!

Tonight we have an opportunity to do something we aren't seeing enough in America today: to think about what it means to be part of something bigger than ourselves. What we want out of our lives together. How much we mean to one another. What we stand for every day. I'm not sure that's ever been more important.

We'll take stock of how far we've come, acknowledge the work that still lies ahead, and remember we're all here for the same reason - because we recognize something special about this place.

You don't have to look any further than little Franny Zidovsky to see it. I want to thank her mom, Danila, for an introduction reminding us what ultimately matters most: the legacy we leave behind for the next generation of Santa Feans. Her dad Matt is okay, too.

In them, and in a thousand families just like them striving to build lives in Santa Fe, we can see everything that made us fall in love with the City Different, whether we were born here or came here from thousands of miles away to build a new life.

It's the love of diversity, not the fear of those who are different.

The celebration of every culture's contributions, and the willingness to embrace new ideas.

The courage to know that you can both honor the past and innovate for the future.

The sense of family, and the knowledge that that word, when you say it in Santa Fe, means so much more.

The belief that no one in our community who works hard for a living should ever live in poverty. It's the Living Wage, the written contract of that ideal.

It's an understanding that goes back a thousand years, that if we don't take care of our climate and honor the scarcity of our resources, our very futures are in jeopardy.

It's the sense at the heart of what drives me every single day as your mayor - that we are our brother's keeper, and our sisters', and our parents', and our childrens' keepers.

It's a vision of Santa Fe as a place where every person deserves the opportunity to pursue and achieve prosperity for themselves and their families.

These are the values from which Santa Fe draws its strength. And don't think for a second that these are just words. If we don't live up to these things at the core of our identity, it matters.

It matters to the people in our community who don't always have the full measure of access to the best that we have to offer.

It matters to the immigrant, who came here to seek a better life for themselves and their loved ones and has so much to contribute to the strength of our community.

To the refugee fleeing the world's most oppressive and most violent places and looking to our country to honor the promise engraved on the Statue of Liberty.

To the working parent, who doesn't even dream for herself anymore, but reserves those higher hopes for her children, that they might have a chance to do better.

To the young family just starting out, to the worker, to the high school student, to the teacher, to all these people and thousands more like them, in this community and in every community, it matters if we fall short of our promise.

Whether we are what we say we are matters, because if we aren't, it's more than just another politician who failed to live up to his rhetoric. Real people - our friends, and neighbors and family members - and all the potential, all the hopes and dreams and goals that a life can encompass, hang in the balance.

These are the people who make up the fabric of our community, and the story of our future is a collection of their stories. In their successes or failures we will find ourselves - or not, and the beauty of it all is that it really is in our hands.

Now more than ever, it matters for Santa Fe because in the short four weeks Donald Trump has been president, he has shown no interest in the struggles our people face, and no inclination to do anything about it.

Now more than ever, because for eight years, when our state leadership weren't actively cutting public investment in the things that matter most or giving out corporate tax cuts at the expense of local communities and local schools, they were standing on the sideline while our state our state was falling farther behind.

It's almost too easy to do. Just give lip service to the problems that are holding us back, don't rock the boat, and keep getting re-elected. It's much harder, and politically much riskier, to step forward and take action, to have the courage of your convictions, to propose big, creative ideas that might have the power to move whole communities forward.

But if there's ever been a moment for local communities like Santa Fe to step forward, it is this moment. If there's ever been a time for cities like ours, it's this time.

Our future is our own, and you can feel the urgency in this community. You can feel it, when 15,000 people show up on a cold and snowy day to march in a women-powered movement against the division coming out of our White House. When hundreds of people show up at Finance Committee meetings and town halls to speak out for this community's core values. When turnout for a school bond election hits record levels.

You are calling for your leaders to step up to the challenge, and you are not going away. Tonight, and every night moving forward when we come together to do the public's business, will be about deciding how we, as this community's elected leaders, are going to answer you.

In so many ways, we've already started to step up. That's why Santa Fe stands out among the cities across this country leading the way forward.

The world sees the work we are doing - which is why it's no longer a surprise when Santa Fe is a finalist for National Geographic's World Legacy Awards for Sense of Place; is named the #2 Small City in America to live and work as a filmmaker, or comes in 5th in the world in Conde Nast's Reader's Choice Awards and 4th on Travel & Leisure's Best Cities in the US; and ranks as the #1 City in New Mexico and #13 nationwide for startup employment.

But there's another side to that coin. Because when the world sees you standing up with pride and living your values, those things can come under attack.

I can't say I ever expected the attacks to be coming from the president, but I can tell you I'm proud of how this community responded.

For 400 years, Santa Fe has been a living testament that a city's inclusiveness toward all immigrants ensures its resilience and success.

Now that value is under attack, and we are fighting, with everything we have, lifting every voice as one, marching in the streets to stop the Trump administration from robbing us, not only of the progress Santa Fe has made, but of part of our identity.

The president and those like him are in for a rude surprise. We know who we are. We know our values. We know the importance of diversity and the strength found in the basic goodness of people who come here striving to build a better life.

We're working with the best and brightest in the Santa Fe legal community and a coalition of strong, experienced advocacy groups to do everything we can to stop this unconstitutional, unlawful, and un-American executive order in its tracks.

I've been asked if I'm really willing to risk all those federal dollars just to take on a fight over one simple policy.

My response is simple. Every time we're faced with a choice between standing up for our values or caving in to a bully, we will stand strong.

Embracing immigrants isn't just a policy. It isn't just some program. It's at the very heart of the America I believe in.

This council, this administration, this city is overwhelmingly united in this. But it's just the beginning of the fights we will face if we continue to press forward in defense of our values. Tonight I want you to know that when those fights come, we will take them on together, and we will win them together.

If it's true that our values make us stronger and help us live up to the vision of what we know we can be, then we have to be willing to fight for all of them, equally. I'm proud of where our values have carried us in just the last three years.

It's because of those ideas, so strongly represented in this community and in this room tonight, that I can stand here and say, with the confidence of a community that has risen to the challenge time and time again, that the State of our City is stronger than ever.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND HOUSING

We could not have accomplished all we have without our City Council. These eight individuals deserve much of the credit. They showed courage and dedication in making tough decisions this budget cycle. Their leadership helped us eliminate, once and for all, a \$15 million dollar structural deficit and restore cash reserves that had dropped dangerously low.

Revenues from the Gross Receipts Tax for 2016, one of the best measures of economic productivity we have, shattered all-time records for Santa Fe by more than \$4 million.

In three years of hard work, we went from a \$15 million deficit to an anticipated revenue surplus of over \$4.5 million. Let me say that again: in three years of hard work, we went from a \$15 million deficit to an anticipated surplus of more than \$4.5 million.

Crucially, we did it all without raising a single tax, which matters for two separate but big reasons.

One, I don't believe it's right to ask you to invest more of your money in government without offering more in return than simply a balanced budget - that's something you should be getting from us already.

And two, as the Early Childcare debate has shown, State Government severely limits our capacity to raise revenue, and I believe we should preserve what capacity we have for the kinds of major investment that will bring this community a real return.

For the hard-working employees, their unions, small businesses and emerging economies like film and entrepreneurs, city councilors and administration leaders who combined their efforts to make this a reality, please join me in a round of applause.

The good news doesn't end there.

Two years ago we invested heavily in our outreach for Tourism Santa Fe. It paid off, growing occupancy rates by 4% and Lodgers Tax revenue almost 9% last year. Tourism, long the centerpiece of our economy, has become a \$1.2 billion annual industry that supports 7,000 families.

Our Film Industry also saw record performance, and it's no accident. Our state's natural beauty, the work to position our city to take advantage of state incentives, our support for local film schools and studios, our two growing film festivals, our Film Commission, and above all our world-class and proud union crews put us on the map.

They helped us record our largest single year yet in direct production spending, at more than \$100 million. That translates to at least \$250 million in local impact. From lumber yards to hotels to electricians and caterers, film helps small businesses thrive.

Even though Santa Fe had one of the strongest economies in the state throughout the recession, at its height local unemployment still topped 7%.

We responded by making Economic Development a focus, both under Mayor Coss and continuing into my administration, investing \$1 million a year into business and workforce growth.

As of December, while the state continues to struggle with unemployment at 6.6%, we saw Santa Fe hit 5.2%, easily the lowest rate among major metro areas.

No other city in New Mexico has seen a larger percentage of new jobs created by entrepreneurs at startup companies. One of the biggest successes, MeowWolf, is creating hundreds of jobs and even today preparing for expansion to other cities.

We doubled down on entrepreneurs by creating opportunity where it never existed before, when we opened the door to entrepreneurs in urban agriculture and food trucks for the innovative chefs and farmers who want to bring growing, cooking and serving delicious and unique food back to the heart of our culture.

Our private sector plays a huge role in these successes, but that's not all that sets us apart.

We made a commitment to working people when we set one of the nation's strongest Living Wages, and we've stuck by it. Now, March 1st will see that wage break \$11 an hour, moving to \$11.09, marking another year of both families and business gaining ground in Santa Fe.

After years of community work, this year we delivered a top-to-bottom re-zoning of the St. Michael's corridor that will bring walkability, commerce, affordable housing and culture together in the new geographic center of Santa Fe.

We passed changes to our Affordable Housing Rules that help us make serious investments in growth, and approved exciting housing efforts across the city that will change the landscape of livability, giving more - and more diverse - people the opportunity to be part of shaping Santa Fe.

But families in our community are counting on us to do more, and this year, I'm proposing a set of big new ideas that will help them make the leap into real middle class prosperity.

When the workforce is struggling we should invest in them, not ask them, after years of cuts, to tighten their belts once again. When the middle class is faltering we need to grow wages, not slash them.

And we should start right here at home. So after years of asking city employees and their families to bear the burden of the city's financial woes, to take on more work for less pay as we eliminated positions and cut back departments, I am proposing that we do right by 1500 of the hardest-working Santa Feans I've ever known and give the entire workforce a well-earned 5% raise.

Looking beyond City Hall, our values push us to make opportunity and access to the economy for every Santa Fean real, and we can get this done.

We know that one of the first steps on the pathway out of poverty and into the middle class is home ownership. That's why I'll be asking the Governing Body to invest more public resources into infrastructure and home-ownership programs to support this goal. We are facing a crisis in access to housing, with a shortage of more than 2,400 rental units in Santa Fe and hundreds of families who want to buy their first home but just can't quite bridge the gap. We must act.

When I came into office we knew there were city-owned properties that were no

longer essential to city services. We created the Asset Development Office to find the best possible uses for city-owned land throughout Sant Fe, and identify property that we could either sell, lease, or donate in ways that generate revenue and benefit the community. Already we have seen this office close deals for more than \$8 million in new long-term revenues from existing assets, with \$2 million more pending, and we can go further to focus our remaining properties on relieving the pressure in the housing market. With the City Council's support we will re-purpose city-owned properties that have outgrown their uses and convert them to affordable, responsible rental development. We can and should also use the revenue our Asset Development Office generates to support greater housing access. Imagine that...\$10 million dollars in long-term revenue invested in making sure people have access to homes.

I'll also ask the City Council to increase infrastructure funds to open up the parts of Tierra Contenta that are not currently accessible for development, re-invigorating one of the biggest affordable housing resources we have at our disposal.

These requests will lead to greater housing opportunity and stabilize our workforce as more of our workers become able to live and participate in Santa Fe.

Increasing access to home ownership and affordability builds wealth, it helps families get ahead, and if we do it right, honors our commitment to sustainability. Our new green building code incentivizes homes that are more energy and water efficient, keeping more money in the pockets of homeowners and contributing carbon-neutral by 2040.

Access to housing is only one part of the puzzle - if our city is going to be truly inclusive we must also map out a more diversified economy that creates opportunity for all.

We've seen real success in tourism, film, and the entrepreneurial economy, and we are in the middle of an unprecedented expansion in health care options and opportunity.

But there is still so much potential remaining in these knowledge-based economic sectors, and to tap into it, there are some basics that we just have to get right.

It starts with a workforce that is trained to the fields where there is the most opportunity. For two years we've worked closely with the Santa Fe Community Foundation to lay out a strategic, birth-to-career roadmap to accomplish that aim.

For the first time, we've brought the city, the business sector, our schools and non-profits together to reach a set of agreed-upon goals and priorities for young people growing up in Santa Fe. More importantly, we have all agreed to allocate our resources toward these ends, ensuring that every young person has a pathway to graduation, not the criminal justice system.

This community collaboration will focus on a key set of goals, including prenatal health and birth weight, kindergarten readiness, third grade reading levels, access to mentorship and paths into careers.

Now we need to deliver on the 21st century skills that help us compete and grow in the global economy. If we give them the skills, Santa Feans can and will access the kinds of careers – not jobs – that create long-term prosperity and real social mobility.

It's so necessary, because today only 50% of our kids will see lifetime earnings higher than their parents. In the generation I grew up in, that number was 90%. Our economy is growing and becoming more diverse, now our task is making sure our young people have the skills to match it.

And we will get it done. I am excited to announce an initiative called Santa Fe Advance, a partnership with Innovate Educate.

Santa Fe Advance will focus our efforts on delivering the skilled workforce our growth industries need to thrive. From health care to digital media, entrepreneurship to science and technology, there is no shortage of opportunity.

By bringing all the stakeholders to the table, much the way we did in the Birth-to-Career Collaborative, Santa Fe Advance will set goals, identify training resources, and invest in core workforce and industry-specific skills mapped directly to the sectors where we know job growth will be happening. This effort doesn't require a massive new investment, it just requires us to think differently and be willing to collaborate to ensure that every person who wants a good paying job can easily navigate a training system that can make it happen. And I want to thank Jamai Blivin and Innovate Educate for a \$100,000 grant to get this initiative off the ground.

For our economy to continue to grow, we have to deliver critical infrastructure that will support and sustain our success.

In our airport, we recognize the potential to be a powerful economic driver and

regional center for tourism – already more than 67% of the passengers utilizing our airport are visitors to the community. But right now 83% of air travelers on their way to Santa Fe come through Albuquerque, which means we have a huge opportunity on the table.

This year we will invest in meeting the airport's full potential, giving local Santa Fe businesses greater access to the world, and vice versa, while taking a jobs creator that today supports 680 full-time local jobs and \$70 million in economic impact and building capacity for an additional 1,400 jobs and \$240 million more in the local economy.

Whether you are opening up a store downtown or building a smart manufacturing facility on Airport road, your business needs to be connected to the rest of the world at the highest level of quality. So I will push to ensure that our annual Capital Improvement Plan includes expanded delivery of world-class, affordable, broadband internet to an unprecedented number of Santa Feans.

SAFETY

We're working toward a Santa Fe where opportunity is real, but also one where we look out for one another, where we keep our community safe for every family in our town.

Our community police force has a huge role to play, and under Chief Gallagher and the hard-working men and women who make up our rank and file, we've taken \$500,000 in narcotics and 150 drug offenders off our streets this year. We're filling our vacancies to ensure a full force, down to 9 from 24 as of today.

Recognizing the changing climate our officers face on the streets, we are equipping our officers with trauma-informed training and the life-saving overdose drug Narcan. In just three months our police officers have saved 11 lives.

OUR BROTHER'S KEEPER: ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

If we're going to be true to the idea that in Santa Fe, we are our brother's keeper, we can't sit on the sidelines while people in our community fall through the cracks of the healthcare system.

Two years ago, facing rising public health costs and an increasing number of Santa

Feans who weren't getting quality care, we launched a program to bring preventative health directly to an under-served group of people reliant on the 911 system.

Since then, the Mobile Integrated Health Office (or MIHO) program has become an example of what can happen when the community comes together and makes a determined, collaborative effort to do better.

In more than 630 visits in homes or on the street, we have provided service to more than 75 Santa Feans who were high-frequency users of 911 emergency services and reduced 911 calls among the targeted population by 53%.

We've worked to partner with and support our healthcare institutions, leading to a vast improvement in health care access, options, and quality.

Christus St. Vincent is investing \$40 million in an expansion that will elevate their quality of patient care. We welcomed Presbyterian Health and their \$140 million investment in out-patient care at Las Soleras on the south side. Combined, those efforts will create more than 700 new high-quality health care jobs.

Add to that the continued growth of Southwest Medical Care, La Familia Medical Services, Presbyterian Medical Services, and a thriving community of alternative options from curanderas to acupuncturists, and I'm proud to say that choice in health care has never been larger, as Santa Fe has quickly become a city where a huge range of care is available to more Santa Feans than ever before.

INCLUSIVITY

Santa Fe's commitment to inclusivity encompasses but then extends beyond the right to a safe community or access to healthcare. It's a core value, one that contributes to our collective and individual identity in important ways.

That's why some of my favorite moments of the past year saw Santa Feans come together as a community to celebrate the things that make us Santa Fe.

The community-driven process that led to our first-ever Culture Connects roadmap will expand access to Santa Fe's arts, traditions, history and culture and ensure the things that matter most, to all of us, will be passed down in perpetuity.

The solidarity with the LGBT community we saw in the widespread support for our

ban on non-essential travel to states that passed laws legalizing discrimination was so powerful, as was the buy-in we saw from the business community and the public when we moved to ensure safe spaces for transgender Santa Feans.

Standing on the Plaza, celebrating the first Indigenous People's Day, we were sending a message to every Native American in and around our community that their immeasurable contributions will not go unrecognized.

As long as I live, I'll never forget the faces and the message of love and solidarity I saw on the Plaza during the vigil after the tragic attack in Orlando.

The joy and sense of family that filled that same space on New Year's Eve or during a Low-Rider Summer car show came close to overwhelming.

These moments don't just help us remember who we are, they help us remember why it matters, where it came from, and how to grow it and pass it on to every Santa Fean.

A COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

We do this work not only to ensure that our culture and our way of life is passed down to the next generation, but to ensure that the Santa Fe our grandchildren and great-grandchildren inherit is as sustainable, resilient, strong and vibrant as the one we enjoy today.

When we launched the Verde Fund, we wanted an investment at the nexus of climate change and poverty. We see them as connected, because we know that as the impacts of climate change play out more and more, it will be the Santa Feans still fighting their way out of poverty who will suffer the worst of the effects.

We funded the initial year of the program using revenue from the uptick in construction permits tied to our rebounding economy, and with over \$300,000 ready to be invested we opened up the Verde Fund to proposals from the community where they saw opportunity to make an impact. The response has been powerful and far-ranging, and we will see the first round of investments awarded within a few months.

2016 also saw the launch of the Sustainable Santa Fe Commission, emerging from the work of the Climate Action Task Force, and given only one job: draw up the roadmap

that will take Santa Fe to carbon neutral by 2040 and ensure that even as Washington moves backward, Santa Fe remains in the vanguard of cities that keep marching on.

We will continue to expand solarization, grow more energy efficient, conserve more water. And we will work with our partners in the EPA to develop a brand new source of water for Santa Fe through a new master plan for a truly innovative urban watershed.

At the end of the day, it's all of you, your unrelenting effort and focus on conserving more, recycling more, and using less, that will help us reach our goals.

OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERY CHILD

But if any one of our values stands out, and deserves to be stood up for, it is the promise we make to every child born or raised in our community that we will do everything we can to give them the possible chance at living their best lives and reaching their utmost potential.

How we live up to that value will have consequences that echo down the generations, and my commitment to the cause of our children will never waiver.

That's why ideas like the Homework Diner are so powerful. If you want to see the future of Santa Fe growing stronger in real time, I'm inviting you to join us, every Monday and Tuesday night at the Boys and Girls Club in the heart of Santa Fe's South side. There you will see upwards of 85 Santa Fe kids and dozens of their parents come together to access hot, nutritious meals and tutors to help with classes and homework, at no charge to the families.

This summer we launched the Summer Youth Culture Passport and watched a new generation connect directly to Santa Fe's world-class art and cultural institutions.

We've partnered with the Americorps Vista program to implement President Obama's My Brothers Keeper initiative and make our Birth-to-Career Collaborative Plan a reality.

And our commitment to this idea keeps going as we look to the year ahead. Working with the governing body and our Finance Chairman Carmichael Dominguez, I'll ask the City Council this budget cycle to put real revenue behind our rhetoric and use new debt capacity to invest in our kids, with the completion of a long-dreamed-of

childhood and teen center on the South side that helps our fastest growing neighborhoods build something incredibly positive into the experience of growing up in Santa Fe.

And it's my hope that they will match that commitment to our south side youth with a commitment to invest in the New Mexico School for the Arts, finishing the buildout on a cutting-edge campus in the Rail Yard that will draw in talented young people from literally all over the state.

Each in their own way, these sites will be pillars, signaling our commitment to every Santa Fe child from one end of our community to the other, no matter where they may be in their educational journey. Whether you're a young girl growing up in a working-class family and looking for resources to access school support or a college education, or a talented young man - from any income or background - who is interested in the arts and just beginning to scratch the depth of your potential, if you're in Santa Fe you should know we have your back, and we should step up and show you.

When you run for public office, you're signing up to try to answer those big questions. Not on your own - nobody has all the answers, even in times when progress comes easy. And the questions we're facing are anything but easy.

But you find that from time-to-time, when people come together, real opportunities arise. In those moments, we can't be afraid to act boldly and without undue delay.

If you believe we all have value, then with that belief comes a responsibility to help each other realize and then reach that value. And we have an unprecedented opportunity to do that for all of our children right now - if we are ready to be bold.

I'm a proud product of Santa Fe's Public Schools - Dr. Garcia and the teachers and parents there have been wonderful partners, and I'm a believer in them and the product they turn out.

But as Dr. Garcia will tell you, 85% of a child's brain development happens before the age of 5, before they ever walk through the doors of Sweeney Elementary or Nina Otero or Wood Gormley.

If we intend to do anything more than give lip service to our children's futures, it starts with making sure they are ready to learn, day one.

Early Childhood Education generates a return on investment of at least \$8 for every \$1 we invest, but this is about a lot more than money.

I'm tired of watching our kids fall short of their potential. I'm tired of watching generations of Santa Fe's young people caught in the criminal justice system.

We know there's an answer, one that can help guarantee our kids are more likely to read at grade level, more likely to graduate, more likely to get a higher education, more likely to earn more over their careers. Knowing this, how can we refuse to act?

I've heard from plenty of people who are concerned about whether we can get this done, and how we will do it. They have honest and important questions.

But I keep coming back to the same answer. Every year, we throw millions of dollars into helping kids who have fallen behind try to catch up in school or into keeping those same kids from falling through the cracks as adults. Those are societal costs that affect every one of us, whether you have children or not.

The public sector has not been able to step up to the challenge, and in its absence the private sector has built a patchwork system that reserves the highest quality only for those who can afford it, leaving the rest of us to scramble for low-cost daycare that doesn't meet educational needs, give up careers to stay home, or ask relatives to fill in where teachers are what's needed.

From the first day of my campaign, three years ago, I have heard from families like Leah Chavez' who are heartbroken they might not be able to give their child the best chance to succeed from day one. Not because they don't care or don't see the value, but because they aren't rich enough to pay.

I've heard from parent after parent like Joanne Kind, working a job knowing full well that her entire paycheck will go just to cover the cost of care for her two children, but willing to do it all the same because she knows what a difference it can make.

At one of our last town halls, a woman stood up in the back of the room and shared that her family, like thousands in Santa Fe, is struggling to come up with the more than \$50,000, per child, it costs to make sure her kids enter kindergarten as ready as they can be to have success.

That's more than college! That's more, broken down per month, than most people's mortgages!

We can do better. We have to do better, by Leah's family and Joanne's family and Danila's family and every other family in our community.

We haven't yet, but we can, if we just have the courage of our convictions.

The proposal we've put forward will expand high-quality early childhood education to every 3- and 4-year old in Santa Fe.

It will create 200 high-paying new jobs.

It will attract talented young families to our community and keep our young people here when they graduate from our schools.

It will make every classroom in every K through 12 school better, as more kids walk in ready to learn from the beginning.

It will mean, after too many years of telling our kids they're on their own, that we finally stepped up to our responsibility to give every child, no matter their background, a chance to begin life in Santa Fe on equal footing.

We can do all of that with a small tax on distributors of sugar-sweetened beverages.

And sugary beverages are not just sodas. It includes a wide range of drinks, including sugary coffees at Starbucks, sugar-sweetened juices and more, all of which have been directly linked to heart disease, diabetes and obesity for children and adults alike.

This raises the revenue we need, even after accounting for realistic drops in consumption. And by exempting diet drinks, healthy juices, milks, and dozens of other choices, we gave low-income families plenty of options to avoid extra costs while cushioning local businesses from too large a hit to their business portfolio.

We've talked to dozens of people in the Santa Fe restaurant, business, and non-profit community, and 75 local organizations, restaurants and businesses have signed on in support, number that is growing daily.

Overall, Early Childhood Education is supported by more than 80% of Santa Fe - and

I am convinced that the time to act is now. But you can't say you are for Pre-K without also being for a source to fund it.

It's not a small idea. But I'll say it again: if the ideas we are proposing seem big, it is only because they must match the scale of the challenges we are facing.

Your Council has already stepped up in a big way, voting unanimously last week to move this initiative forward to a public hearing on March 8th. They've shown leadership in asking the tough questions, and they want to hear from the public about it.

What we're asking them to do March 8th is give the people a chance to have their voices heard this May during a special election, and if this is something you care about, I hope you'll find a way to be there to participate in this conversation, both on that day and hopefully after that as we go out into the community to ask Santa Fe to embrace its "Go Big" moment.

CLOSING

As public officials, our legacy is the sum of what we actually do, not just what we say we want to support.

A city is more than just buildings and blocks, it's more than just houses and highways.

It's a family, it's our family, and it tells a story. We decide what we want that story to be, what people learn about in our small businesses, our neighborhoods, our schools.

It's how we tell them who we are, and what we think is important in this world.

My passion as mayor has always been making sure that story is about opportunity. About an economy that keeps our best and brightest here, especially our youth. About inclusivity and open-mindedness. About history, no question, but also about innovation and the future. About the big, challenging collaborations that move us forward, not the fights that hold us back. But in the end, that's not up to me. It's up to all of us, together, to decide on our story.

It's hard not to feel anxious these days. Or angry. Or even afraid. I get that. I feel it, too. But standing here, looking out at all of you, it's impossible not to feel something

else, too: inspired.

We don't know what the next four years will hold. With this president, it's hard to predict what will happen in the next four hours.

But here's what I know: it's people like you, and cities like ours, that will stand up and lead the way forward, holding fast to what we believe. Because in times like these, that's what people of good conscience are called to do.

The State of Our City is strong, and as long as we keep marching, as long as we keep fighting, as long as we keep expanding the circle of Santa Feans who have access to all the best we have to offer, we will always have a reason to be proud of the story we tell.

Thank you, God bless you, and as we face the uncertain trials that tomorrow brings, let us face them together.