

Thank you!

First – always first – I want to thank Frances, and our two wonderful daughters: Sarah and Katie. I love you, and I wouldn't be here without you. I also want to thank Sarah and Katie's husbands, our sons-in-law, Joe and Jamie.

Thank you, Governors Ridge and Schweiker, for being here, and for your service and commitment to Pennsylvania.

I'd also like to thank Chief Justice Saylor, Speaker Turzai, President Scarnati, Leader Cutler, Leader Dermody, Leader Corman, Leader Costa, and the members of our judiciary and general assembly for being here, as well as all of the family, friends, and invited guests who have made today so special.

I'd like to say a special thank-you to Mike Stack for his hard work over the last four years. And I'd like to thank Lieutenant Governor John Fetterman for his commitment to public service, and for his friendship, as we tackle the next four years as partners. The tie looks good on you, John.

Most of all, I want to thank the people of Pennsylvania. Thank you for the honor you have given me of serving as your Governor. Thank you for the inspiration you provide to me every day.

Not too long ago, Frances and I got a call from our daughter Sarah. She had really good news. After years and years of what she'd probably call "hectoring" – but we'd call "gentle encouraging" – she and her husband, Joe, were finally moving back to Pennsylvania.

When you have talented kids – and we do: Sarah's an architect, Joe is a graphic designer and Katie's a geologist and Jamie is running his own business – you always run the risk that they're going to run off and do something great somewhere else.

When I first took this oath four years ago, far too many parents across our state were worried that their kids would wind up moving away – that they would have to move away, if they were going to find the quality of life they desired.

That anxiety cuts to the core. That's not who we should be. We are not like any other state. We began as a Holy Experiment in tolerance and inclusion, and for more than 300 years, history has chosen us as its crucible.

Pennsylvania is where America declared her independence.

Pennsylvania is where our Founders wrote not one, but two constitutions, and sparked our nation's evolving political experiment with those truths we hold to be self-evident but still seek to fully realize.

Pennsylvania is where Lincoln came at America's most vulnerable moment to eulogize the heroes of Gettysburg and call for a new birth of freedom that we still seek to fully implement for all Americans.

And history is still being written right here in Pennsylvania. You see it when you visit the world-class universities and teaching hospitals where innovation is happening every day. You see it on the farms and in the steel plants where our great work ethic is on display. You see it when you trace our evolution from dirt tracks to canals to rivers to railroads to highways

Pennsylvania continues to be a place where history is made.

So, a big part of who we are as Pennsylvanians is the pride we have in where we're from. And we want to pass that pride down to our kids, so they can instill it in their children the way our parents instilled it in us.

But when I spoke to you for the first time as Pennsylvania's Governor, I spoke of a Commonwealth at a crossroads. We were still proud of our storied past, but the future had never looked more uncertain.

You could look around and see the causes of that anxiety: an economy struggling to keep pace with rapid change, workers' wages not keeping up with the skyrocketing cost of living, a budget deficit that threatened our fiscal future, a billion-dollar shortfall in education funding that was crippling our public schools.

We were mired in a crisis of confidence, and for good reason: Parents no longer felt like they could promise their kids that Pennsylvania had opportunities to offer them – that their lives would be better than their own. Business owners no longer felt sure that the soil from which great companies had long grown was still fertile.

And citizens of this great Commonwealth no longer trusted that our leaders could find common ground. Frankly, after so many failures, we no longer trusted them to do much of anything.

It wasn't a Republican or Democratic thing. It was a simple lack of faith in Harrisburg's ability to solve problems in a way that put people first. Here, in the birthplace of American democracy, many of us had come to the

conclusion that, no matter who we voted for, our government was simply broken beyond repair.

Our continuous experiment in representative government embarked on by our founders became subject to doubt by far too many. That too many felt their promise of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness had become out of reach.

And because of that, the challenges that we faced seemed insurmountable.

Four years later, those challenges haven't disappeared. But we've proven that those problems really aren't insurmountable.

Pennsylvania has created more than 200,000 new jobs – good jobs that support families.

We've improved more than 20,000 miles of roadways and restored more than 1,900 bridges.

We've restored \$1 billion to our schools and enacted a fair funding formula to make sure that our children's opportunities are not restricted by his or her zip code.

We've turned a \$2.5 billion deficit into a surplus and made the first deposit to our Rainy Day Fund in over a decade.

We've expanded Medicaid to cover an additional 720,000 Pennsylvanians, and increased enrollment in the CHIP program so it now serves nearly 180,000 children.

We've gotten more than 4,200 homeless veterans off the streets and into permanent housing and we've helped tens of thousands of seniors and people with disabilities get care in their homes.

The graduation rate is up. The uninsured rate is down. Pre-K enrollment is up. Crime is down. We've got more people working and fewer people in prison.

And while we've had plenty of fierce arguments in Harrisburg, that hasn't stopped Democrats and Republicans from working together to legalize medical marijuana, modernize our liquor system, make our pets safer, and pass comprehensive pension reform that puts our fiscal future on sounder footing.

Our differences haven't stopped us from putting a down payment on criminal justice reform with the Clean Slate bill, instituting new protections against domestic violence, and passing our first gun safety law in decades.

Look: We all come to public service with convictions that we know we can't compromise. I certainly do. And I know my friends in the legislature do, as well. So sometimes we'll disagree. And sometimes we'll have to agree to disagree.

But that doesn't have to stop us from working together to make progress for Pennsylvania where we have common ground. As Leader Corman said, we're not like Washington. We can work together here in Harrisburg. We can get things done.

My fellow Pennsylvanians: We've gone from a Commonwealth at a crossroads to a Commonwealth on a comeback. And today, even as we reflect on our pride in the Pennsylvania we inherited from our parents, we can look forward to the future with renewed hope that we'll leave an even better Pennsylvania for our children.

Now, I'd love to take credit for all of that. Heck, while we're at it, I'd love to take credit for the Eagles winning the Super Bowl, Villanova winning the Final Four – twice, and the Penguins bringing home the Stanley Cup – twice.

But the accomplishments of the last four years aren't my accomplishments. These are our accomplishments. Pennsylvanians have earned the right to feel optimistic about our future. And as we look forward to the next four years, I want us to be ambitious in imagining the Pennsylvania we can build together.

A Pennsylvania where we continue to invest in our schools, where we continue to rebuild our infrastructure, where we continue to lead in research and development, where we continue to prioritize opportunity and prosperity for all of our communities and all of our children. Where we don't wait around for Amazon to move here, because we're building the next Amazon.

A Pennsylvania where we don't just have enough to take care of our own, but enough to take care of each other. Where people living in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh understand the importance of our agricultural sector and the needs of our rural communities. Where people living in McKean County appreciate the power of our world class cities. Where the business community recognizes the value of an energy policy that protects our environment and creates good jobs. Where we attack the opioid crisis that has taken so much from so many families.

A Pennsylvania where we don't just fondly recall William Penn's commitment to tolerance, and the Founders' civic spirit, and Lincoln's political courage, but seek to emulate these heroes and reflect their values in our own time. Where we reform a criminal justice system that treats African Americans and the poor unjustly; where we stand as one to stop discrimination against the LGBTQ community, and where we commit to a process that makes our elections fairer and, where we give every Pennsylvanian the same chance to determine our shared future.

I know this sounds like a lot to ask of a divided Harrisburg. And, the truth is, none of it is possible without trust.

That's why I've made transparency and ethics reform a top priority: implementing the gift ban, refusing to take a salary, cutting waste and red tape from state government, and saving billions in taxpayer money.

But while I will continue this fight to make Harrisburg work for you, I'm not going to stand up here and ask you to forget about the lack of trust that came before. Some stains do take a long time to wash away.

So I'm not asking Pennsylvanians to trust me, or any other politician in Harrisburg. I'm asking them to trust in themselves. Because that's where I put my faith every day I wake up with the privilege of holding this office.

Last October, on what was unquestionably the toughest day I've had in this office, Frances and I were in Beaver County when we got the news about the shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.

We raced the 45 minutes to the scene, but all I could do was share in the grief and agony of that horrible day. I remember seeing Mike Turzai and Jay Costa there, and in that moment, we weren't Republicans or Democrats. And, for that matter, they weren't legislative leaders and I wasn't the Governor. We were just like everyone else, feeling helpless and heartbroken.

But in the days that followed, the people of Pennsylvania lifted us all up. Law enforcement officers who had responded to the scene continued to do their jobs with the courage and grace and professionalism that makes them heroes. High school students from Taylor Allderdice organized an interfaith vigil that night, and more than 3,000 people showed up. The head of the local Islamic Society offered to provide guards to stand watch, so people could feel safe while they grieved the dead at memorial services in their synagogues. Thousands came from all across Pennsylvania to lay stones and show solidarity.

I'm so grateful that you, Rabbi Myers, could be with us today. Your leadership and strength, along with so many others, showed us the way to move forward.

We all came together. We all did what we could. We all leaned on each other. We all found the strength to carry on.

That's who we are. That's the Pennsylvania I grew up in; the Pennsylvania Frances and I raised our family in; and that's the Pennsylvania we should all want.

Way back in 1749, Ben Franklin was sitting on the dock in Philadelphia, watching thousands of people stream off ships from Europe, most from Germany. Franklin wrote that he was worried about whether Pennsylvania could survive the arrival of so many German immigrants.

Ben Franklin was right about a lot of things, but not about this. He should have had more faith in Pennsylvania. And I'm not just saying that because he was talking about my ancestors. Throughout its history, Pennsylvania has never been defined by one ethnicity, or one religion, or one ideology, or one region. We've always been diverse. And we've always been at the epicenter of change.

From the American Revolution to the Civil War to the industrial revolution, from the days of steel and coal to the days of innovation and technology, Pennsylvania has been asked to adapt to change and respond to challenges, time and time again.

That isn't our curse. It's our blessing. Our ability to come together again and again, across whatever boundaries may divide us, and renew this great political experiment for another generation – that's what made Pennsylvania the place I'm so proud to be from.

And now, we are challenged again.

Challenged to re-imagine our workforce for a new century so that more of our children can find opportunity right here in Pennsylvania. Challenged to protect the progress we've made in restoring our schools and our fiscal security. Challenged to keep making our state stronger, and fairer, and more prosperous.

I'm ready to do my part. But, today, I'm asking you, the people of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to do your part, as well.

In this last election, we saw increased voter turnout in all 67 counties. But voting isn't the end of your responsibility in helping to shape our shared future. It's just the beginning. It's long past time we re-discover democracy together – because if we're going to build the kind of trust we need to make progress in Harrisburg. . . if we're going to renew our faith in Pennsylvania's future. . . it won't come from me or anyone else on this stage. It'll come from you, the people of this great Commonwealth.

So, today, I ask you to choose hope over hopelessness, empathy over apathy. I ask you to choose action over passivity. I ask you to take the future of our Commonwealth into your own hands and help lead us forward.

My fellow Pennsylvanians, no longer are we stuck at a crossroads. We have chosen a path of progress. We have earned the right to feel not just proud of our past, but hopeful for our future.

So, let us have faith in each other.

Let us have faith in what we can fix together, what we can achieve together – what we can build together.

Thank you, and God bless you! And God bless the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.