

Good evening, Michigan. It's great to be back in the Capitol.

And it feels even better to be making history. I am honored to stand between Speaker Joe Tate and Majority Leader Winnie Brinks. Both are firsts—the first Black Speaker and the first woman Majority Leader. They will certainly not be the last.

Speaker Tate, Majority Leader Brinks, Minority Leader Hall, and Minority Leader Nesbitt—I look forward to our partnership centered on problem solving. It's what Michiganders deserve.

Let's also take a moment to honor our Michigan State Police and Michigan National Guard. They and their families all make sacrifices to keep us safe. We will always have their backs. We mean it.

We are calling on the Biden administration to keep supporting our guard members, their families, and the community. And continue to base a fighter mission at Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Macomb County.

Now I want to acknowledge Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist, Attorney General Dana Nessel, and Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson—you've been strong allies and great friends. I'm looking forward to more good work together.

Also want to acknowledge all our state employees, my cabinet, and executive office staff who work hard to move our state forward. Thank you.

My fellow Michiganders. We spoke with a clear voice in November. We want the ability to raise a family without breaking the bank. Strong protections for our fundamental rights to: vote and control our own bodies. Leaders who will work across the aisle to solve problems and deliver on the issues that make a real difference in our lives.

Michiganders are facing the pinch right now: Picking up items at the store and putting them back before checking out. Having tough conversations about medical bills, prescription costs, and what paths their kids can afford after high school. We are all concerned about making sure we live in a safe neighborhood and have jobs and businesses in our towns next year and next decade.

We might not be able to solve inflation or supply chain issues on our own, but we must work together to lower costs and put Michiganders on the path to a brighter future. As I said in my inaugural address, Michiganders compete with an underdog spirit and carry ourselves with championship swagger. No challenge is too tough.

Tonight, let's talk about what we can do and where we're going, together. We are eager to chase our bright future with hustle and grit.

Michigan, the state of our state is: strong and ready to go.

My proposals tonight will; tackle the challenges people are facing right now, make a real difference in their lives, and make Michigan more competitive. This is our future. But policies alone mean nothing—it's about the people they impact.

So, I'm not going to give you a list. Instead, let's talk about what my proposals will mean to 3 groups of Michiganders with whom we can all identify.

1) Folks working hard to care for themselves and support their families.

2) Young people about to graduate.

And finally, 3) Michiganders born today.

The #1 issue for folks trying to make ends meet is costs. Michiganders at home: I know how hard you work. I'll get right to the point. Tonight, I am excited to announce "Lowering MI Costs," a plan offering immediate relief. It's got 3 parts.

First: let's roll back the retirement tax, saving half a million households \$1,000 a year.

Second: let's expand the Working Families Tax Credit, delivering at least \$3,000 refunds to 700,000 families.

And third: Pre-K for All to save families an average of \$10,000 a year and ensure every 4-year-old in Michigan gets a great start.

With inflation, every dollar saved makes a difference. That's why we're moving fast. Parts of the plan have already been introduced by Representatives Witwer and Shannon and Senators Hertel and McDonald Rivet. Let's get it done.

Now let's talk about what Lowering MI Costs means for you.

Repealing the retirement tax will make a huge difference for our seniors. Ultimately, it will save 500,000 households an average of \$1,000 bucks a year. That's money for prescriptions, groceries, gas, or gifts for grandkids. I fought this tax as a legislator and as governor because I knew it hurt people.

We need to get this done for Michiganders like Michael, a retired firefighter from Livonia. He was aghast when his retirement income was taxed. He spent his career putting his life on the line to pull his neighbors from burning buildings, and then the state changed the rules in the middle of the game, raising taxes on his hard-earned dollars.

Seniors who served, saved, and did everything right deserve to keep more of what they earned. Let's get this done.

The Working Families Tax Credit, formerly known as the EITC, is a bipartisan tax break at the federal and state level. Boosting it delivers an average refund of at least \$3,000 to 700,000 families.

As we work together to build a brighter future, we need to lower costs and support every kind of family: those who have kids and those who do not. The Working Families Tax Credit benefits all kinds of families, and it directly impacts nearly 1 million children—almost half the kids in Michigan. It will put hundreds of millions back in family budgets to help with rent, school supplies, and food on the table.

Data shows boosting the Working Families Tax Credit also closes health and wealth gaps. Children who grow up with this support have better test scores, graduation rates, and earnings as adults.

The credit especially benefits single moms and working class families of every race in all 83 counties—from city centers to small towns. It is, in the words of President Reagan, “the best anti-poverty, the best pro-family, the best job creation measure.”

These 2 tax changes will right a wrong inflicted on Michiganders 12 years ago. In 2011, seniors and hardworking families had the rug ripped out from under them when the retirement tax was enacted and the Working Families Tax Credit was gutted. It was wrong. Now, we can make it right.

Lowering MI Costs goes further to save people money. Part 3—pre-K for all—saves families an average of \$10,000 a year compared to their current pre-K or child care.

Every parent knows an early start is critical to their child’s future. It’s why we: read, talk, and sing to our babies, worry about finding a great child care provider, and have wait lists for great preschools.

It’s why one of us showed up to work just hours after his daughter, Violet, was born—so he could keep fighting for all our kids. Representative Andrews, I hope you’re enjoying some well-deserved time with your baby. Congratulations to you and especially to your wife, Lora, another strong Michigan woman who is already an incredible mom.

Data shows that children who go to preschool are: more likely to graduate, earn a certificate or degree, and get a good-paying job. Preschool helps employers too, which is why so many business groups support it.

Unfortunately, affordable preschool is hard to find right now. 20 years ago, it was invaluable for me. Without it, I could not have raised my girls and continued my career. Most in this room could say the same. We were fortunate because we had access and could afford preschool. Every parent and every child in Michigan deserves the same because we all want what’s best for our kids.

Let’s expand our bipartisan preschool effort—the Great Start Readiness Program—so every 4-year-old in Michigan can access a free, public preschool education by the end of my second term.

This investment will ensure children arrive at kindergarten ready to learn and saves their families upwards of \$10,000 a year. It helps parents, especially moms, go back to work. And it will launch hundreds more preschool classrooms across Michigan, supporting thousands of jobs.

Together, we can lower costs for Michiganders feeling the pain of inflation right now. For our seniors, families, and kids, let’s get this done.

Now let’s turn to the Michiganders who recently graduated from high school or college. I’m looking at my daughters and thinking of all the young people in our state.

They’re smart, engaged, and fighting for their future—record turnout on campuses last November proved it. I know Secretary of State Benson will ensure their voices—and the voices of every Michigander—are heard in every election. Together, we are going to expand voting rights, protect

election workers, and build on last year's bipartisan law to help military members and their families overseas have their votes counted.

To keep young Michiganders here and attract even more talent to Michigan, we must focus on 2 things: economic opportunity and personal freedom.

To deliver on these priorities, I am excited to announce: Make it in Michigan.

First, opportunity. A quote from the 90's: it's the economy, stupid.

Ambitious young people have a lot of options when they graduate. As they decide where to live, we must make sure Michigan is the answer—not just for a few years but for the rest of their lives—by creating opportunity that lasts for decades.

Let's start with the good news. Just over a year ago, in a bipartisan way, we came together to create powerful new tools to attract jobs and investment to Michigan. Since then, we have brought home over \$13.5 billion worth of projects including: A chipmaker in Bay City. Battery plants in Big Rapids, Grand Rapids, and Van Buren Township. And Big 3 investments across Michigan. Heck, there's a new GM battery plant being built just down the road. Our work is paying off, with nearly 13,000 good-paying jobs secured.

Make it in Michigan proposes a sustainable funding source for our economic development efforts while growing talent, making our communities better places to live, and helping our state become a place where anyone can thrive.

If we get this done, we can move faster year-round to compete and win cutting-edge manufacturing projects and bring more supply chains home. We can create opportunity for you and your family and support local economies and small businesses across our state. Businesses know that we must compete to grow, and when we do, we all win.

I am proud that we created powerful economic development tools and I know we will work together to make them the strongest in our state's history. For too long, we were fighting with a hand tied behind our back. Now we've got the upper hand.

Hustling for more projects is a solid first step. But building a strong economy is a marathon, not a sprint. If we want to play in the global market, we must go everywhere and compete with everyone.

The good news: competition is in our DNA. Whether it's a local rec league or the global manufacturing market, Michiganders hustle. That spirit can be found in our hungry, passionate young people too. We can channel that energy to shore up Michigan as the world's premier advanced manufacturing destination.

The last few years—with economic shocks in China and Russia's invasion of Ukraine—have demonstrated that a domestic supply of chips and energy is tied to national security.

That's why over the last few weeks, I met with business leaders around the globe and across our nation. I told them what Michigan has to offer: Friendly, hardworking people. Unbeatable natural resources. A

great quality of life at a good cost of living. But most of all, I told them that we will do what it takes to bring them to Michigan because our young people deserve the best opportunities in the world.

To quote our great senior Senator Debbie Stabenow, Michigan “makes stuff and grows stuff.” Let’s develop that core strength by manufacturing the building blocks of the future in Michigan. Let’s keep bringing supply chains of cars and chips home. And let’s increase domestic clean energy production, like wind and solar, so we can produce more energy in America instead of overseas.

To help young people get jobs to “make stuff and grow stuff,” let’s support talent development and keep closing in on our 60 by 30 goal to have 60% of people earn a degree or skills certificate by 2030.

Let’s keep funding the bipartisan Michigan Achievement Scholarship, which lowers the cost of higher education—community college, private, or public university—by thousands of dollars for most students and makes college tuition-free for 65% of graduating seniors. Maybe you can use it to: study engineering at Michigan Tech, nursing at Alpena Community College, teaching at Saginaw Valley, or attend MSU’s #1 ranked supply chain program or U of M’s #1 ranked undergrad business program!

Let’s fund apprenticeships and initiatives that are putting nearly 200,000 Michiganders on tuition-free paths to higher education or skills training, helping them land good-paying, union jobs.

To help even more people “Make it in Michigan,” let’s take steps to lower the age for Michigan Reconnect from 25 to 21.

Reconnect is our bipartisan program that offers anyone 25 and older a tuition-free associate’s degree or skills training. I want to thank Senator Anthony for her work to establish and grow this program. Over 113,000 Reconnectors have been accepted, and we want that number to grow. Let’s unleash opportunity for young people while offering companies the skilled, hardworking talent they need to succeed in Michigan.

The other half of attracting and retaining young people is standing up for their freedoms. Just a few months ago, Michiganders told us that people should be able to make their own decisions about their own bodies. Let’s get to work.

Let’s repeal our extreme 1931 law banning abortion.

I want to thank the Progressive Women’s Caucus for their leadership on this issue and Representative Pohutsky and Senator Geiss for introducing legislation to get it done.

Let’s repeal other dangerous laws prohibiting people from accessing reproductive health care or shaming them for seeking it in the first place.

Let’s repeal outdated laws restricting who you can marry.

And let’s expand the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act so you can’t be fired or evicted against because of who you are or how you identify.

I called for this in my first State of the State back in 2019. I want to thank Senator Moss and Representative Hoskins for introducing this bill. It’s about damn time we got it done.

Protecting these freedoms is the right thing to do and it's just good economics. States with extreme laws are losing talent and investment because bigotry is bad for business. We should build on our reputation as a welcoming beacon of opportunity where anyone can succeed.

I know talent development is a personal priority for Lieutenant Governor Gilchrist, and I look forward to working with him so we can help people see their futures in Michigan.

I've also heard from folks like Lauren, who grew up in Traverse City and wants to move back to start a family but waited until she knew her reproductive rights would be protected. Lauren, I want you and anyone living in a state that wants to control your body or deny your existence to know that Michigan has a place for you.

Together, we are going to change Michigan from a state with century-old bans to forward looking protections.

Our message is simple: we will fight for your freedom. And you know what? Let's go on offense. I'll go to any state that restricts people's freedoms and win business and hardworking people from them. I'm looking at you, Ohio and Indiana.

Every parent—Republican, Democrat, or Independent—wants our kids to stay in Michigan. Let's give them reasons to stay beyond the promise of a home-cooked meal or free laundry facilities. Let's expand economic opportunity and protect fundamental freedoms.

Now that we've talked about folks working to make ends meet and young people choosing where to build their lives, I want to talk about the littlest Michiganders.

A baby born down the street at Sparrow today could live past the year 2100. What will they see in that time? More Stanley Cups for the Wings? A Super Bowl for the Lions? More World Series for the Tigers? Hey, we can dream. All I know is that Izzo will still be coaching.

Truth is, we have no idea what kids born today will live through. Heck, when I was here 3 years ago we had no idea what we were about to live through. What we do know, however, is we can act now to set them up for success.

A lot will change by the year 2100, but what every child needs to succeed will not.

Tonight, I'm proposing bold investments in public safety and education to make sure a child born today lives in a safe neighborhood and can get a great public education.

Over the last 4 years, we made record investments in our children and schools by leading with our shared values: We closed the funding gap between schools and brought student investment to an all-time high—4 years in a row without raising taxes. We made a generational investment to build new libraries and labs and improve air in classrooms and water from drinking fountains. We funded mental health and campus safety at record levels.

We set up fellowships and started paying our student teachers. Student teacher stipends are already making a difference for future educators like Zahara from Canton, who uses the money to pay her bills

as she gears up to enter the classroom. Zahara—we're rooting for you! And we will continue having your back and growing the profession, so every classroom has a caring, qualified educator.

In the months ahead, we will deliver another strong education budget. But we must do more.

Let's fund MI Kids Back on Track, to offer every child personalized learning support to get them back on track for long-term success. I want to thank Representative Haadsma for championing this issue.

When a child gets a great start, learns to read, and graduates high school, they are on track to land a good-paying job or pursue higher education. Unfortunately, the last few years have disrupted regular learning patterns. In-class instruction alone is not enough—our children need more support to master the skills we know they need most.

Investing in tutoring, after-school programs, and other learning supports gets children 1-on-1 time with a caring, qualified educator that they need to succeed.

Whether you're a 3rd grader learning about the solar system, a 6th grader focusing on fractions, or a junior sharpening persuasive writing skills—tutoring addresses your specific learning challenges.

And we know that education investments matter to the private sector too. Employers know that today's students are tomorrow's workforce and entrepreneurs. We need tutoring to get our kids back on track for Michigan's long-term economic success.

Let's fund MI Kids Back on Track before spring break.

Now let's talk about public safety.

As a former prosecutor, public safety is a top priority for me. I will work hard to make sure everyone can get home at the end of the day. And I am proud to have a strong partner in Attorney General Nessel. She prosecutes violent criminals, is shoring up consumer protections, and faces down anyone who tries to harm Michiganders.

Since I've been governor, we've invested \$1 billion in public safety. Let's continue funding law enforcement with better training, oversight, and access to mental health resources. Police officers, state troopers, and prosecutors have tough, dangerous jobs, and if we work together, we get them what they need to keep our communities safe.

Right now, there is a flood of illegal guns on our streets. There's been a rise of break-ins at gun dealerships and straw purchases, where one person illegally buys a firearm for another. Firearms are getting more dangerous too, thanks to 3D printed technology called Glock switches that turn semi-automatic weapons fully automatic.

That's why we launched Operation Safe Neighborhoods, taking hundreds of illegal firearms off the street before they could be used in the commission of a crime. But we must do more so the world our kids inherit is not more violent than the one we inhabit now.

The time for only thoughts and prayers is over. It's time for commonsense action to reduce gun violence in our communities.

Let's enact universal background checks for people who want to buy firearms.

Let's enact safe storage laws so we can make sure firearms are stored safely at home.

And let's enact extreme risk protection orders, so we can keep guns out of the hands of those who might represent a danger to themselves or others. If Florida and Indiana can get this done, we sure can, right?

Despite pleas from Oxford families, these issues never even got a hearing in the legislature. This year, let's change that and work together to stop the violence and save lives. I want to thank Senator Bayer and Representative Brabec for their leadership on this issue.

And I want to be very clear—I'm not talking about law-abiding citizens. Hunters and responsible gun owners from both sides of the aisle know that we need to get these commonsense gun safety proposals across the finish line.

We need to do this for our kids, like Zyaire from Plymouth, who wrote to me and said that he just wants to feel safe going to school to learn. Zyaire—we will get this done so you and your classmates can focus on learning and growing.

Tonight, I spoke to 3 groups of Michiganders we can all see ourselves in. I proposed that we Lower MI Costs, Make it in Michigan, and fund public safety and education.

There are many more priorities I will share in my budget proposal. But I want to highlight 2 more tonight that impact us all: infrastructure and climate.

If you haven't heard, roads are pretty important to me and every Michigander—our state flower might as well be an orange barrel! Since I took office, we've fixed 16,000 lane miles and 1,200 bridges, supporting 89,000 jobs. Throughout my second term, I will continue finding ways to keep fixing the damn roads. And as we fix them, let's build the most innovative transportation systems in the country. With new smart road technology, we can avert hundreds of crashes and get the next-generation of made-in-Michigan vehicles on the road.

We also have billions in federal resources from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law headed our way. To invest them as efficiently as possible, I established the Michigan Infrastructure Office. This year, it will redouble its efforts, helping to build up every kind of infrastructure—roads, high-speed internet, clean energy, and lead-free pipes.

Last, but certainly not least, it is our shared duty to face climate change head-on and protect our land and water. We must pursue climate action while creating jobs, lowering costs, and becoming a hub of clean energy production. Last year, we unveiled the MI Healthy Climate Plan, and this year, we should make bold investments in climate action to deliver on its targets. Let's get it done.

I am honored to be standing here tonight as your governor. I will work with anyone who's serious about solving problems to move Michigan forward. Before I go, I want to talk about an American superpower—belief.

I've always been a hopeful person. I believe in our bright future. I write in my gratitude journal every day and insist on quoting Ted Lasso, much to my staff's chagrin and occasional delight.

Don't get me wrong—I'm not naïve. Over the last 4 years, we've faced historic challenges and seen the visceral consequences of political division. But the prevailing take now seems to be that things will get worse. Fatalism is in vogue as people wonder aloud whether America's best days are behind her.

I reject that. We cannot mistake pessimism for intelligence. And we must never forget who we are.

My fellow Michiganders, we live in a special place. Our beautiful state has played host to so much progress because of our unbreakable, hopeful spirit.

As the world grapples with big challenges and asks itself tough questions, our responsibility as Michiganders is to roll up our sleeves and do the work.

On May 31, 1907, that's exactly what President Teddy Roosevelt reminded us at a speech just down the road at Michigan Agricultural College, known as MSU today. He said, "I believe in the happiness that comes from the performance of duty, not the avoidance of duty. But I also believe in trying, each of us, as strength is given us, to bear one another's burdens."

Michigan—let's embrace our duty.

Let's show everyone that the cure for cynicism is competence.

Let's lead by example as a state of hardworking, happy warriors.

As Coach Campbell said, we know what we are.

So, whether it's your buffs, the map decal on your car, or your GRIT hat... Let's show the world: We are Michiganders and nothing gets in our way.

Thank you and goodnight!