

Governor Whitmer's Second Inaugural Address as Prepared for Delivery

LANSING, Mich – Today, Governor Gretchen Whitmer will take the oath of office for her second term as Michigan's 49th governor and deliver her inaugural address. Please see below for her remarks as prepared for delivery.

Hello Michigan! I am honored to be here and excited to get to work.

First, I want to acknowledge my family—my daughters Sherry and Sydney, my husband Marc, my dad, Dick Whitmer, my sister Liz, brother Richard, and my step-sons Mason, Alex, and Winston. I could not do this without their love and support.

I want to thank all the statewide leaders with us today: my partner in governance Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist. Our Attorney General Dana Nessel and Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson. Each has served Michigan admirably over the last 4 years, and I am grateful to continue our partnership for the next 4.

A warm welcome to my friends in the Michigan Legislature, the 2 new Democratic leaders who have each made history—Speaker of the House Joe Tate and Senate Majority Leader Winnie Brinks. Also, welcome to House Minority Leader Matt Hall and Senate Minority Leader Aric Nesbitt. Let's work together to move Michigan forward. Also, I want to acknowledge my federal partners, Senators Stabenow and Peters, Congresswomen Stevens and Lawrence, and our hardworking congressional delegation.

My fellow Michiganders, I am honored that you have put your trust in me to keep serving our beautiful state. I will be a governor for ALL Michiganders and I'll work with anyone who wants to get things done.

In November, Michiganders spoke with a clear voice. They want the ability to raise a family without breaking the bank, strong protections for constitutional rights, and leaders focused on the fundamental issues that matter most to their lives. They expect us to embody the values they live up to every day—grit and grace. They deserve practical problem solvers who get things done.

Michiganders are smart. We know we face a lot of immediate and long-term challenges. By working together, we can tackle those challenges.

Over the next 4 years...

We must do everything we can to lower costs so families have more money in their pockets to pay the bills and put food on the table.

Grow our economy so every person can get the skills to land a good-paying job.

Ensure every Michigander is safe going to work, dropping their kids off at school, or at home in their neighborhood.

Build up infrastructure for our communities: From the roads people drive on, the homes they live in, to the pipes that deliver their kids' drinking water.

Our task is clear: focus on the fundamentals, work together, and get things done.

So, let's talk about those fundamentals. What are we going to do over the next 4 years? I will have a lot more to say in my upcoming State of the State and budget addresses.

But I want to share the vision with you here today.

Let's ensure our hardworking seniors can keep more of what they've earned.

Let's bring supply chains home from China to Michigan and become an epicenter of innovation in clean energy, batteries, and chips.

Let's empower every child—no matter where they live—to pursue their potential by continuing to make record investments in education from preschool to postsecondary.

Let's fight for our workers and ensure they can earn a good living and have great benefits including time with their families and quality, affordable health care.

Let's reduce gun violence—the #1 of killer of our kids in this country—by pursuing commonsense reforms.

Let's repeal outdated laws limiting our freedom to control our own bodies and marry who we want.

Let's tackle climate change head-on while: creating jobs, lowering costs, and protecting our air and our lakes, both Great and small.

If we reach across the aisle, bring people together in every region, and focus on solving problems, we can make Michigan a place where all people can envision a great future, no matter who they are, where they come from, or how much money they have in their pocket.

We have a lot of good work to do. I am more confident than ever that our future is bright because of you, my fellow Michiganders, the tough, hardworking people who call this place home.

How do you know a Michigander? There are a few telltale signs.

We show off our hometown with pride by pointing to our hands. Or our mittens.

We have the peninsulas or the Great Lakes on our cars, around our necks, and on our clothes.

We rock Stormy Kromers on our heads and put Carhartt on our backs to keep us warm.

We bleed maize and blue, but mostly green and white. At least in this town.

We swear by our favorite local craft beer and know that the Lions are on their way up. Hey... they've never lost a Super Bowl.

We know that Michigan is a special place, and we want to make it better for Michiganders today and those to come in the decades ahead.

But what makes a Michigander?

It's not any of those things I just mentioned. It's our underdog spirit and our championship swagger. We are tough and we never shy away from hard work. Michiganders are competitive. Even if you count us out, look down on us, or fly over us, I promise you: we will defy your expectations.

Over the next 4 years we will dig deep and get things done.

It's what Michiganders do. We've got some famous ones you may know:

A rapper from 8 mile who taught us to lose ourselves in the moment.

Sojourner from Battle Creek, born into slavery who fought for liberation and women's equality. Her last name was her legacy—Truth.

A genre-defining singer from Detroit who told us that we all deserve a little R-E-S-P-E-C-T.

A young man from Saginaw, born without sight, whose voice lifts our souls.

Another from Iron Mountain who became one of the greatest basketball coaches to ever do it.

And Hemingway, one of America's greatest writers who spent his childhood summers in Petoskey and wrote, "the world is a fine place and worth fighting for."

These are folks you may know. But there are millions you don't.

Centuries of Anishinaabe, who fought to preserve their culture and defend the Great Lakes that define us. Generations of families who migrated here from across the country and around the world to escape poverty and violence or simply seek a better life. They built the middle class and the automobile with their bare hands.

They saw our spectacular peninsulas as places of possibility. They came with nothing, looking for something. They worked hard over centuries in hopes that their children and grandchildren would have a brighter future with more freedom and opportunity.

That's what Michigan is at its best:

A beacon for anyone who has been counted out or left behind.

The embodiment of hope, defined by hard work.

Those of us who are lucky enough to be Michiganders know that. It's why we love our state. For the next 4 years, our task is to ensure that every Michigander—present and future—can succeed.

Our message is simple: We're putting the world on notice that your future is in Michigan.

If you want to have a great quality of life at a good cost of living, your future is in Michigan.

If you've got big dreams and an underdog spirit, your future is in Michigan.

If you want to come together to get things done, your future is in Michigan.

I am so excited to get to work. Let's move Michigan forward! Thank you and happy new year! Drive safe and let's go Lions.