

Living our Values • Achieving our Goals

2023 State of the County Address

David Coulter, Oakland County Executive

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The Berman Center for the Performing Arts • West Bloomfield, MI

Please join me in thanking my dear friend, and winner of the 2022 Shining Light Award for lifetime achievement, Gilda Jacobs for serving as tonight's MC.

For those of you who may not know, before Gilda became a state legislator and before she was inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame, Gilda served on the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, representing south Oakland County from 1995 to 1998.

See, Commissioners, great things begin at the Board.

Let me recognize my current partners on the Board of Commissioners led by Chairman, Dave Woodward and Minority Leader, Mike Spisz.

I also want to thank our distinguished county-wide officials as well as members of our judicial branch.

Please join me in welcoming my friends Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan, Wayne County Executive Warren Evans and Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel. I am really grateful for the advice and counsel they provide and their commitment to partnering on regional activities.

I also want to recognize my friend Attorney General Dana Nessel and our state legislators who could be with us here tonight.

We also have six Members of Congress who represent Oakland County in the U.S. House of Representatives and some of them are here tonight. Please join me in thanking them all: Congresswomen Debbie Dingell, Lisa McClain, Elissa Slotkin, Haley Stevens, and Rashida Tlaib, as well as Congressman John James.

We gather here tonight – at the Berman Center -- for a reason. Yes, I am in awe of this beautiful facility. But I am even more humbled by the story of the individuals whose names adorn these walls.

Mandell and Madeleine Berman. Bill and Madge to their friends. They were an indispensable force within the greater Detroit Jewish community and beyond on a wide range of vital religious, philanthropic and educational endeavors.

This extraordinary couple contributed to everything from arts and culture in the region to history and education across the country. They served governors and presidents and helped provide for the most vulnerable among us.

They lived their values and worked tirelessly to help enrich the lives of the people of Oakland County, this region and the state with facilities like this, through organizations like the Skillman Foundation, New Detroit, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Detroit Opera House.

I believe we can all benefit from their example of selfless generosity, not only with their hard-earned resources, but their time and their passion and their desire to give back.

Friends, we have a lot to talk about this evening and I deeply appreciate you joining this conversation.

Our country too often feels chaotic, divided, on edge and unsettled.

This was, of course, underway before COVID, but the pandemic isolated us even further and seemed to throw a match on what was already plaguing us.

And while the disturbing pictures on our televisions are often of other places, we are not immune here in Oakland County from the turmoil that we see happening around us.

Oxford...

Temple Beth El...

A gun drawn over a perceived slight in a Chipotle parking lot.

We used to worry that our political system was broken. Our elected officials too partisan and their rhetoric too heated. We called on the red and the blue to work together and for politicians to stop fighting all the time.

But I'm afraid we can no longer simply blame politics. The problems afflicting our country are impacting all aspects of our lives.

I think it's time for us to take responsibility ourselves; to ask ourselves who are we as a people. How do we want to be treated and how are we treating others?

How do we define our humanity?

What values do we hold dear?

And maybe, most importantly, how do we stand up for these values in a way that reflects our humanity?

Because while we are all different, we are fundamentally the same. We want to feel valued. We want to be safe, secure and make a better life for ourselves and our families. We face challenges. And we don't have all the answers.

You might be able to get away with believing that it is not happening to you but remember "There but for the grace of God, go I."

Rather, we should think of ourselves as the parent of an Oxford student, an MSU student, a Temple Beth El student. We should think of ourselves as homeless, elderly, unemployed.

And, with that humility, we should re-introduce ourselves to each other. Be intentional about the relationships that serve as the foundation of community. Today, some people think of civility as censorship, while others think it sounds like appeasement. But, instead, let us see ourselves in the original definition of civility as citizens willing to give of themselves for the good of the community.

And there is plenty of good around us. For me, the most striking and the most hopeful examples have come from our young people.

Out of the Oxford tragedy, our young people have formed non-profits to honor their peers, they have traveled to other parts of the country to console others, and they have marched and protested and lifted up their voices.

Oakland University students formed a committee to raise money to help fellow students struggling to pay for their education.

Fabiola Molina-Portilla, a Pontiac High School senior, has become a strong voice in advocating for more access to mental health services.

And 15-year-old Nia Ballah got involved in a STEM program last summer and started a research project looking at the benefits of epidemiology on public health. That presentation won a second-place award in a national Program of Excellence in STEM. And that led to the U.S. Department of Education asking Nia to be one of the first high schoolers to present at a conference focused on cultivating future leaders in STEM.

These outstanding young people and so many more are taking public service to heart, not just to add a bullet point to their resume or college application, but to lead, innovate and lend a genuine hand to people in need in their communities.

I am so proud of the example they are setting.

That's why tonight I am announcing the Acorn2Oak program to provide grants to Oakland County residents ages 8 to 18 years old to pursue their passions, their talents, and their futures. These Acorn2Oak mini-grants will help show our young people that we are confident and optimistic about their future.

For example, there are 22 Oakland County robotics teams competing at the state competition. If one or more of them qualifies for the First Robotics national competition to be held in Houston next month, it will cost about \$1,200 per student to attend. So, an Acorn2Oak grant could ensure a student isn't left behind for an inability to pay.

Another student may be trying to launch a documentary or an initiative in their school to highlight a program and needs help covering the cost of filming or supplies. A grant from Acorn2Oak could help that passion take root.

Students are altruistic on any number of fronts: volunteering at food pantries, providing entertainment at nursing homes, or sponsoring events to raise money for everything from animal shelters to children's hospitals. Acorn2Oak could help these young people pay for the cost of putting on those charitable events.

I hope it will support, inspire and encourage personal growth, civic engagement and leadership development.

Speaking of helping our students pursue their passion, we are also happy to re-launch MI Career Quest of Southeast Michigan. This regional event brings together 8,000 high school students to explore future careers in high-demand fields through hands-on, interactive exhibits.

After the last Career Quest, 82 percent of students said they learned about employment, education and training opportunities that they had never heard of before. And 72 percent said the event helped them make plans for their life and career after high school.

Another program that I am happy to champion is our 40 Under 40 achievement award. Each year we recognize Oakland County's young leaders. Individuals excelling in a wide range of careers and serving their community. They exemplify our Oakland Together vision.

Many of them are here tonight. I'd like to ask them to stand so you can join me in congratulating the 2023 award winners.

And for young adults – and not-so-young adults – going back to school is at the heart of our Oakland80 initiative. Launched in 2020, Oakland80 is our transformational effort to ensure that 80% of our adults have a post-secondary degree or industry-recognized certificate by 2030.

Oakland80 is our North Star, not only because it is important to the future of our economy – attracting and retaining businesses – but because it is important to the future of our residents achieving their dreams and living their best lives.

Using American Rescue Plan dollars, we have hired a team of navigators to provide one-on-one assistance to residents. Now more than 700 people have received in-depth counseling, coaching and education services from this team.

We have given our workforce offices the money they need to provide wrap-around services and eliminate barriers like transportation and childcare that are preventing adults from enrolling or completing education.

For Lisa Bica Grodsky, raising kids and tight budgets kept her from completing her degree. She has cheered her children on during their college classes at Adrian and Michigan State University but also dreamed about earning her own degree in social work.

When she encountered an Oakland80 navigator at an event in Troy everything changed.

The navigator helped her apply for the Michigan Reconnect scholarship program and federal financial aid to pay her tuition costs. They assisted in getting the credits she received over twenty years ago transferred to Oakland Community College. Now in her mid-50s, Lisa is enrolled and on her way to an associate degree, telling her kids “It’s Mom’s turn now.”

Here is another story about the impact of Oakland80.

WATCH: OAKLAND80 VIDEO

You can see what I mean when I say transformational.

In the two short years since we launched Oakland80, we have gone from 61% of our residents with a post-secondary degree or certificate to 67.5%.

That’s real progress. And we’re on our way to 80%. But hard work remains ahead of us to get to our ultimate goal of 80%.

Enrollment is down across the board, especially among low-income, minority and first-generation students.

I am grateful for the leadership of Gov. Whitmer who has proposed expanding the State Re-Connect Tuition scholarship program to cover more young adults. And to the efforts of Oakland University, Oakland Community College and Oakland Schools. They share my urgency in the need to reverse the trend of declining enrollments.

But it is not just the schools that we need on board. We need labor unions who run so many important apprenticeship training programs. We need businesses to provide the time and incentives for their existing workers to continue their education or training.

We need residents to create a culture where every young person – and every adult with some credits but no degree – knows that in Oakland County, education makes it happen and we are happy to help you navigate your future.

We can't achieve this big and audacious goal without everyone's active support. So, I'd ask anyone here who knows a student going on to college or an adult looking to advance their career to support them, encourage them and send them our way.

That's why at the county, guided by the efforts of our Oakland80 Administrator – Rana Al-Igoe - I have asked my entire leadership team to become actively engaged in achieving this goal.

Our Workforce Development professionals are also providing critical assistance to our employers.

We re-launched our Business Resource Network after hearing from business owners about their challenges in retaining talented employees. Oakland County invested more than \$1 million to provide success coaches to help employees who are facing challenges at work, whether it's finding transportation to get to the job or helping them find affordable childcare. The coaches also meet with the companies to talk about the best ways to retain employees.

The data for the companies participating is impressive, with a 90 percent retention rate for people who have used the Business Resource Network Services.

And employers – if you have not met Jennifer Llewellyn and her team located at six offices across the county – you need to. She is a recognized leader in the state and her team can help you with recruitment, retention, and retraining.

We are also broadening our workforce by ensuring that individuals with non-violent convictions on their record now have a clean slate, a second chance. These cases are on average over 20 years old. They include things like shoplifting, driving offenses, or minor marijuana possession. We shouldn't let mistakes like this define someone's future.

For example, we assisted a woman who went to school to be a CPA but who was unable to get her license because of a conviction when she was 17 years old working in retail, and she failed to ring up the purchases of her friends.

Our clean slate residents now have employment, housing and education opportunities that eluded them in the past.

I often feel that my major responsibility is not only improving the quality of life in Oakland County but ensuring that everyone has access to it.

To do that, people must be able to afford to live here. That is why I hold close to mind the statistic that 43% of our residents are housing burdened – meaning they are spending more than 30% of their monthly income on housing.

We are now using federal funds each year to provide \$1 million in grants to build, rehabilitate or preserve affordable housing in Oakland County.

And through an initiative with our Board of Commissioners, we are also investing \$5 million to create a new Housing Trust Fund that will help facilitate additional gap financing to encourage more affordable housing development across Oakland County. And our Treasurer, Robert Wittenberg, is setting up a County Land Bank, so we have this important housing and economic development tool to use in the years ahead.

In addition to being affordable, we must also make sure that we are welcoming to all of those living here and looking to build a life here.

I said at the beginning of the evening that we were here – on the campus of the Jewish Community Center for a reason – so let me be very clear. In Oakland County, we condemn antisemitism and all forms of hate speech.

In 2022, there were 244 incidents of anti-Semitic harassment, vandalism and white supremacist propaganda – right here in Michigan — that is an 80% increase. That is simply unacceptable, and we all have a moral obligation to call it out and denounce it. That’s why we support the Anti-Defamation League’s #shinealight campaign to raise awareness and leverage collective action in response to the dangers of antisemitism.

I was also proud to testify in support of expanding the protections of the Elliott Larsen Civil Rights Act to the LGBTQ community during a state Senate committee hearing last month. I’m happy and relieved to be able to say that the bill received final passage just last week with bipartisan votes in both the House and Senate.

Not only was it the right and moral thing to do from a human and civil rights perspective, it’s also good for business. One of my firm beliefs, as a public servant and an employer, is that we have to let people know that they’re in a safe place that is free from discrimination and as employers, we can’t attract talent to Michigan, especially those key young people, if they don’t feel welcome.

We also want to welcome those arriving from other countries. Many come for education or employment or to reunite with their families. Others are escaping the horrors of war or seeking refuge from dangerous and oppressive conditions.

I’m proud that Oakland County is the number one county in the state to sponsor and financially support more than 630 families who have left Ukraine since the Russian invasion began last year.

Of course, it would be better if this conflict was over, Russia would retreat and Ukrainians could return home, but until then we stand united with Ukraine.

While our residents are the core of our economic future, so are the small businesses that call Oakland County home.

Did you know that of the 39,000 businesses in Oakland County, 95 percent of them have fewer than 50 employees? These are the backbone of our communities, the businesses that make our downtowns unique and lively and the employers of so many of our residents.

Investments by big companies rightfully get a lot of attention from the state and us. But our small businesses need help, too.

We knew we had to step in after the pandemic hit three years ago, first to help stabilize, then recover and then Thrive.

That's how our Business Forward program was born. Launched last year with nine consultants embedded in communities to help our small businesses, it has now grown to 16 people and had significant success. They are working with entrepreneurs, mom-and-pop shops and small businesses to make sure they know about the resources available to help them succeed.

It could be helping a business owner find the financing, grants or shop space they need to start or expand a business, assisting an at-home cook bringing their product to market, or pointing a retailer to the social media opportunities that will allow them to grow demand for their merchandise.

The Business Forward team has met with more than 2,200 businesses and is targeting a goal to double that this year.

And now the team is under the umbrella of Oakland Thrive, a new non-profit organization announced just last week and inspired by Oakland County officials and business leaders.

The organization is designed to be flexible, nimble and sustainable for years, working with our great partners in the Chambers of Commerce and DDAs across Oakland County.

Our Economic Outlook report showed that prosperity does not touch every business the same in Oakland County. It will be the mission of this organization to help the County close the gaps that exist for woman-owned, minority-owned, and veteran-owned businesses.

THRIVE is what a DEI initiative looks like in the economic development world, and another example of how we integrate DEI into all of our county's strategic objectives.

We're also benefiting from our forward-thinking and strategic partnership with Automation Alley, which is now home to the only US Centre for Advanced Manufacturing in North America. This designation and efforts to move from traditional manufacturing to cost-effective advanced manufacturing will help Oakland County lead the way in bringing jobs back to the U.S.

We are expecting these efforts to help retain our 2,600 small manufacturing enterprises as well as help them to expand their operations in the future.

In the last year, 40 companies, most in advanced manufacturing, robotics or EV production have expanded their footprint or decided to locate in Oakland County. With big and small manufacturers alike, ranging from Our Next Energy and Fanuc Robotics to Via Motors relocating their headquarters to Auburn Hills and Zeiss' building its environmentally-friendly innovation showroom in Wixom, the investments represent more than 7,000 retained and new jobs.

There is a lot to do for Oakland County to continue to generate 21% of Michigan's Gross Domestic Product right here in this county. I'm confident that with our renewed strategic partnership with Automation Alley, THRIVE, the Detroit Regional Partnership and the MEDC - we can achieve our goals of building a thriving and Inclusive economy.

After a three-year hiatus, we went back out on the road for the first overseas business attraction trip to Sweden and Germany.

Oakland County is home to more than 700 companies from 35 countries. During the past 5 years, these companies have been responsible for 30,000 jobs and \$2.7 billion in investment.

In Sweden, we met with technology companies and encouraged them to make Oakland County their home for their North American operations. We also spent some time visiting Webasto, a leader in charging stations.

Oakland is one of the [top three counties in the country](#) for foreign direct investment and we need to continue to foster expansion and new investments in cutting-edge technologies.

We have a lot in common with the two countries, but I found that many people didn't have a sense of our location in relation to Detroit.

So, I started asking our hosts if they had heard of rapper Eminem, and virtually all of them raised their hands. They also knew about the movie "8 Mile" and nodded in recognition when I told them that we shared 8 Mile on our county's south end with Detroit.

Suddenly, Oakland County didn't seem so unfamiliar to our European friends.

So, I guess I have to give Marshall Mathers a shout-out for helping our foreign counterparts envision a place where they might like to visit and invest.

And back home in Oakland County, our [voters](#) did something pretty special last year as well. We changed the narrative around what is possible with public transit from what hasn't been done in the region for decades to what can be done.

Our voters made a commitment to expand transportation services to all corners of the county. To find transit solutions to job centers like Novi and Rochester, but also ensure local solutions so that residents in the northern and western parts of the county can get where they need to go, too.

I want to thank the staff who in just three short months since the election, brought forward four new transit contracts, a local reimbursement grant program and just hired our first-ever Transit Manager to lead our efforts going forward. Bret Rasegan, Kristen Wiltfang, Bill DiBiasio and Aaron Thomas – thank you for your tireless efforts.

And to my good friend, Chairman Dave Woodward. We have been partners in this work for a long time. Thank you for your passion and your leadership.

And Rick Hamill – the supervisor in Highland Township. I want to thank you for your dedication and your vision for what improved transit must look like for residents in our northern and western communities.

We still have a lot of work to do to create the public transportation system Oakland County residents want and deserve, but we have taken a huge step forward.

Did you know that Oakland is the largest county in the United States without a city of over 100,000 people?

Think about that. What does that mean?

That means it's imperative that we focus on the unique nature of our 62 cities, villages, and townships. Whether you want to live in an urbanized area, a suburban neighborhood, or "up north" in rural Oakland County, you can find a way of life here that suits you.

And in nearly half of these communities, you can find a historic downtown supported by Main Street Oakland County. Since its inception in 2001, there have been more than \$1 billion in public and private investments in our Main Street communities. Those investments have helped create nearly 8,000 new full-time jobs, 1,345 new businesses and have contributed to the rehabilitation of more than 2,700 commercial buildings.

One community that will continue to be at the top of my priority list is, of course, our county seat, Pontiac. We want to be part of the revitalization underway through our facilities, our health care initiatives, our mobility initiatives on Woodward, our parks. We are and will always be good partners with Pontiac.

We also know the importance of sustainable practices that produce livable neighborhoods, protect our environment, and keep our water safe.

There's nothing more important than safe drinking water and investing in infrastructure is going to require partnerships at all levels of government.

That's why we used our ARP funds to grant \$3.9 million to 35 communities to help with the planning and engineering costs associated with water improvement projects. And, to take advantage of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our northwest communities, the Board of Commissioners set aside \$10 million for the Water Resource Commission to help these communities connect to a new sanitary sewer line in Genesee County.

This project is critical to protecting the environment, especially our lakes, streams and watershed from failing septic tanks.

We can't talk about livable neighborhoods and sustainability without mentioning Oakland County's crown jewel – the parks system that provides recreation and outdoor enjoyment to residents across the county. Thousands of acres of protected lands, hundreds of miles of trails, dog parks, waterparks, golf courses, and of course, our new ORV park in Holly.

But I have been adamant about the need to beef up the parks systems in the urban parts of the county. And with an historic \$20 million investment - \$15 million from ARP and \$5 million from Parks and Recreation – we're doing just that. Ten parks will be improved or added to the parks' system, providing more equitable access in our more densely populated areas.

We're also dedicated to providing access to affordable, quality health care for our residents. It started with our Health360 initiative that brought Honor Community Health and OLSHA – our community action agency - into the county clinics to provide primary care and wraparound services onsite.

Nearly 7,300 residents received these new Health 360 services in 2022 at our clinics in Pontiac and Southfield.

I remain deeply grateful to our health professionals for their efforts. But I know they are relieved to be able to restore the programs that keep our community healthy but were limited during the pandemic. Programs like our visiting mom program, our nutrition education, our mobile drug harm reduction effort that put us in the community, helping residents.

They have also dedicated themselves to reversing a dangerous trend in our community – a decline in childhood immunizations. It is imperative that all of us use our relationships to convey the safety and importance of these routine vaccines.

Now, this notion of county government as the hub for community services or the convenor of major initiatives is one that we take seriously. I know that county government – indeed county services – cannot solve every problem. But we can lead, partner and support.

Let me give you some examples.

Let's start with our students.

County government doesn't run schools, but who among us doesn't want to do everything they can to support our students?

We are investing \$5 million in grants to organizations for out-of-school activities ranging from tutoring to recreational activities and social-emotional learning with the hope that these programs can better equip kids to close the academic and social gaps created by COVID.

Last year, Warren Evans and I did something pretty exciting.

We went on a trip together. No, we didn't go to Europe. We went to Akron, Ohio and visited the LeBron James I-Promise school. We found an amazing community commitment to schools. Their mission is "We Are Family," and we found that to be very true.

I am committed – working with local foundations, businesses, and our intermediate school district – to bring this community school model to interested Oakland County schools.

How about our Veterans.

County government doesn't run the VA but who among us is not willing to do everything they can to support the men and women that have taken an oath to serve our country.

This past year we took our services on the road and held 10 veterans resource fairs around the county.

This is a theme, by the way, that you've heard multiple times tonight. We're committed to getting the services to the people where they are.

These veterans' fairs bring together a wide range of partners who share our commitment to service.

Nearly 2,000 veterans attended and received nearly 1,200 food boxes, and almost \$60,000 worth of Meijer gift cards.

A new Veteran Services employee – Tyrone Jordan – who joined the county during the census effort – worked tirelessly to bring together these resources and encourage veterans to attend. Thank you, Tyrone!

Let me share with you a remarkable story.

When a veteran from Pontiac came to the county for help with a request for disability benefits - benefits he had been denied for more than 20 years - our Veteran's counselor, Danielle [Mukomele](#) demonstrated what organizational excellence looks like.

She reviewed his file, provided him and his family with encouragement, advice, and helped him to pursue a third appeal. The VA came back this past November and granted the appeal and awarded him more than \$800,000 in back-due benefits.

Danielle thank you for fighting for our veterans.

How about our older residents?

The county doesn't run the Social Security Administration, but who among us isn't willing to do everything we can to honor our older loved ones?

That's why the Board of Commissioners awarded \$5 million to 29 senior centers across Oakland County to make much-needed upgrades to their facilities, their technology or equipment. And we've hired former state Representative and Royal Oak Mayor Jim Ellison for a new job at the county – chief of Older Adult Services. He'll make sure that our seniors know about available resources and help fill any gaps that exist.

And finally, the county's largest investment has been in an area that is fundamental to our health and well-being. Our mental health.

Three years ago, we knew that we had to improve and expand access to mental health care for our residents and our kids. The pandemic only exacerbated that need so we have made an unprecedented \$24 million investment to increase access to mental health services.

Through a partnership with the Oakland Community Health Network and Oakland Schools we are providing more mental health professions in our schools.

Through a partnership with the Michigan Health and Hospital Association, we are supporting hospitals as they begin mental health evaluations and services in their emergency rooms.

And through a partnership with the United Way of Southeastern Michigan, we have invested in 41 non-profit organizations to expand their capacity to provide a full range of mental health, social emotional and other critical support services to our residents in crisis.

More than 66,000 additional people from across Oakland County have sought mental health care through the agencies that received grants from the county. The stories we're hearing from the agencies are heartening and leave me hopeful that the stigma surrounding mental health care is diminishing.

Mental health care must be on par with our physical health care – in our attitudes and our services.

To address the unprecedented growth in the number of adults experiencing mental health crisis, the county is now leading an effort to create a new Integrated Urgent Care Clinic in Pontiac. This clinic will offer emergency mental health care services to people regardless of their ability to pay.

Thanks to a \$5 million grant from the state of Michigan, this pilot anchored by the county, Oakland Community Health Network, Honor Community Health and our hospitals will address the crucial need for improved and expanded access to both primary care and mental health services.

Supporting our students, addressing both physical and mental health, providing excellent services to our most vulnerable, extending our fiscal stewardship and improving our quality of life.

This is what calls us to service.

Service that begins with living our values – community, respect, inclusion and gratitude. These are the foundational values I have talked about tonight.

Community: Remembering the power of community – as safe and supportive places - that allow us to build a life and prosper.

Respect: Demonstrating through our actions, respect for ourselves, for those who have come before us and for those with whom we may disagree.

Inclusion: Taking steps to ensure that all people are not just included but actually feeling like they belong.

And **Gratitude:** It's a value that many of us don't take the time to practice. Identifying each day those things – big and small – that we are grateful for. When your mind is focused on gratitude. When you hold gratitude in your heart, I believe you have no room for negativity.

There is a concept in Judaism - *Tikkun olam* – which means action taken to repair the world. To take responsibility for your own moral and spiritual well-being but also the well-being of society at large. In this era of chaos and concern, I believe we all bear that responsibility.

At the county, our Equity Council members are working with Harry Weaver, our Chief DEI Officer and my entire leadership team to ensure county employees feel valued and supported. That we are changing our culture and building community.

The Equity team is with us here in the theater tonight and they bring with them a symbol — a new Oakland County challenge coin. This coin is inscribed with the values we have discussed here tonight. It is our commitment to Achieving Our Goals, by Living Our Values.

I hope you will accept it and join us in demonstrating our collective responsibility to each other, to our county and to the values of community, respect, inclusion, and gratitude.

I believe that what may be wrong with our country today can certainly be fixed by ALL that is right about it.

Here are some examples.

WATCH: YOUTH VIDEO

So, as you can see, our future is bright. Your County is strong. It's dedicated to reweaving the fabric of our communities through a wonderful mosaic of relationships. Holding our values close and achieving them through our actions.

That is my commitment to you. So, again thank you for being here tonight.