

GOOD AFTERNOON.

ALEX, THANK YOU FOR THE INTRODUCTION, AND THANK YOU FOR ALL THE GOOD WORK THAT YOU AND AT&T DO IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.

I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN BY THANKING OUR LT. GOVERNOR AND MIAMI-DADE RESIDENT CARLOS LOPEZ-CANTERA FOR JOINING US TODAY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP, MR. LT. GOVERNOR.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER JOSE PEPE DIAZ, CITY OF SWEETWATER MAYOR ORLANDO LOPEZ AND CITY OF WEST MIAMI MAYOR EDUARDO MUHINA, THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

AUGUSTO, JAN, MYRNA, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS AND FRIENDS...

THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME.

IT'S MY PLEASURE TO BE HERE TODAY TO HONOR THE HISPANIC BUSINESS INITIATIVE FUND OF FLORIDA AS WE CELEBRATE HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY...

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO TO EXPAND THE

OPPORTUNITIES FOR HISPANIC BUSINESS MEN AND WOMEN HERE AND THROUGHOUT OUR STATE.

AS MANY OF US KNOW, HERE IN MIAMI-DADE MORE THAN FIFTY PERCENT OF OUR 2.6 MILLION RESIDENTS WERE BORN OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES, MOSTLY IN LATIN AMERICA.

MANY OF THOSE RESIDENTS HAVE REESTABLISHED THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES FINANCIALLY BY OPENING SMALL BUSINESSES.

AND THOSE HAVE BEEN CRITICAL TO THE UNPRECEDENTED ECONOMIC GROWTH WE HAVE HAD IN OUR HOME.

ALTHOUGH MUCH OF THE ATTENTION OUR COUNTY RECEIVES IS FOCUSED ON BIG TICKET EVENTS LIKE SUPER BOWLS AND ART BASEL, THERE IS A THRIVING SMALL BUSINESS SECTOR THAT KEEPS OUR LOCAL ECONOMY GROWING.

IN FACT, THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS MADE UP OF THESE SMALL BUSINESSES WHO CREATE JOBS AND COLLECTIVELY IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN OUR COMMUNITY.

WHAT THESE SMALL BUSINESSES DO FOR MIAMI-DADE CANNOT AND SHOULD NOT EVER BE OVERLOOKED BECAUSE WE ARE A COMMUNITY WHERE THE AMERICAN DREAM OF OWNING YOUR BUSINESS, OF BEING YOUR OWN BOSS, IS VERY MUCH ALIVE AND FOR MANY, WE ARE NOT ONLY THE GATEWAY TO AMERICA BUT THE GATEWAY TO FREEDOM AND PROSPERITY.

LIKE MANY OF YOUR FAMILIES, MY FAMILY CAME TO THE UNITED STATES TO ESCAPE COMMUNISM IN CUBA AND BUILD NEW LIVES IN THE GREATEST COUNTRY ON EARTH...

AND TODAY, OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS FROM COUNTRIES LIKE VENEZUELA ARE COMING TO MIAMI-DADE TO ESCAPE SOCIALISM AND TO BE ABLE TO CHART THEIR OWN COURSE, TO WORK HARD AND IMPROVE THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE GREATEST COMMUNITY IN THE GREATEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD -- MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN -- I MEAN THAT. WE LIVE IN THE BEST COMMUNITY IN THE GREATEST NATION ON EARTH.

WHERE ELSE COULD A 61-YEAR OLD FORMER FIREFIGHTER FOR THE CITY OF MIAMI WORK HIS WAY UP THE RANKS AND EVENTUALLY BECOME THE MAYOR OF THE LARGEST COUNTY IN THE THIRD MOST POPULOUS STATE AND THE SEVENTH LARGEST COUNTY IN THE U.S.?

NOT MANY OTHER PLACES IF YOU ASK ME...

MIAMI-DADE, LIKE AMERICA, REPRESENTS OPPORTUNITY -- FOR YOU, FOR OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN AND I COULDN'T BE PROUDER TO BE YOUR MAYOR...

MANY OF OUR SMALL BUSINESSES HELP SUPPORT OUR HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY, WHICH WELCOMED A RECORD 14.6 MILLION OVERNIGHT VISITORS IN 2014, AS WELL AS OUR ECONOMIC ENGINES OF MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND PORTMIAMI. APPROXIMATELY 600,000 JOBS IN OUR COMMUNITY SUPPORT OPERATIONS AT MIA AND OUR SEAPORT.

MY ADMINISTRATION CONTINUES TO WORK TO CREATE THE CLIMATE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY WHERE THE ENTREPRENEURS OF TODAY WILL PROSPER, AND THE BUSINESSES OF TOMORROW WILL BE CREATED.

WE ARE DOING THIS BY INCREASING OUR FOCUS AND INVESTMENTS IN ALL THE THINGS THAT ADD VALUE TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF A COMMUNITY.

OUR COUNTY WIDE INFRASTRUCTURE – INCLUDING OUR AIRPORT, PORTMIAMI, AND OUR WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT – ARE ALL RECEIVING UNPRECEDENTED LEVELS OF INVESTMENTS.

IN FACT, THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM TO MODERNIZE AND EXPAND OUR WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE WILL CREATE APPROXIMATELY 17,000 JOBS OVER THE 15-20 YEARS OF THE \$13.5 BILLION PROJECT.

THIS CRITIC INVESTMENT IS KEY TO BOOSTING THE BOTTOM LINE OF OUR BUSINESSES, AND TO FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MIAMI-DADE RESIDENTS.

MY ADMINISTRATION ALSO CONTINUES TO BE FOCUSED ON OUR TECHNOLOGY SECTOR, WHERE WE HAVE SEEN TREMENDOUS GROWTH, ESPECIALLY DUE TO OUR CLOSE TIES WITH LATIN AMERICA.

WE ARE PARTNERING WITH OUR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TO SUPPORT THIS FAST-GROWING SECTOR.

AND WE ARE ALSO SUPPORTING TECHNOLOGY VENTURES SUCH AS THE START-UP INCUBATOR “VENTURE HIVE” AS WELL AS THE “EMERGE AMERICAS” CONFERENCE TAKING PLACE RIGHT NOW IN MIAMI BEACH.

IN ADDITION, WE HAVE PARTNERED WITH MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE AND GOLDMAN SACHS TO BRING THE 10,000 SMALL BUSINESSES INITIATIVE TO MIAMI...

A MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE PRACTICAL BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT EDUCATION, AS WELL AS IMPROVED ACCESS TO CAPITAL AND BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES.

WHILE I'M PROUD OF ALL WE HAVE DONE, I'M ALSO A REALIST.

ALTHOUGH OUR COUNTY LEADS THE STATE IN JOB CREATION WITH OVER 115,000 PRIVATE SECTOR JOBS CREATED AND OUR UNEMPLOYMENT RATE HAS DROPPED FROM ABOUT 12 PERCENT DOWN TO BELOW 6 PERCENT SINCE I BECAME MAYOR IN JUNE 2011...

AND DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE GROWTH OF OUR ECONOMY IS GREATER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE...

THERE ARE STILL TOO MANY OF OUR RESIDENTS IN OUR COMMUNITY THAT HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO BENEFIT FROM OUR ECONOMIC GROWTH.

FOR THIS REASON, WE LAUNCHED THE “EMPLOY MIAMI-DADE” INITIATIVE IN DECEMBER.

“EMPLOY MIAMI-DADE” PROVIDES JOB TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO THOSE RESIDENTS IN AREAS WITH HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT RATES.

TO DATE, MORE THAN 1,200 RESIDENTS HAVE ENROLLED IN THE FIRST TRAINING CLASSES, AND MANY HAVE ALREADY SECURED EMPLOYMENT.

“EMPLOY MIAMI-DADE” USES FEDERAL, STATE AND PRIVATE SECTOR DOLLARS TO FUND ACTIVITIES AND PROVIDE STIPENDS TO PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS WHILE THEY ARE IN TRAINING.

BECAUSE AS THE ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT

HERE CAN ATTEST, GOVERNMENT CAN NOT CREATE ALL THE JOBS – BUT IT CAN CREATE THE ENVIRONMENT WHERE JOBS CAN GROW AND PROSPER.

I ENCOURAGE YOU HERE TODAY TO CONTACT MY OFFICE AND BECOME INVOLVED IN THIS CRITICAL PROGRAM.

BECAUSE ALL MIAMIANS SHOULD SHARE IN OUR PROSPERITY.

MIAMIANS SHOULD BE FIRST IN LINE FOR JOBS.

IN OTHER WORDS, MIAMIANS SHOULD LOOK TO HIRE MIAMIANS...

MY FRIENDS, MY ADMINISTRATION WILL CONTINUE TO WORK TO CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH.

WE ARE ASSISTED BY PARTNERS LIKE THE HISPANIC BUSINESS INITIATIVE FUND.

ON BEHALF OF THE 2.6 MILLION RESIDENTS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE HBIF, AND ALL OF YOU PRESENT TODAY, FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN MAKING

SURE EVERYONE IN OUR COMMUNITY HAS ACCESS TO ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND PROSPERITY.

I RAN FOR MAYOR OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY BECAUSE I FELT WE COULD BUILD A BETTER MIAMI-DADE FOR MY THREE CHILDREN AND SIX GRANDCHILDREN.

IT HASN'T ALWAYS BEEN EASY -- JUST TAKE MY WORD FOR IT...

BUT BECAUSE WE -- YOUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR -- HAVE COME TOGETHER, I'M VERY CONFIDENT THAT BETTER DAYS ARE AHEAD FOR OUR COMMUNITY!

MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL AND MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!