

GOOD AFTERNOON, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

ALEX, THANK YOU FOR THAT INTRODUCTION...I APPRECIATE THE LBA INVITING ME TO SPEAK AT ITS JANUARY LUNCHEON.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, FRIENDS...

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL!

IT'S AN HONOR AND A PLEASURE TO BE HERE WITH YOU THIS AFTERNOON TO SHARE MY THOUGHTS ON HOW WE CAN CONTINUE TO WORK *TOGETHER* TO BUILD A BETTER MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.

ON WEDNESDAY OF NEXT WEEK, I WILL DELIVER MY FIFTH STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS. IT'S AT 10 A.M. AT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AUDITORIUM. AND AS ALWAYS, YOU'RE ALL INVITED TO ATTEND.

IN FACT, I ENCOURAGE YOU TO BECAUSE I'M PROUD OF THE STORY WE HAVE TO SHARE WITH YOU -- OUR RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS OWNERS...

SO PLEASE CONSIDER MY REMARKS THIS AFTERNOON TO BE A PREVIEW OF SOME OF WHAT I'LL DISCUSS ON WEDNESDAY.

WE HAVE A LOT TO BE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT IN 2016...AND FOR YEARS TO COME...

AS YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD ME SAY BEFORE, AFTER YEARS OF FISCAL CHALLENGES, PAINFUL REDUCTIONS IN SERVICES AND OTHER SACRIFICES...MIAMI-DADE COUNTY TURNED THE CORNER IN 2015 AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, *WE AREN'T LOOKING BACK.*

NOT ON MY WATCH.

OUR COUNTY WAS HIT ESPECIALLY HARD DURING THE RECESSION. BUT WE ALSO RECOVERED VERY WELL IN LARGE PART DUE TO THE RESILIENCE OF OUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND OF YOU ALL HERE -- MEMBERS OF OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

MY FRIENDS, YOU ARE THE JOB CREATORS IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY...AND A GUIDING PRINCIPLE FOR MY ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN TO SET THE

BEST POSSIBLE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS BY KEEPING OVERALL TAX RATES AT REASONABLE LEVELS SO THAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR CAN THRIVE...

WE HAVE ALSO ENGAGED THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO MEET THE CRITICAL NEEDS FACING OUR COMMUNITY.

THOSE INCLUDE MAINTAINING AND ENHANCING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE; ADDRESSING TRANSIT AND MOBILITY CHALLENGES; INNOVATING TO PROVIDE SERVICES BETTER, FASTER AND MORE EFFICIENTLY; AND CREATING WELL-PAYING JOBS.

I'M HERE TODAY TO REPEAT WHAT I HAVE SAID TO MANY OF YOU BEFORE -- THAT YOU HAVE A PARTNER AT COUNTY HALL WHO IS EAGER TO WORK WITH YOU SO THAT *TOGETHER*, WE CAN CONTINUE TO MOVE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY *FORWARD*.

HERE IS SOME OF WHAT I WILL REPORT IN MY STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS ON WEDNESDAY:

OUR COUNTY'S FINANCIAL OUTLOOK IS MUCH BETTER THAN IT WAS WHEN I FIRST TOOK OFFICE IN 2011. IN FACT, THE COUNTY'S FIVE-YEAR BUDGET FORECAST CONTINUES TO BE BALANCED WITHOUT THE NEED TO RAISE TAXES.

THAT'S WORTH REPEATING -- OUR FINANCIAL HOUSE IS IN ORDER. WE HAVE A BALANCED BUDGET FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, WITH CONSERVATIVE GROWTH PROJECTIONS AND WITHOUT RAISING OVERALL TAXES.

AND WE BALANCED THE BUDGET WITHOUT SACRIFICING CRITICAL SERVICES FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE IN OUR COMMUNITY -- OUR ELDERLY RESIDENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

JUST TWO WEEKS AFTER TAKING OFFICE IN JUNE 2011, I PROPOSED AND THE COUNTY COMMISSION ADOPTED THE LARGEST TAX CUT IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HISTORY.

DESPITE ATTEMPTS BY SOME TO RAISE TAXES, WE HAVE HELD THE LINE ON TAX INCREASES DURING THE FIVE YEARS I HAVE BEEN IN OFFICE.

WHAT THIS MEANS IS THAT COUNTY TAXPAYERS HAVE SAVED APPROXIMATELY \$1 BILLION -- THAT'S BILLION WITH A "B" DOLLARS -- SINCE I TOOK OFFICE IN 2011.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR THE AVERAGE MIAMI-DADE HOMEOWNER? -- A SAVINGS OF APPROXIMATELY \$1,000.

THOSE ARE REAL SAVINGS FOR OUR RESIDENTS.

IT'S THEIR MONEY AND THEY DESERVE TO KEEP IT.

I BELIEVE THE TAX CUTS HELPED TO STIMULATE THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND WAS A CONTRIBUTOR TO OUR RECOVERY.

YOU KNOW WHAT? THE RESULTS ARE IN -- MIAMI-DADE COUNTY CONTINUES TO LEAD THE STATE IN JOB CREATION, WITH OVER 115,000 PRIVATE-

SECTOR JOBS BEING CREATED IN OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2011.

WE HAVE MUCH MORE WORK TO DO AND, IN A MOMENT, I WILL TOUCH ON WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING TO ENSURE ALL OUR RESIDENTS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE IN THAT ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY...

BUT I ALSO WANT TO MENTION THAT THIS GROWTH HAS BEEN FUELED BY BOTH OUR TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES SUCH AS BUILDING AND TOURISM, AND NEW INDUSTRIES, INCLUDING TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION COMPANIES THAT ARE RELOCATING OR EXPANDING THROUGHOUT MIAMI-DADE.

WHILE WE WELCOME AN EXPANSION IN OUR BUILDING AND TOURISM INDUSTRIES, WE MUST CONTINUE TO DIVERSIFY OUR ECONOMY TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE WITH OTHER METROPOLITAN AREAS AND TO CONTINUE REVERSING THE SO-CALLED BRAIN DRAIN WHICH HAS RESULTED IN MANY OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE RELOCATING OUTSIDE OF OUR COMMUNITY FOR JOBS.

IN FACT, SOON WE WILL ANNOUNCE THAT WE ARE INVESTING IN CREATING JOBS IN DIVERSE FIELDS, RANGING FROM CLEAN ENERGY AND GROUND TRANSPORTATION TO ART, FILM AND ENTERTAINMENT, JUST TO NAME A FEW.

THOSE INVESTMENTS ARE PROJECTED TO RESULT IN THOUSANDS OF NEW, WELL-PAYING JOBS IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

YOU KNOW WHAT? THAT'S GOOD NEWS WE CAN ALL CELEBRATE!

[BRIEF PAUSE]

AS I MENTIONED, MY ADMINISTRATION HAS ALSO BEEN HARD AT WORK FACILITATING THE TRAINING OF RESIDENTS THROUGHOUT OUR COMMUNITY TO BE EMPLOYABLE.

WHILE THE OVERALL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE HAS BEEN REDUCED FROM APPROXIMATELY 12 PERCENT WHEN I BECAME MAYOR, TO 6.2 PERCENT TODAY, THERE ARE AREAS OF OUR COMMUNITY THAT

CONTINUE TO HAVE HIGH LEVELS OF UNEMPLOYMENT.

THAT IS WHY I BROUGHT TOGETHER SOME OF YOU IN THIS ROOM -- TO EXPLORE WAYS TO TRAIN RESIDENTS TO WORK FOR COMPANIES LIKE YOURS AND PLACE THEM WITH POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS.

AND THAT IS HOW EMPLOY MIAMI-DADE WAS BORN...

SINCE EMPLOY MIAMI-DADE KICKED OFF IN DECEMBER 2014, WE'VE REGISTERED MORE THAN 1,600 RESIDENTS IN THE PROGRAM, REFERRED MORE THAN 550 TO JOBS, AND PLACED MORE THAN 260 RESIDENTS IN CONSTRUCTION, HOSPITALITY AND CULINARY JOBS.

ALL OF YOU IN THIS ROOM CAN DO WHAT CAREERSOURCE SOUTH FLORIDA, THE NEIGHBORS AND NEIGHBORS ASSOCIATION, AND THE ASSOCIATED BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS HAVE DONE THROUGH EMPLOY-MIAMI DADE.

LET'S CONTINUE TO WORK *TOGETHER!* LET'S EMPLOY OUR RESIDENTS.

IF YOU AREN'T INVOLVED WITH EMPLOY MIAMI-DADE YET, CONTACT MY OFFICE. THERE'S NO REASON THAT OUR COMMUNITY SHOULDN'T EMPLOY OUR RESIDENTS.

[BRIEF PAUSE]

I'VE SHARED A LOT OF GOOD NEWS WITH YOU THIS AFTERNOON, AND A LOT OF WHAT MY ADMINISTRATION HAS DONE RIGHT.

BUT I ALSO WANT TO MAKE CLEAR THAT I'M ALWAYS OPEN TO NEW IDEAS AND FEEDBACK FROM THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE OUT THERE EVERY DAY CREATING AND SUPPORTING JOBS IN OUR COMMUNITY.

WE ARE HARD AT WORK TO SUPPORT YOU. FOR EXAMPLE, THE COUNTY PROVIDED HOMEOWNERS CLOSE TO \$8 MILLION IN RELIEF OF BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT PENALTIES VIA THE AMNESTY PROGRAM. BY THE WAY, THAT WAS EXTENDED FOR ONE MORE YEAR.

SINCE THE PROGRAM'S INCEPTION IN 2011, HOMEOWNERS HAVE SEEN A RELIEF OF MORE THAN \$21 MILLION IN CIVIC PENALTIES.

AND, IN ORDER TO IMPROVE COMPLIANCE WITH NEIGHBORHOOD CODE STANDARDS, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IMPLEMENTED AN OUTREACH CAMPAIGN TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE REGULATIONS DESIGNED TO KEEP NEIGHBORHOODS CLEAN, SAFE AND AESTHETICALLY PLEASING. THIS CAMPAIGN IS AIMED TO ENCOURAGE VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE WITH NEIGHBORHOOD REGULATIONS AND MAINTAIN PROPERTY VALUES -- SOMETHING I'M SURE EVERYONE HERE CAN APPRECIATE.

OBTAINING FEEDBACK SO THAT WE CAN MAKE PROCESSES MORE EFFICIENT AND IMPROVE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IS ALSO IMPORTANT. AND THAT IS WHY THE COUNTY LAUNCHED DIGITAL CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS TO PROVIDE US WITH REAL-TIME FEEDBACK FROM OUR RESIDENTS ABOUT THE COUNTY'S BUILDING, PERMITTING AND INSPECTION PROCESS.

WE ALSO INTRODUCED CHANGES TO THE COUNTY'S IMPACT FEE CODE -- ENABLING ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS.

THIS ALL MAY SEEM LIKE SMALL ADJUSTMENTS, BUT THEY ARE IMPORTANT STEPS IN MAKING SURE THAT THE PUBLIC SECTOR KEEPS UP WITH THE SAME TECHNOLOGIES THAT OUR CONSTITUENTS ARE ACCUSTOMED TO FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

IF THERE IS ANY WAY WE CAN MAKE YOUR WORK EASIER -- WHETHER IT'S RELATED TO CONSTRUCTION, PERMITTING, BUILDING CODES OR ANYTHING ELSE -- JUST LET US KNOW.

[BRIEF PAUSE]

MY FRIENDS, MY ADMINISTRATION IS BUILT ON FOUR PRINCIPLES -- HONESTY, TRANSPARENCY, EFFICIENCY AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY.

I TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BEING HONEST, TRANSPARENT AND EFFICIENT WITH YOUR TAX

DOLLARS VERY SERIOUSLY...AND SO DOES MY ADMINISTRATION.

AND AS LONG AS I'M MAYOR, I WILL CONTINUE TO LEAD OUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT -- WHICH IS THE LARGEST IN FLORIDA AND THE SEVENTH-LARGEST METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED STATES -- IN AN HONEST AND TRANSPARENT MANNER AND AS EFFICIENTLY AS POSSIBLE.

I'VE LIVED IN THIS COMMUNITY NEARLY MY ENTIRE LIFE. MY WIFE, LOURDES, AND I HAVE RAISED OUR THREE CHILDREN AND ARE HELPING THEM RAISE OUR SOON-TO-BE SIX GRANDCHILDREN RIGHT HERE. MY PARENTS ALSO CONTINUE TO CALL MIAMI-DADE HOME MORE THAN 50 YEARS AFTER LEAVING THEIR BELOVED HOMELAND OF CUBA.

THE POINT IS: I WANT THE BEST FOR OUR COUNTY, AND THAT IS WHY I'M SEEKING ANOTHER FOUR-YEAR TERM AS YOUR MAYOR.

BECAUSE OUR WORK IS NOT DONE.

BECAUSE MORE WORK IS REQUIRED TO ENSURE THAT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY CONTINUES ITS ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DIVERSIFIES ITS ECONOMY...

WE MUST CONTINUE TO WORK TO ADDRESS OUR CHALLENGES WITH TRAFFIC AND CONGESTION, ENHANCING OUR GREEN AND PUBLIC SPACES AND ENSURING PUBLIC SAFETY.

WE MUST CONTINUE TO WORK *TOGETHER* SO THAT MIAMI-DADE BECOMES THE WORLD'S NEXT GREAT METROPOLITAN AREA -- AS I BELIEVE IT CAN AND WILL BE...

OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN, THEY ARE DEPENDING ON ALL OF US TO CONTINUE WORKING *TOGETHER* -- THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR -- TO LEAVE THEM A BETTER MIAMI-DADE COUNTY THAN WE HAVE.

MY FRIENDS, WE ARE WELL ON OUR WAY. WE OWE IT TO THEM.

**OUR COMMUNITY IS MOVING *FORWARD*...AND WE'RE
NOT *LOOKING BACK*!**

**THANK YOU, GOD BLESS YOU AND MAY GOD
CONTINUE TO BLESS MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!**

