Tony Evers
Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

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Contact: GovPress@wisconsin.gov

Gov. Evers Delivers 2025 State of the State Address

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers tonight delivered his 2025 State of the State address. The governor's address is available to watch here and here.

Below are Gov. Evers' remarks as prepared for delivery:

Good evening, Wisconsinites!

Honorable Supreme Court Justices, Tribal Nation leaders, constitutional officers, Adjutant General May, members of the Wisconsin National Guard and active and retired members of our armed forces, cabinet members, legislators, distinguished guests, and Wisconsinites from wherever you are joining us tonight, thank you for being here with us.

I'm Tony Evers, and I am so grateful and proud to be the 46th governor of the great state of Wisconsin.

My forever prom date, Kathy, is up in the gallery, as well. Kathleen Frances, you are the filling to my cream puff, and every day, I love you more than yesterday.

We begin the new year with a new Legislature elected under new, fair maps. For the first time in a generation, this Legislature was not elected under some of the most gerrymandered maps in America. I am hopeful this will mean more collaboration, more partnership, a little less rancor, and a renewed commitment to do right by the will of the people.

And that is great news—it means we can work together to make bipartisan progress on critical priorities like reforming our justice system, fixing our roads, funding our public schools, and expanding access to affordable housing.

It's no secret that sometimes people in this building disagree and share some differences—never with me, of course. But we begin this year with, I believe, an urgent need—and a mandate—to find common ground. So, let's get to work!

Wisconsinites, I begin tonight with good news. Thanks to our work cutting taxes, Wisconsinites are keeping more of your hard-earned income today than at any point in the last 50 years. A new Wisconsin Policy Forum report says Wisconsin's state and local tax burden dropped to a record low in 2024. The state and local taxes Wisconsinites pay as a share of your income is the lowest it has been in over half a century.

Just two decades ago, Wisconsin was in the top five states for our tax burden and the taxes Wisconsinites paid as a share of their income. Today, Wisconsin is in the bottom 16 states in the country. We have seen the largest drop in our tax burden of any state over the last 20 years.

Cutting taxes has been a bipartisan priority over the last six years. I have proposed middle-class tax cuts in every budget I have introduced as governor. And the Legislature sent me back some proposals I agreed with, including one of the largest tax cuts in state history. All told, through the income tax cuts I've signed into law, most Wisconsinites have seen a 15 percent income tax cut or more, and folks will see $1.5 billion in tax relief each year, primarily targeted to the middle class.

And we've been able to provide real, responsible relief while still paying down our state's debt, saving where we can, and working across the aisle to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. After 30 consecutive years of our state's checking account running a deficit, we have ended all five fiscal years that I have been governor with a positive balance.

And, Wisconsin, our workforce has never been stronger. I declared 2024 the Year of the Worker in Wisconsin because I want addressing the workforce challenges that have plagued our state for generations to be a top priority. And here are our results so far.

In 2024, we reported nine counties with the lowest rates of unemployment on record. We had historically low unemployment. And Wisconsin ended last year with seven consecutive months of record-high employment. Wisconsinites are hard workers by nature, and more Wisconsinites are working than ever before.

And we want Wisconsin workers to be ready for the 21st Century. For the second consecutive year, we hit an all-time high of nearly 10,000 Youth Apprentices and had record-high employer participation. And we had the highest enrollment ever in our Registered Apprenticeship Program's 100-year history—for the third year in a row.

We launched the first-ever teacher apprentice pilot program to retain new teachers and bolster our education workforce. We created new youth apprenticeship pathways from law enforcement and fire prevention to early childhood education. And we're partnering with over 20 bipartisan states through the U.S. Climate Alliance to train 1 million new registered apprentices nationwide with a focus on climate and clean energy fields over the next decade.

And we're making sure our economy is built for the 21st Century, too. In 2024, we launched the largest public-private investment in Wisconsin startups and entrepreneurs in state history. We also welcomed billions of dollars in investments from global companies, including Microsoft, Eli Lilly and Company, and Kikkoman, among others, that will create thousands of jobs in Wisconsin. Businesses partnering with our administration last fiscal year committed to more than $2 billion in capital investments—the highest level in over a decade.

We're also working to make Wisconsin a global leader in health and medical field advancements, from developing new technologies to discovering cures and strategies to improve treatment outcomes. We worked with Senator Baldwin to secure Wisconsin's designation as a U.S. Regional Tech Hub. Our Tech Hub is projected to create over 100,000 jobs and $9 billion worth of economic development in Wisconsin over the next decade alone.

And, Wisconsinites, thanks to our hard work, state government is working smarter and faster than ever before. We've been working to modernize and improve programs that can help improve your daily life. It's about making sure government works—and works better—for you.

We expedited community infrastructure projects for drinking water by cutting the review time for engineering plans in half. We partnered with the Technical Colleges to streamline licensing for students, helping make sure

they could join our strapped healthcare workforce as soon as possible. We also created the first-ever interactive mapping tool for producers to be able to monitor animal disease outbreaks across Wisconsin.

After I directed investments to bring our state's licensing system into the 21st Century, folks can now apply for or renew their professional licenses online. And get this! Wisconsinites no longer have to use a fax machine to send in some of their materials. For those wondering what in the heck a 'fax machine' is—folks, that's the point.

We created a new system to help professionals respond to drug overdoses, identify dangerous trends in our communities, and get information out quicker to folks who need it. We made it possible to purchase state trail passes online so folks no longer have to carry a paper pass on the trails. And we launched a new app for our state-run veterans homes so that loved ones can stay up to speed about their veteran's medical care.

And, Wisconsinites, we're also saving your tax dollars along the way by shrinking our bottom line. We're working to consolidate building space across state government. And, by downsizing and expanding remote work options, we've made it even easier for Wisconsinites to join our state workforce, regardless of where you live. Our plan is projected to save taxpayers over $7 million every year while delivering another half a billion dollars in savings from deferred maintenance costs.

Wisconsin, we accomplished a lot this last year. We have shown we can get a lot of good things done when politics stay out of our way. There is, as always, more work to do, and our work together continues here tonight. I will soon introduce our next state budget, laying out our state's top policy priorities for the next two years. Every budget I have ever built began first by doing what is best for our kids, and this one will be no different.

So, I will again propose historic investments in K-12 education. And I will again ask Republicans and Democrats to join me in doing what is best for our kids by making meaningful investments in public education at every level, from early childhood to our UW System and technical colleges.

The good news is that the Legislature need not wait until I introduce my budget to get to work. Republican lawmakers can start today by releasing the $50 million we approved with bipartisan support nearly two years ago. These funds were already approved, they are available now, and they should not still be sitting in Madison. Folks, our kids and their futures are too important for petty politics. Republicans, release those investments so we can get to work improving reading outcomes statewide.

We have to do more to improve outcomes for our kids. And, yes, that means making meaningful investments in our public schools. But our kids' outcomes are as much a reflection of what happens within our schools as they are, importantly, a reflection of what happens beyond them. And that's a simple matter of math.

The average Wisconsin elementary school student, for example, spends less than 12 percent of their year receiving direct instruction in the classroom. That means they probably spend, give or take, about 80 percent of their time each year outside of our schools.

So, we have to recognize that our schools and educators cannot single-handedly fix our kids' circumstances beyond the school doors that nevertheless affect learning and success in the classroom every day.

Folks, the obligation to help address the challenges our kids are facing in the 80 percent of the time they are not in school falls squarely at the feet of elected officials in this building. So, tonight, I'm declaring 2025 the Year of the Kid in Wisconsin because I want everyone here to start taking that important responsibility seriously.

I will keep saying this until the folks in this building finally hear me—if we want to improve our kids' outcomes, then we have to shorten the odds. If we want our educators and schools to be able to do their very best work in

the hours our kids are with them, we have to set them up for success. And we have to start by making sure our kids can bring their full and best selves to our classrooms.

Kids in class should be focused on learning, not wondering when or whether they'll eat next. Our kids should never go hungry, period, but especially not at school. In the Year of the Kid, the budget I will introduce next month will again include my "Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids" initiative. Let's end school meal debt and make sure every kid has a healthy breakfast and lunch at school with no stigma and at no cost.

And let's start treating our state's mental health crisis with the urgency it requires. Yes, for everyone of every age. But especially for our kids.

The state of our kids' mental health continues to be concerning for me, both as a governor and as a grandfather. A kid in crisis may be distracted or disengaged and may not be able to focus on their studies, if they are able to get to school at all. I fought hard to secure $30 million in our last state budget to support school-based mental health services in schools across Wisconsin. But that was just a fraction of what I asked the Legislature to approve.

Tonight, I'm announcing my budget proposal will invest nearly $300 million to provide comprehensive mental health services in schools statewide, including support for peer-to-peer suicide prevention programs and expanded mental health training.

Making sure our kids are healthy—physically and mentally—is a crucial part of improving outcomes in our classrooms. But we have to connect the dots between school achievement and the challenges our kids are facing at home and in our communities.

Take lack of access to clean and safe drinking water, for example. There is no safe level of lead exposure for kids. According to the CDC, even the smallest exposure to lead can have serious, long-term consequences, and can even, "reduce a child's learning capacity, ability to pay attention, and academic achievement."

A 2019 study of kids over several early grade levels found that even low-level lead exposure during early childhood can affect a kid's achievement, including reading and math scores. It also showed that even additional schooling and physically maturing, "are not sufficient to offset the damage caused by early childhood exposure."

My Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids plan will also help modernize bubblers at schools across Wisconsin to remove harmful contaminants. And, as we kick off the Year of the Kid, I'm also announcing we're going to invest over $6 million in our biennial budget to support lead poisoning intervention and response. And I'm announcing that this week I'll approve a Department of Health Services emergency rule strengthening Wisconsin's lead standards so more kids and families will be eligible for these critical resources.

With each day of inaction, addressing harmful contaminants in our water grows more and more expensive. So, I'm announcing tonight that I've directed an additional $5 million to continue our work getting harmful contaminants out of water wells in 2025, the Year of the Kid. It's about doing what's best for our kids and families. Simple as that.

If we want our kids to bring their full and best selves to our classrooms, elected officials have to start acknowledging how policy decisions and investments—or lack thereof—here in this building affect kids, families, schools, and communities across Wisconsin every day.

Whether or not kids and families have access to safe, reliable housing affects kids at school. Whether or not kids and families have a way to safely and efficiently travel to and from home and work affects kids at school.

Living in a traumatic or unsafe home environment affects kids at school. Lack of access to preventive healthcare and dental and eye care affects kids at school.

The state cannot continue to shirk responsibility for the 80 percent of the time our kids are not in our classrooms—that 80 percent falls on us.

So, folks, that means we have work to do. We can start with the basics—making sure our kids are safe at home, at school, and in our communities is an area where we have much room for improvement.

Last week, I created our new Wisconsin Office of Violence Prevention. We're going to work across law enforcement agencies and local governments and with school districts, nonprofits, and firearm dealers to help keep our kids, families, and communities safe. I also announced my budget will include sustainable, ongoing funding to make the Wisconsin Office of Violence Prevention permanent so we can take a statewide approach to preventing crime and violence across our state.

I will, again, be proposing significant investments in our next state budget to expand access to mental and behavioral health services across our state. Those investments should receive bipartisan support. And we also have to make sure crime victims, survivors, and their families have the support they need to recover. I directed millions of dollars to keep Victims of Crime Act providers afloat when their federal funds were cut. Tonight, I'm announcing I'm investing $66 million to support services for crime victims in our next state budget.

But these actions alone cannot be our only effort to reduce crime and violence and keep our kids, families, and communities safe. Addressing gun violence must be part of our work, folks.

In recent years, Wisconsin has seen about a 21 percent decrease in homicide, a nearly 30 percent decrease in burglary, and an almost 50 percent decrease in motor vehicle theft. Major categories of violent crime are going down statewide.

And, yet, the rate of gun deaths in Wisconsin is trending in the opposite direction. According to Everytown for Gun Safety, the rate of gun deaths increased in Wisconsin by 54 percent from 2014 to 2023, compared to a 34 percent increase nationwide over that same time period.

Thirty-seven days ago, a shooting at Abundant Life Christian School in Madison took the lives of Erin and Rubi, a student and an educator, who woke up and went to school that morning and will never return home. Six others were injured, and countless lives will never be the same.

Folks, Wisconsinites sent us here to see big problems and fix them. We cannot let common sense get lost in debates over whether basic policies could have prevented the most recent shooting, or the one before it, or the one before that. We aren't here in Madison to quibble about the semantics of the last shooting; we are here to do everything we can to prevent the next one.

So, we can do better than doing nothing. This Legislature must do better than doing nothing.

This is Wisconsin. We hunt, we fish, we trap, and generations have grown up learning to appreciate our traditions. No one wants to change this proud part of our heritage. And we won't. Because we do not have to choose between respecting the Second Amendment or keeping kids, schools, streets, and communities safe. We can do both. And the truth is this: the vast majority of Wisconsinites, including gun owners, agree.

So, let's start with two basic policies that we already know Wisconsinites support.

We can take easy, simple steps to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people. Let's ask everyone to play by the same set of rules. Let's close the loophole so that everyone goes through a background check no matter what kind of firearm they are buying or where they are buying it.

And the second thing we can do is pass a "red flag" law to give law enforcement and loved ones the tools they need to get guns out of the home when someone is a dangerous risk to themselves or others.

Just last month, we saw how crucial "red flag" laws can be to prevent tragedy. Shortly after the shooting at Abundant Life, law enforcement discovered the shooter had potentially plotted with a man in another state who was allegedly planning his own mass shooting. Because he lives in a state with a "red flag" law, law enforcement was able to get an emergency protective order requiring him to surrender his firearms before he could move forward with his plans. Their quick work almost certainly saved lives.

Without "red flag" laws, law enforcement in Wisconsin are often unable to intervene unless a crime has already been committed. At that point, sometimes it's too late. We have to change that.

So, let's do what an overwhelming majority of Wisconsinites, including gun owners, believe we should: let's give law enforcement and loved ones the tools they need by passing a "red flag" law here in Wisconsin.

And there are other easy steps we can take to keep our kids and our communities safe and keep guns off the streets. We can keep guns out of the hands of domestic abusers. We can help make sure that guns in homes where there are kids or someone prohibited from possessing a firearm are locked away or have a trigger lock engaged. We can help make sure that firearms at retailers are secured when their business is unattended. We can help make sure that if a firearm is lost or stolen, law enforcement is immediately notified. We should be able to get this commonsense stuff done with bipartisan support, folks.

A lot of our work is not just to prevent people from hurting others, but to make sure people are safe from hurting themselves. These next two policies are personal for me, as I know they are for folks who are here and tuning in at home.

Please know that if you or someone you know is struggling, help and hope are always available. You can call or text 9-8-8 or visit 988Lifeline.org to get free, confidential help anytime, 24/7.

Just three years ago, as I delivered my State of the State address, State Representative Jonathan Brostoff sat right there in one of those seats. Jonathan had a heart of service. He was always working to make someone else's life just a little bit better. And as fierce an advocate as Jonathan was, he was still always eager to learn about and understand others in order to bridge divides.

At the end of last year, Jonathan died by suicide. We are so deeply saddened that he is no longer with us. Jonathan's wife, Diana, and his parents, Phyllis and Alan, are here with us in the gallery tonight. Please stand and join me in recognizing them.

For too many Wisconsinites, even if they did not know Jonathan, the story of losing him is their story, too. Kathy and I share that story. The families, friends, and coworkers of veterans, farmers, construction workers, and law enforcement officers and so many others share that story. Kids, classmates, parents, grandparents, loved ones, and friends in every corner of our state—they share that story. This heartache has become far too common.

Wisconsin in 2022 reported 932 deaths by suicide, according to the Department of Health Services, nearly 60 percent of which involved a firearm. These are statistics we cannot change because those are souls we cannot bring back. But there is more we can do today to save lives tomorrow.

If you talk to someone whose loved one died by suicide, many will tell you their loss was not a foregone conclusion. That maybe—just maybe—if the person they loved had just made it through one more dark night to see with certainty that the sun again would rise, things might have ended up differently. Tonight, I'm asking this Legislature to give the next family, and the next one, and the family after that, hope for that same opportunity.

Studies show that the time between when someone decides to take their life and attempts to do so is often less than 24 hours—for about half, less than 10 minutes. The window for intervention is very short. Being able to purchase and possess a gun in minutes significantly increases the risk of firearm suicide—and firearm homicide, as well.

A decade ago today, Wisconsin had a waiting period law, requiring time between when a person purchased a firearm and took possession of it. That policy was repealed. It's time for Wisconsin to return to that commonsense policy. Tonight, I am announcing I will be asking the Legislature to restore the 48-hour waiting period in Wisconsin in our next state budget.

I am also announcing tonight a new "Self-Assigned Firearm Exclusion" Program, or SAFE, to help reduce suicide by firearm. We can help make sure folks have a plan to keep themselves safe when they are in crisis. Our SAFE Program will allow Wisconsinites to temporarily—and voluntarily—register to prevent themselves from purchasing a firearm. Registering SAFE could make a real difference and even save someone's life. Let's get this done.

Folks, the Legislature must start doing its part to take gun violence seriously in this state. People don't expect us to be perfect in this building, but they do expect us to be pragmatic. People don't expect us to acquiesce to each concept in every policy put before us, but they do expect us to at least have the courage to engage in a conversation. People don't expect us to agree with each other 100 percent of the time, but they do expect us to have the guts to give reasonable policies a vote. Let's do better for Wisconsin than doing nothing.

Kathy and I raised three kids, including twins. We know that, for parents, nothing is more important than our kids' safety, no matter where they are. So, keeping our kids, families, schools, and communities safe by reducing crime and gun violence should be a top priority for us in the Year of the Kid. Kathy and I also remember working to make ends meet so our kids were not just safe but had food on the table, a warm bed to sleep in, and clothes on their backs. So, a critical part of our work doing what's best for our kids in the Year of the Kid must be supporting the parents and families who raise them.

There are a lot of ways we can lower everyday, out-of-pocket costs to make sure Wisconsinites and working families can afford basic needs. So, I have good news. The plan I'm announcing tonight will support our economy and our workforce, lower out-of-pocket costs for working families and Wisconsinites, and help give folks a little breathing room in their household budgets.

Child care is too darn expensive. We have to make child care more affordable and accessible. This is as much about doing what is best for our kids as it is doing what is best for parents in our workforce and our economy, too.

After years of proposing similar efforts, I was proud last year to sign a bipartisan bill to expand our child and dependent care credit. That bill goes into effect this year, so parents and families, be sure to look out for that when you file your taxes. Over 110,000 Wisconsin taxpayers will see an average benefit of over $650 per filer, totaling nearly $73 million this year alone. That's great news for Wisconsin's working families.

But we have to do more to lower the out-of-pocket costs working families are paying for child care every day. A 2023 report showed child care costs in Wisconsin can consume 18 to 36 percent of a family's household income. If those parents are under 25 and have two kids in child care, it's closer to 70 percent. The cost of

putting two young kids in child care costs more than the average rent or mortgage in Wisconsin and exceeds the annual cost of tuition to send two students to the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

And even if folks can find and afford care, families may be waitlisted for months. Child care providers across Wisconsin surveyed last fall had 48,000 kids on waitlists, with nearly 60 percent of providers having unutilized capacity, often because they needed more workers. Child care providers are stuck increasing costs while keeping classrooms closed and serving fewer kids as waitlists grow. Getting providers up to full capacity would mean serving another 33,000 kids.

Wisconsin's child care crisis affects not only our kids, families, and child care providers but our state's employers, workforce, and economy, too. I've repeatedly proposed plans to lower the cost of child care, much of which Republican lawmakers rejected. So, I directed $170 million in emergency funding to keep our child care industry afloat. But, folks, that was 15 months ago. We must do better than nothing when it comes to making child care more affordable.

Our state budget will–once again–include sustainable, ongoing funding to make our Child Care Counts program permanent, including investing over $500 million aimed at lowering child care costs, supporting this critical industry, and investing in employer-sponsored child care.

And when we're looking at everyday, out-of-pocket costs, child care is not the only thing folks are struggling to afford. The costs of prescriptions and life-saving medication like insulin are also too darn high. According to a 2023 national survey, more than a quarter of adults in America are having a hard time affording their prescription drugs. It found 30 percent of adults aren't taking medications as prescribed due to cost.

No Wisconsinite should have to choose between paying bills and putting food on the table or getting their life-saving medication. Accessing healthcare and picking up basic prescriptions or insulin should not break the bank, folks.

Let's work to lower the costs of prescriptions and protect consumers from price gouging on life-saving medication. Through my "Less for Rx" plan, I will again ask Republicans and Democrats to work together to approve new state programs aimed at setting price ceilings for prescriptions and improving oversight of drug companies to make sure Wisconsinites are getting a fair shake. And let's remove the sales tax on over-the-counter medications and cap the copay on insulin at $35 while we're at it.

Lowering everyday, out-of-pocket costs for Wisconsinites and working families must be a priority for us this session. Making child care and everyday prescriptions more affordable are two easy ways we can help Wisconsinites afford basic needs, help paychecks go a little further, and give parents, families, and seniors some breathing room in their household budgets. And my plan allows us to lower costs while supporting our workforce and our economy, too.

In the coming weeks, I will announce my comprehensive plan to lower costs for Wisconsinites and working families. And this work is especially timely. We have already seen steps taken in Washington in recent days that could significantly increase costs, hurt Wisconsinites and working families, and leave a lot of uncertainty for our economy.

A lot has happened in Washington in the last 72 hours, and I know there is a lot of angst about what may happen in the days, months, and years ahead. I want to talk about what that means for Wisconsin and how we move forward together.

So, let's talk about immigration. These lands were inhabited by Indigenous peoples for millennia before people from France, Great Britain, Norway, Holland, Sweden, Germany, and regions the world over came and settled here in the state as we now know and love it.

Wisconsin began as a land of many people, of many origins, each important and none any better than any other. And that is still who we are 177 years later.

The state of Wisconsin was born of immigrants. But today, there are those who would have us forget this fact. There are those who would have us rewrite the story of ourselves, and they would ask us to believe in a distorted and dishonest history. They would have us abandon the values that made us who we are and the people whose blood, love, and labor make our state great.

We cannot. And we will not. Wisconsinites are honest people. We tell the truth. So, in this building, let's do the same, and let's move past partisan rhetoric.

Let's agree to be honest about the fact that, in this state, some of our state's largest—and most important—industries and companies have always welcomed the hard work of immigrants.

Let's agree to be honest about the fact that the story of our state's success today is told in the labor of over 3 million Wisconsinites, including tens of thousands of workers whose only transgression to date was not having the good fortune of being born in this country.

Let's agree that we can continue to be a state that enforces our laws when and if they are broken but still embraces our shared history and all those who have helped write our Wisconsin story, from the Native Nations to the generations of immigrants who came after.

And let's agree that if you work, obey the law, pay taxes, contribute to our communities, and play by the rules just like everyone else, you should have a fair shot at continuing to pursue the American Dream.

Our current system is unworkable and unsustainable. There must be bipartisan work toward a solution that builds upon the strength of our country without threatening our economy's success. Wisconsin, we cannot allow reckless decisions in Washington to stymie our economic momentum. We cannot stall our progress toward fixing the problems that have plagued our state for generations. We cannot afford to lose the prosperity for posterity that we've worked hard to build together.

I have always been willing to work with anyone who is willing to do the right thing for the people of Wisconsin. And that has not changed. But I will not compromise on our Wisconsin values of treating people with kindness, dignity, empathy, and respect. And I will continue to deliver on my promise to fight for the values and priorities that I have every day as your governor.

Protecting access to affordable healthcare is one of them. The Affordable Care Act ensures coverage for millions of Wisconsinites, including folks who have pre-existing conditions. Women are no longer charged more than men. We no longer have annual or lifetime limits on the care patients receive. So, I promise you this: I will fight every effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act, just as I have since Day One as governor.

I fought like hell to make sure Wisconsin women have the freedom to make their own reproductive healthcare decisions without interference from politicians in this building who know nothing about their life, their faith, or their circumstances. And I fought like hell to restore access to safe, legal abortion in Wisconsin. And on the 52nd anniversary of Roe v. Wade, I tell you tonight that I will fight like hell against every effort and veto any bill that makes access to abortion, birth control, infertility treatments, or any other part of reproductive care, any less accessible in Wisconsin than it is today. That's a promise.

Wisconsin will continue to be bold on clean energy, fight the climate crisis, and create good-paying jobs in innovative industries of the future. Because, in Wisconsin, we know we can't afford to choose between mitigating climate change and protecting our environment or creating jobs and economic development—we

must do both. So, we will continue our work to do right by our kids by leaving them a better future and world than the one we inherited.

And to our LGBTQ kids and Wisconsinites. You know the promise I made to you—the promise I have always been proud to keep. I will veto any bill that makes Wisconsin a less safe, less inclusive, and less welcoming place. And I will never stop delivering on my promise to use every power available to me to defend you, protect your rights, and keep you safe.

My promise to the people of Wisconsin has always been to be a governor who works for all Wisconsinites, who does the right thing when it matters most. That is a promise I will continue to keep.

If everyone here is more intent on doing more for others than themselves, more focused on what we can accomplish together than what they can gain on their own, and committed to doing what is right rather than what is best for their personal politics, we will get a lot done for the people we are here to serve.

We must continue to make smart and strategic investments while staying within our means. We must continue to invest in needs long neglected while still finding ways to save where we can. And we must continue to go, as ever, forward, together.

So, let's get good things done for the people of Wisconsin this year, and let's get back to work.

Thank you, and On, Wisconsin!

UW Marching Band, take it away!