

**AS PREPARED STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS  
GOVERNOR MIKE DEWINE  
HOUSE CHAMBER  
THE OHIO STATEHOUSE  
COLUMBUS, OH  
MARCH 23, 2022**

**OPENING**

Before I begin, on behalf of the people of the State of Ohio and all who love freedom -- I say in salute: "Glory to Ukraine! Glory to the Heroes!"

Speaker Cupp, President Huffman, Leader Russo, Leader Yuko, Members of the General Assembly, Justices of the Supreme Court, Elected State Officials, Lieutenant Governor Husted, My fellow citizens of Ohio....

The state of our amazing state IS STRONG! OHIO. IS. STRONG!

I'm so grateful to be back here today with all of you in this historic chamber -- the first time all three branches of government have gathered together in three years.

It truly is a great day!

**TRIBUTE TO FORMER HOUSE SPEAKER BILL BATCHELDER**

I want to thank all of you for yesterday honoring our friend, former colleague, and former Speaker of the House -- Bill Batchelder.

At this time, I invite Judge Batchelder and her family to come the Well.

Joining Judge Batchelder are her son Bill and wife Xela; daughter Elisabeth and husband Matthew; and grandchildren Sophie, Eilidh, William, James, Eleanor, Matthew, Bethany, and Mary Ruth.

Judge -- thank you for being here today and bringing your children and grandchildren. It is a special moment for all of you -- and all of us -- to have you stand in this Chamber that he loved so much -- in the "People's House," as he always described it.

Speaker Batchelder was an amazing man. He never forgot his roots. He loved Medina County. And, he loved Ohio.

Long before he was Speaker, he was the "go to" person when a member had a tough legislative challenge, and there has been more than one Governor, of both political parties, who has called on him for help when faced with a very difficult problem.

In his farewell address to the Legislature, the Speaker reminded us that “it is the ultimate responsibility of all of us to [keep our Republic]” and that we all must “stand strong” to protect it. And so today, let his words remind us of our obligation as public servants and our duty to the people we were elected to serve.

To the Batchelder family, we are honored to pay tribute to Speaker Batchelder today.

## **OUR WORK TOGETHER**

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Members of the General Assembly -- While no Governor and General Assembly agree on everything, there are core truths and fundamental values that we all share.

What unites us is stronger than what divides us, and I know that we are solidly united in our deep love for Ohio and in our belief that EVERY Ohioan deserves the chance to succeed -- no matter their zip code; no matter if they live in Appalachia, in our cities or in our suburbs; no matter who their parents are.

They deserve the chance to get a good-paying job, to raise a family comfortably, to be secure in their future, and to live their version of the American Dream.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Members of the General Assembly -- Thank you. Thank you for believing in the future of our state and for investing in the things that will build a firm foundation that can lift all Ohioans.

In my previous State of the State Address, I asked you -- and I asked the people of Ohio -- “to invest in things where the returns will not all be immediate.” I said that “in many cases, we will not see results during this Administration or even in our lifetimes. Yet, we still must act!”

And act you did!

Together, we have invested in the PEOPLE of Ohio.

My friends, I want to start by talking about some of the significant investments we have made, and then I will talk about the work that remains to be done.

Let’s first talk about what we have done for our children, for they are our future.

With your support, we are helping Ohio’s youngest, most vulnerable children get the best possible start in life by doubling our investment in Ohio’s voluntary home visiting programs, where trained professionals meet regularly with new and expectant moms to teach valuable parenting skills.

We are making important investments in similar services so that fewer Ohio babies are born exposed to opiates.

And, we are working so that children do not grow up with life-long brain damage from toxic lead paint that's peeling from walls in their homes.

Together, we are ensuring that more at-risk, pregnant mom will have a roof over their heads, because inadequate housing is a huge risk factor for infant and maternal mortality, and we've worked to protect those who cannot protect themselves -- the unborn.

By increasing eligibility levels and access to quality childcare, we are empowering thousands more families to take on full-time, full-year employment, promotions, and higher-wage jobs, and we've taken significant steps to change our child welfare system so that the health and safety of the child always comes first!

Because of your support, we have enabled thousands of Ohio seniors to stay in their own homes longer, and we've helped those with disabilities to gain fulfilling employment and live more independently.

In the last two years, we've realized that when you need healthcare and behavioral health services, a virtual visit can save time and money, so we've eased restrictions on telehealth services to expand access to care. In December, I signed House Bill 122, sponsored by Representatives Fraizer and Holmes and Senators Huffman and Antonio, to expand insurance coverage of telehealth -- and I am pleased to say that this new law takes effect today!

Members of the General Assembly, we are blessed in Ohio with an abundance of water. We are the stewards of this precious resource. And together, we have taken unprecedented steps to preserve that water and make it accessible to all Ohioans.

We are now, with your help, in our fourth year of H2Ohio -- our visionary plan to rid Lake Erie of toxic algae blooms, which threaten the drinking water of nearly three million of our fellow citizens. And, we have repaired and replaced decades-old, lead water pipes. Now, with the placement of new lines that never existed before, there are parts of Ohio where -- for the very first time -- citizens will not have to travel miles to get clean drinking water!

Together, we are investing in our neighborhoods to demolish dangerous, decaying, unsightly buildings and to clean up hazardous, brownfield properties to spur economic development. And, we are closing the digital divide in Ohio, with the goal that everyone in Ohio will have the necessary broadband services on which our citizens depend for everything -- from homework to healthcare!

I want to recognize and thank Lieutenant Governor Husted for spearheading this effort.

He has also worked diligently with you as we have invested significantly in career education, job training, and workforce development to help give every Ohioan an opportunity to get a satisfying and well-paying job. We'll be working with you to provide additional help to our career centers, community colleges, and four-year universities to provide them advanced, high-tech equipment for even better training for the jobs of the future.

With help from you and JobsOhio, we are positioning our state to become a global leader in science, technology, and medicine through the launch of three, cutting-edge “Innovation Districts” in Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Columbus. They are poised to produce 60,000 jobs over the next ten years and generate billions of dollars in pioneering, life-saving research and development.

And -- while some people talk of defunding the police -- we are doubling down on our support for law enforcement by giving them more resources to keep our communities safe!

Working together, we’ve slashed state spending by a whopping \$1.2 billion! And, we cut taxes by more than \$3.6 billion -- creating Ohio’s lowest taxes in more than 40 years, leaving more money for businesses to re-invest in our economy and more money in the pockets of our fellow Ohioans!

And to think -- to think we have done all these many things -- all of them -- during a once-in-a-hundred-years pandemic!

## **COVID PANDEMIC**

Though we have had many shared successes, the past couple of years certainly been difficult for Ohioans, and we continue to pray for those who died from COVID, and we pray for their families.

My Fellow Ohioans -- Two years-ago at this time, we began our battle against an invisible and deadly enemy. Here in Ohio -- you did what Ohioans always do.

You rallied together. You made extraordinary sacrifices. And, you showed the world that Ohioans are RESILIENT!

We owe such a debt to our healthcare workers -- our nurses and our doctors -- our first responders, frontline workers, grocery store clerks, restaurant workers, local health department personnel, teachers, educators, and so many, many others -- all of whom have stepped up in countless ways over these past two years.

At this time, I would like to ask our Ohio National Guard Adjutant General, John Harris, to stand. General Harris, on behalf of all Ohioans, we thank you. We thank you and the members of the Ohio National Guard for your tireless efforts during the pandemic and for all that you do every single day to help us and to protect us.

Our Guard members responded to every call when asked during the pandemic -- from testing to vaccinations. They assisted with staffing at our nursing homes, and most recently, they worked in more than 64 hospitals and at 21 testing sites across Ohio, preventing a crisis in care during the recent Omicron surge.

Members of our Guard also traveled to the southern border in Texas and Arizona to help stop the influx of deadly fentanyl and other lethal drugs into our state and into nation.

So, I want to thank them, and I want to thank all the men and women in the military and in law enforcement and our firefighters, who risk their lives every single day to protect us -- and we must remember all the Ohioans who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Please join me now in a moment of silence for Marine Gunnery Sergeant James W. Speedy from Cambridge. He died Friday night during a NATO training exercise. We pray for him. We pray for his family.

[MOMENT OF SILENCE]

## **OHIO HAS ASSETS**

Members of the General Assembly -- This is Ohio's time!

People are returning to the heartland! They are coming to Ohio because we have lower taxes, a strong business climate, and a good regulatory environment -- made better by recently enacted Senate Bill 9, sponsored by Senators Roegner and McColley!

But, my friends, it is so much more than this. It's also about the great quality of life we have here in Ohio!

No matter where you live in Ohio, you're within driving distance of amazing art, theater, and major league sports teams!

We have 14 public universities, 74 private colleges and universities, 23 community colleges, and a host of great career centers all over Ohio!

And, we have a world-class State Fair that is BACK this year!

There is simply no better place to raise a family than Ohio! No better place to live. No better place to start or grow a business. And no better place that provides more opportunity than Ohio!

What Wilbur Wright said 100 years ago is still true today: "If I were giving a young [person] advice as to how [they] might succeed in life, I would say . . . pick out a good father and mother, and begin life in Ohio!"

My friends -- Now is the time to seize our Ohio moment!

Our economy is surging! Our state budget is on firm footing. Our bond rating is the highest it has been since 1979. Our unemployment rate is only 4.3 percent -- near historic lows. And, manufacturing is flourishing!

Ohio has always been a manufacturing state. But now -- now we are bringing the highest tech manufacturing known to man into the State of Ohio, and the world is taking notice!

Just a few short weeks ago, we announced the single, largest economic development investment by one company in the history of the State of Ohio! Intel Corporation will be investing \$20 billion in Ohio, just in its first phase, to build two new, state-of-the-art fabrication facilities to make semi-conductor chips. This will impact not just Central Ohio, but our entire state as many of their suppliers move to Ohio.

To all of you -- Thank you -- thank you for helping make this deal a reality! It's a game-changer for our state and will have positive economic ripple effects across Ohio. Your support of the Mega Projects Legislation through House Bill 110 made a big difference.

But, Ohio's economic success is not limited to Intel. New manufacturing companies are locating all over Ohio. They could have gone anywhere. They chose Ohio!

Just a few examples:

Cleveland-Cliffs built a state-of-the-art steel plant in Toledo.

Sherwin Williams is building a new research facility in Brecksville, and they are building their new headquarters in downtown Cleveland.

Leading aerospace company, Sierra Nevada Corporation, recently set up operations in the Miami Valley.

And then there's Global Cooling in Athens County, Ultium Cell in the Mahoning Valley, Nestle-Purina in Clermont County, and so many, many more.

My friends -- Ohio is taking off! And, all of us in this Chamber are building the environment in this state, where every Ohioan can have a better life, and where Ohio kids can dream -- and those dreams can really come true.

But our work is not done. In many ways, it is just beginning.

Ohio will not rise to its highest level unless we do even more than we already have in several important areas. Let me begin by talking about mental health.

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

I am proud of the work we have started together -- and we have done a lot in the area of mental health. For example, we have started the reform of Medicaid out of our shared-commitment to multi-system kids, through a program we call OhioRISE. Under OhioRise, children who have multiple medical and behavioral health challenges will now get the help they need -- in their own communities. Parents will no longer be forced to give up custody in order to get their children the help they need -- and families will stay together.

We have also worked to create a landmark program to address the mental and physical health needs of children right in their own school buildings!

We've specifically focused dollars for schools across Ohio to provide for on-site medical clinics; additional counselors and mental health services; prevention and after-school care; family supports, such as English classes and access to healthcare; as well as new training and programming around childhood trauma and mental health for our most vulnerable kids.

We are helping struggling families get better access to addiction and mental health treatment, so that their children don't end up in foster care. And, we have more than doubled medication-assisted drug treatment capacity across Ohio, and have dramatically increased crisis stabilization services.

But -- despite our best efforts so far, it still is not enough.

Mental illness remains on the rise in Ohio. Suicide is one of the top ten causes of death for Ohioans ages 10 to 64, with the rate rising in rural Ohio and in our communities of color. Accidental drug overdose deaths remain at record levels. The shared adversity of the COVID pandemic has worsened rates of depression, anxiety, addiction, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Access to care still remains elusive for too many Ohioans. And over 40 percent of Ohio children have experienced one or more Adverse Childhood Experiences, putting them at higher risk for lifelong health and mental health challenges.

Now, to better understand how we got here, let's go back in history. Let's go back 60 years to the federal Community Mental Health Act of 1963, when hundreds of thousands of women and men with brain disorders were released from psychiatric hospitals, promised -- as President Kennedy said at the time -- that "the cold mercy of custodial care would be replaced by the open warmth of community."

Despite good intentions -- tragically -- that promise was never kept -- not nationally, nor in Ohio -- and the community system was never fully built.

Ohio closed psychiatric hospitals without prevention or residential services in place and without building full capacity outpatient care. Many Ohioans in need of support became homeless or languished in jail or in prison.

And now -- every day in Ohio, we have families in crisis. They need immediate help. And too often, they have nowhere to turn, no idea where to go, so their loved ones suffer -- and sometimes, these individuals -- our friends, our family members -- die needlessly.

We can change this.

While we can never fully remedy the mistakes of the past, we can resolve to change the course of history moving forward by making help visible, accessible, and effective in all communities in Ohio. We can do this by investing significantly more resources in the following:

1. We must grow our behavioral health workforce;

2. By increasing research and innovation; and

3. By building a community capacity for care that offers better crisis response services and treatment, increased prevention efforts, and more residential and outpatient services.

Seated in the Gallery today next to the First Lady is my long-time friend, Terry Russell and his wife Retta and their son Luke. Terry leads Ohio's chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness. I have met no stronger advocate for those suffering from mental illness and their families -- the "real heroes," as Terry calls them. After 50 years of dedicated work, he will be retiring later this year.

I know that Terry shares my goal for Ohio to lead the world in behavioral health research, community care, and workforce development. Ohio can be the model.

The future Ohio that I envision has the best, most robust behavioral health workforce in the country -- a workforce that is hailed as heroic and valued as a vital part of our healthcare system.

I see an Ohio with expanded residential and community-based, outpatient treatment options, so fewer Ohioans need to be institutionalized or placed in long-term hospital care.

I see an Ohio that catches and treats mental health problems and addiction at their earliest onset to lessen the chances of life-long challenges.

I see an Ohio where families get support in their own communities and at school, so that teachers can teach, kids can learn, and parents can worry less, because ALL kids benefit when every child has the support to be physically and mentally healthy and the opportunity to live up to their God-given potential.

I see an Ohio that harnesses the innovative potential of our research colleges and universities to conduct strategic, cutting-edge research. . . an Ohio with fewer emergency room visits, and where fewer Ohioans with mental illness are living on the streets. . . an Ohio where mental illness isn't criminalized, lessening pressure on the criminal justice system.

In the Ohio I see -- fewer families face the unimaginable grief of losing a son, a daughter, a brother, a sister, or a parent to suicide or overdose. Shame, fear, stigma, and embarrassment are erased. Mental illness is treated as a health issue -- not as a crime. And, those who seek help are met with respect -- and treated with the dignity they deserve.

Realizing this vision will require us to take a giant step forward. But, if we build on our successes and the work we have started together, we can truly bring about lasting change.

My friends, the system isn't broken -- it was just never fully built, and it does not exist everywhere in Ohio.... YET!

And so, we must build it! We must do the work that has never been done. We must fulfill the promises made over 60 years ago, but never kept.

The bottom line is this: Ohioans with untreated addiction and mental illness will remain under-employed and unemployed, and so much potential -- for people, for families, for our state -- will be lost if we look the other way.

In the weeks ahead, I will be coming to you with specific proposals for how we finish this important work. It won't happen overnight -- and it will take a major, long-term commitment from ALL of us.

We can create the opportunity for people with mental illness or addiction to build the skills to lead joyful, meaningful lives. And if we do, it will result in reduced community costs, more people working, and more people contributing -- to the vitality of their communities.

We have the ability. We have the talent. We simply must have the will.

## **STATE PARKS**

Let me now talk about our State Parks, wildlife areas, nature preserves, and scenic rivers, which really are the crown jewels of Ohio.

We are blessed with a system of 75 -- soon to be 76 -- State Parks, with many Ohioans discovering them for the first-time during pandemic. From Maumee Bay to Geneva to Lake Hope to Great Seal to Hueston Woods, to John Bryan, our State Parks add so much to our quality of life and make Ohio such a great place to live.

Access to nature is a vital part of both our physical and mental wellbeing, and our Parks have something for everyone -- the calming influence for those looking to relax, the adrenaline-pumping activities for those looking for a thrill -- and everything in between!

Thanks to your support and investments, we are working to make these wonderful places even better. Improvements are being made at Parks across the state.

To the east -- we are working on a masterplan that will connect fantastic places -- The Wilds, the new amazing Appalachian Hills Wildlife Area, Jesse Owens State Park, and Burr Oak State Park -- to create a one-of-a-kind adventure. I'm also excited about the development at Shawnee State Park. On the banks of the Ohio River, guests will be able to mountain bike, paddle, travel along one of the Imagination Library's Storybook Trails, and stay at a full-service campsite.

Soon, more people will be able to stay at the new Lodge at Hocking Hills -- Ohio's first new State Park lodge in more than 30 years! And, our newest State Park will be at Oldtown, in Greene County, honoring the heritage of the Shawnee Indians, Tecumseh, and the intersection of the Native Americans and the pioneers.

Members of the General Assembly -- Our dream is for Ohio to have the best State Park system in the country! In the weeks and months ahead, I will be asking you to reinvest in our magnificent

State Parks, as I know we share a commitment to preserving the natural beauty that God has graciously bestowed upon Ohio!

By continuing to invest in our Parks, when visitors come, they will feel like family. And they will say: "THIS IS OHIO!"

## **APPALACHIA**

Developing and showcasing our State Parks in Appalachia is just part of the larger renaissance happening in our Appalachian region. This, also, is THEIR moment!

We can be a part of it -- we need to be a part of it -- by re-igniting the pioneer spirit of the Ohioans who built this state! One of the most important things we can do that will benefit -- not only the 32 counties in the Appalachian region, but also our entire state -- is to make a long-overdue, comprehensive investment in Appalachia.

And so, Members of the General Assembly, I intend to work with you and local leaders to create an investment program to revitalize and rebuild the economies and the Main Streets of the area where Ohio began. We have an historic opportunity to dedicate resources to an area of our state that is ready to flourish!

In the coming days and weeks, I will work together with you and community leaders to help the region plan and implement improvements that reflect the vision of local communities, investing in things, such as downtown re-development, further expansion of broadband coverage, workforce development, student wellness in schools, and fighting the on-going battle against addiction.

Our citizens in Appalachia are strong! They have a great and proud history. Generations have built a life there, planting roots deep in the soil along the Ohio River. And THIS -- this is now Appalachia's time.

## **MENTORS/SCHOLARSHIPS**

Ohio is a great state, but there remain gaps in access to opportunity for too many children, and we have a moral obligation to remove the barriers to their success. Every child needs a responsible, reliable adult in their lives. For most kids, those mentors are their parents or grandparents. But there are some children in Ohio who don't have that, or they don't have it consistently.

All children need mentors -- someone they can look up to. Someone they can count on. Someone who can help keep them in school and out of trouble and away from the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Someone who can teach them life skills and help them deal with the challenges of growing up and the added burdens of living in difficult, chaotic, stressful, complex situations.

Members of the General Assembly -- we have the ability to transform the lives of so many kids, who -- for whatever reason -- don't have someone in their young lives who can be a role model. In the coming days, I intend to work with you and with community leaders and our colleges and universities to create a combined scholarship and mentorship program, so that no child in this state lacks guidance and direction, and so they can have the financial support to continue their education to become career-ready, whether by earning a credential, a certificate, or a degree.

I will need your help and your ideas. There are so many strong advocates in this Chamber for children. We also have some great examples of programs in right here Ohio, such as "I Know I Can" in Columbus, "Say Yes Cleveland," and many more.

We need to do this because, frankly, it is the right thing to do for these kids and for the State. Just as I said regarding those with behavioral health challenges, our state's economy -- our state -- will not fully flourish if we leave these kids behind. There is so much untapped potential -- potential that our state simply cannot afford to waste.

An area I have cared deeply about throughout my life is highway safety. Whether driving under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs or driving while texting, too many Ohio lives -- too many family members -- are still being lost on our highways.

Last year, fatalities on our roads in Ohio were at their highest level since 2002 -- and we all know that distracted driving is a key factor behind many of these crashes. There were nearly 12,000 distracted driving-related crashes last year in Ohio, causing more than 300 serious injuries and 43 deaths. And, 39 percent of these crashes involved drivers who were 15 to 24 years-old.

We must do more. And, Ohioans want us to do more. A 2021 survey of Ohio drivers found that 78 percent of respondents support legislation to toughen our laws on distracted driving.

Representatives Abrams and Lampton have a bill -- House Bill 283 -- pending before you now, that -- if passed -- will significantly help decrease distracted driving tragedies. Twenty-four other states have implemented similar legislation, and those states have seen significant reductions in serious and fatal accidents.

Members of the General Assembly -- lives are at stake. Please pass this bill.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Let me now turn to law enforcement. Our current generation of law enforcement officers are the most educated, best trained, and most technologically savvy individuals to ever work in the profession. Yet, state funding for on-going training has been haphazard at best.

Some years, the State funds police training. Most years, we don't.

Professional development training, year after year, is something that every single police officer wants, and it directly benefits the public. In last year's budget, you created a Commission to

study this problem. This Commission was chaired by Senator Hoagland and had representatives from law enforcement; the community; the Attorney General's Office; and also included Representatives Richardson, West, and Abrams; and Senators O'Brien and Thomas.

I am asking you simply to adopt the recommendations of the Commission that you created. These recommendations will create a permanent funding source for on-going training.

In addition to properly funding law enforcement training, we also must do a better job of treating and viewing our deputies, officers, and troopers like we do other professionals in this state. Representatives Abrams and Plummer have been working on legislation that would help standardize oversight of our law enforcement professionals, increase transparency within the system, and require independent investigation of officer-involved critical incidents. I support this bill and look forward to signing it into law.

Finally, we must work hard to support our officers and deputies by giving them the resources to go after violent criminals. We know that just a small number of dangerous offenders are causing the vast majority of violent crime in this state. Together, we recently allocated \$250 million to address, in part, violent crime in our communities. But, money, alone, is not enough.

We must also strengthen our laws to deal with violent offenders who have lost their legal right to possess a firearm, but still carry and use weapons to commit violent crime. Now, it's a small group, but we must target them, and we must remove them from society!

There is a bill currently pending before you that achieves this goal by increasing penalties on these dangerous felons. Chiefs, deputies, prosecutors, and frontline patrol officers have asked us to support this legislation, as it will help them deal with the most violent offenders in their communities.

We need to get tough on the convicted violent offenders who carry and use weapons in violation of the law. If we can remove this small group of dangerous offenders from our streets, the violent crime in our neighborhoods will be reduced dramatically -- and the citizens and families who live there will be safer, and lives will be saved.

## **GOVERNOR'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY**

Before I conclude, I saved the best for last! I am very pleased now to introduce my bride of almost 55 years -- First Lady of Ohio, Fran DeWine.

Frances is -- and always has been -- an amazing champion for children. At the start of our Administration, she partnered with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library to create the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library. I want to thank the Legislature for providing the funds -- that are being matched by the local communities -- to provide a book each month to Ohio children ages zero to five.

When we started, only 13 percent of eligible Ohio kids were receiving these books. Now, that number has risen to 43 percent, and so far over 6.9 million books have been mailed to children in

all 88 Ohio counties! This month, we are up to nearly 313,000 children, who will receive an age-appropriate book in the mail at no cost to their family!

We know that a child's brain is 80 percent developed by the time they turn three years-of-age. So, these first years of development are so very important. Enrollment in the Imagination Library improves Kindergarten readiness and family literacy habits. And, no matter where you live in Ohio, your child or grandchild is eligible.

## **CONCLUSION**

Spring is here! And everything is possible in the springtime!

You've heard me talk about my grandfather who, well into his later years, continued to plant trees, knowing he likely would not live to see them fully grown. He did it, nonetheless, because he had faith -- faith in the future -- and wanted those trees to be there for his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

At the conclusion of my address, I invite everyone here today to join the First Lady and me on the South Plaza across from the Ohio Theater, as we plant a Dogwood tree on the Statehouse grounds. This tree, native to Ohio, represents renewal and rebirth. We plant this tree today as a symbol of our shared faith in Ohio's future and as a recommitment to investing in things that may not have results today, but will transform tomorrow!

The sun is coming up in Ohio, the wind is at our back, and together, we have the power to change the course of Ohio's history!

We have opportunities before us that come once-in-a-lifetime, so we must seize them! Ohio -- This. Is. Our. Moment!

Perhaps fellow Ohioan, Joe Burrow, said it best after the Bengals advanced to the AFC Championship game when he said: "We're a really, really good team. We're here to make noise, and teams are going to have to pay attention to us [because] we are coming for it all!"

Well, My Fellow Ohioans -- so is the State of Ohio!

Ohio is making some noise! People are going to have to pay attention to us! And, we are coming for it ALL!

Thank you very much, and may God bless you, and may God bless Ohio!