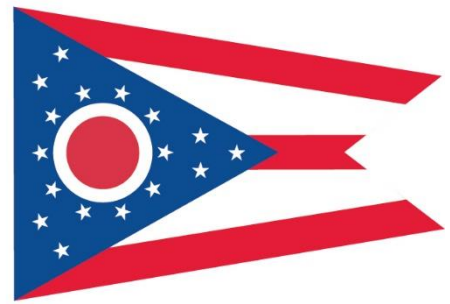




STATE
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GOVERNOR MIKE DEWINE
MARCH 5, 2019

AS PREPARED STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS
GOVERNOR MIKE DEWINE
HOUSE CHAMBER OF THE OHIO STATEHOUSE
COLUMBUS, OH
MARCH 5, 2019

Speaker Householder,

President Obhof,

Leader Sykes,

Leader Yuko,

Members of the General Assembly,

Chief Justice O'Connor and Justices of the Supreme Court,

Elected State Officials,

Lieutenant Governor Husted,

My fellow citizens of Ohio....

Thank you—thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Mr. Speaker, it is so great to be with you today in this beautiful and historic House Chamber—truly the people's house!

And President Obhof, thank you for escorting me from the Senate Chamber—the place where I started my legislative career. I learned so much there from some amazing colleagues of both political parties.

Let me introduce my bride of 51 years and my best friend—our new First Lady Fran DeWine!

Fran tells me that she will be focusing on children, particularly on reading and food and nutrition. I know, that with her great passion for children and families, she is going to do some truly amazing things!

Members of the General Assembly, if our state is to move forward, we must govern together.

Let me ask my cabinet to rise and face you.

I am proud of this team. I have instructed them to listen to you and to listen to the people of Ohio.

We will work together with you, for it is only by working together—Democrats and Republicans, alike—that the people’s business can faithfully be done.

The Bible tells us that there is a time and a place for everything under the Heavens. At this point in Ohio history, it is the time for us to INVEST IN OHIO!

It is time for us to invest in our children, in our workers, in our roads and bridges, in our infrastructure, and in Lake Erie and in our state parks and other natural wonders.

Simply put—it is time for us to invest in our future!

Fran and I love this great State of Ohio! There is so much to be proud of with our state’s rich, storied history and promising, hopeful future.

It is an exciting time to be in Ohio! This year, we will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of mankind’s first step on the moon by fellow Ohioan Neil Armstrong. And, as a life-long baseball fan, I am especially excited that this year marks the 150th anniversary of the Cincinnati Red Stockings—baseball’s first professional team—and today’s Cincinnati Reds, the oldest team in all of baseball! But, not only that, on July 9th this year, the Cleveland Indians at Progressive Field will host the 90th All-Star Game.

Indeed, it is a great year to be Governor—and to be an Ohio baseball fan!

One of the most important jobs of the Governor is to be the biggest salesman and promoter of the state. No one was better at that than Governor James A. Rhodes.

He died 18 years ago yesterday, and though his final term ended 36 years ago, his legacy lives on in so many ways all over our wonderful state. And, while Governor Rhodes was passionate in promoting Ohio’s interests—our economy, our tourism, our natural resources, and our education system—what really set him apart was his concern for people—for all the people of Ohio.

In the Governor’s own words from his February 1965, State of the State address:

“It is a wonderful world we have here in Ohio! Our state has more remarkable characteristics, resources, and people than any state in the Union! We want to sell that idea everywhere.... [But] I call upon you to help. I call upon every Ohioan to help. We must work together, seeking constantly that Divine Guidance which is rooted in our state motto. We must dedicate ourselves to a massive effort, based on morality, equality, and justice to move our state forward into the future for all of our people.”

Today, we must dedicate ourselves to our own massive effort. Though we live in a great state—with so many amazing opportunities and amazing people who are doing truly incredible things to transform Ohio—we still have so many real and significant challenges.

John F. Kennedy said that the job of the President is to lay before the American people the “unfinished business of the country.” That is also my job, as your Governor—to lay before the people of our state our unfinished business.

And so, let me start with our roads and bridges.

We have neglected them too long—and we now face a crisis today that must be addressed immediately!

We must fill our potholes!

We must bolster our bridges!

And we must rebuild our roads!

These are the essential facts: Our counties, cities, villages, and townships have seen their resources for road and bridge repairs dwindle and dwindle over the years. A dollar of gas tax in 2005—the last time the gas tax was raised—now only buys 58 cents worth of road and bridge repairs. And our local partners—townships, villages, cities, and counties—have received no relief for 14 years.

Each year, their infrastructure degrades more and more.

Each year, they fall further and further behind.

And each year, their roads and bridges get less and less safe.

Collectively, our local governments have over 200,000 miles of road to maintain.

And you want to know about their bridges? Nearly 2,600 of their bridges are rated in poor condition. Let me repeat—almost 2,600 of their bridges are rated today in poor condition.

The situation with our state roads and bridges is similar. The only difference is that the state has masked its problem by borrowing more and more money (none of which, by the way, has gone to our local communities). Well—now our credit cards are literally maxed out—and we simply cannot borrow any more—nor should we.

Some may think that if we do nothing, the quality of our roads will somehow remain the same. Nothing could be further from the truth. The money the state has borrowed—that same money that has been propping us up—has now been spent.

It’s gone.

And now that it’s gone, we are about to see a dramatic reduction in the quality of the roads in this state. It has just now started—and each month it will get worse and worse.

When road conditions deteriorate by 25 percent, crashes double. When they deteriorate 60 percent, crashes go up tenfold.

If we do nothing, more Ohioans will get hurt. And more Ohioans will die.

Our total ODOT debt is now almost \$4 billion dollars—an absolute record! This coming year, our debt service at ODOT will be \$390 million dollars—also an historic high! That means that before one single penny can be spent on roads and bridges, drivers must pay \$390 million dollars in debt service for past projects and past commitments.

I have instructed ODOT Director Marchbanks to take a hard look at his Department to cut everywhere he can, and he has assured me he is doing that.

Our local jurisdictions and the state have a combined shortfall this year and for years into the future of at least \$1.2 billion dollars per year. It will take this much additional revenue just for us to maintain our roads in their current condition and do only a modest amount of new work.

Members of the General Assembly, by requesting \$1.2 billion dollars to fill the budget hole and meet existing needs, let me assure you that I am taking a minimalist, conservative approach, with this being the absolute bare minimum we need to protect our families and our economy.

Each one of you knows of a dangerous roadway or intersection in your district that needs to be fixed. In fact, ODOT has, at my request, identified 150 roads and highway locations that need to be fixed. Our proposal that we have sent to you would allow us to fix each one of these, and when all of those are fixed, we can then work on repairing all the rest of the dangerous places in our communities.

If you think the roads are bad now—you have not seen anything yet! While the local governments have been suffering for some time with a lack of resources for roads, state roads are just NOW entering the period where the revenues for them are drop dramatically.

I know there may be a temptation to reduce the \$1.2 billion we are asking for—and I understand that. However, it is the smallest amount we can add that will keep our families safe. Anything less will mean either our roads won't be kept up, or no new projects will get done or safety projects will not get done.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the General Assembly—our families should not be driving on roads that are crumbling and bridges that are failing. I appeal to you—as legislators, as fathers and mothers, as sons and daughters—help us fix this! The state has avoided its responsibility for too long—and now is the time to act.

To do anything less is simply irresponsible.

As I said in my inaugural address, I will be asking you—and I will be asking the people of Ohio—to invest in things where the returns will not all be immediate. In many cases, we won't see results during the term of this Administration or even in our lifetimes.

Yet, we still must act!

In the words of Robert Louis Stevenson, “Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap, but [rather] by the seeds that you plant.” Our budget will plant seeds of hope and possibility that will grow the roots of abundance and opportunity for future generations of Ohioans.

My philosophy is really pretty simple: I take the world as I find it and do everything I can to try and make it better. And through the budget we will propose, we just want to make lives better for all Ohio families.

It will be based on our guiding principles, which I outlined in my inaugural address:

Family is everything.

Education is the key to equality and to opportunity.

We must be fierce and passionate advocates for—and defenders of—the defenseless—those “in the dawn of life, the twilight of life, and the shadows of life.”

And everyone—no matter where you were born or who your parents are—deserves the chance to succeed, to get a good-paying job, to raise a family comfortably, and to be secure in your future.

Yet, tragically today, too many Ohioans are not getting the chance to succeed and to live up to their full God-given potential.

It is wrong—it is unconscionable—that in 2019, there are still children whose opportunities and whose dreams are stifled because they live in homes where they are exposed to lead paint. Every year, thousands of Ohio children under the age of six test positive for unsafe lead levels. And undoubtedly, there are countless more who have never been tested at all and would test positive.

In 2017, nearly 1,000 babies in Ohio died in their first 12 months of life. That’s equal to all the children under the age of four living in either Vinton or Morgan or Monroe or Harrison Counties. Further, African American babies are dying at almost three times the rate of white babies, leaving Ohio ranked 49th worst in the nation for deaths of African American infants.

This must stop!

Tragically, through no fault of their own, there are children in every part of Ohio are experiencing significant trauma, such as abuse, neglect, or having a parent who uses drugs. These kinds of adverse childhood experiences are linked to an increased likelihood of depression, drug abuse, and even decreased life expectancy.

At any point in time last year, at least 15,500 of our children were in out-of-home care—that’s more than a 25 percent increase since 2013.

And too many Ohioans are still dying daily from unintentional drug overdoses.

I have instructed my health and human services team—and it is an amazing team—to focus every single day on these public health challenges. Director of Health Dr. Amy Acton; Director of Medicaid Maureen Corcoran; Children’s Initiatives Director LeeAnne Cornyn; Director of Mental Health and Addiction Services Lori Criss; Director of Job and Family Services Kim Hall; RecoveryOhio Director Alisha Nelson; and Director of Aging Ursel McElroy—please stand.

This strong, compassionate team will work together across agencies to save lives. They understand that kids have only one chance to grow up and that there is an urgency, therefore, in absolutely everything they will do.

Their focus will be on people—not on bureaucracy. They will work with you. And, they will serve as partners with their counterparts at the local community level.

In the budget that I will propose, we will be creating a new public health fund, that will leverage resources through an innovative new public-private partnership to increase public health awareness and prevention strategies. And, we will be infusing resources directly into communities to make systemic changes to help local efforts to prevent and treat mental health and substance use disorders and to support recovery and wellness for individuals.

We are going to expand the state’s treatment capacity first with more crisis support for children and for adults struggling with mental illness and addiction.

We are going to consistently and continually educate children in Kindergarten through 12th grade on the dangers of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use and teach them the skills—through a much-needed focus on social-emotional learning—on how to make healthy decisions throughout their lives.

We are going to expand wrap-around service models, such as our Ohio Sobriety, Treatment, Abuse, and Reducing Trauma program, known as OhioSTART. It provides specialized victim services to children who have been abused or neglected because of parental drug use, and it provides drug treatment for those parents. This intensive program that I started as your Attorney General is keeping families together and is keeping parents on the path to recovery. I am grateful for Attorney General Yost’s continued support for our program.

We are also going to work with Attorney General Yost as we double down on the drug cartels by increasing the number of law enforcement drug task forces in Ohio. We will also empower local law enforcement through our creation of a new, highly-specialized Narcotics Intelligence Center. This innovative new Center will provide local law enforcement with enhanced intelligence and high-tech analytical capabilities to strengthen criminal investigations and improve public safety.

And, we are going to dramatically increase the number of specialty docket courts across Ohio to get people into treatment and keep them out of jail. I want to thank Chief Justice O’Connor for her dedication to this effort and for all her all work to make the criminal justice system more fair and better aligned with the needs of all Ohioans.

We are going to help at-risk moms take care of their babies by tripling the number of families served in evidence-based home-visiting programs. And, by increasing our investment in quality, early childhood education, we will improve these children's odds for success.

We are also going to direct significant state resources to Ohio's most-in-need children to help them overcome the barriers and disadvantages of poverty and trauma. We have both a moral and an economic imperative to support these students every way we can, and that is why—through targeted funding in my budget—these kids will receive additional resources for mentoring, after-school programs, wrap-around supports, health care, mental health care, and much, much more.

And, we are going to be true partners with county children services agencies. The drug epidemic has strained Ohio's child welfare system with many, many more children being placed into foster care. Historically, the state's financial support to local children services agencies has been very, very small. We will change that! We will increase our state investment in children's services, and we will actively work with all local agencies to eliminate red tape, relieve the pressure on local dollars, and allow promising prevention and intervention methods for our most vulnerable children to flourish.

Also, I have instructed my director of foster care initiatives, Kristi Burre, to focus every day on ways to better help children and families. We're going to continue our efforts to recruit more foster and adoptive parents and better support kinship caregivers—primarily grandparents—who find themselves unexpectedly caring for children.

By the year 2020, 25 percent of Ohioans will be age 60 and older. To assist this growing population, we will strengthen the caregiver infrastructure through respite and other supportive services for those families caring for older Ohioans living with a chronic, disabling, or serious health condition. We will expand nutritional and other programs that promote life-long healthy living. And, we will educate the public on ways to protect the independence, vitality, and contributions of older Ohioans.

Even though the economy is going well, many Ohioans still struggle. Many in our urban core and in our rural heartland have not seen economic recovery in their neighborhoods. We will focus on bringing jobs and job training to the communities and to the people who have been left behind. Our Administration will focus on knocking down the barriers that stand in the way of a better life, and we will focus on creative, new strategies to restore hope and to restore opportunity.

We have a shocking number of our fellow citizens with disabilities who are unemployed or grossly underemployed. This is wrong. And so, we are going to invest more resources into initiatives that increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

We are going to help businesses in Ohio through enhanced opportunity zones.

And, we are going to help Ohio college students by having every one of our public universities offer guaranteed tuition—that won't increase one dime—over the four years the student is in college. The cost of college should be transparent and predictable, and I want to thank our

university presidents—several who are seated in the gallery today—for their commitment to do this.

For those who take another career path, we are going to embark on the most aggressive workforce development and worker re-training effort in Ohio history! We're going to invest more in our career-tech centers and two-year community colleges, and we are going to create at least 10,000 new industry certificates.

Let me just take a moment while we're talking about education to thank all teachers in Ohio—whether they are in early childhood education, primary education, high school, home-schooling, higher education, career-tech, or special education. Let's give all of them a round of applause!

Teaching is tough, and teachers change lives every single day. Fran and my son Mark and our daughter-in-law Becca are educators here in Ohio. Our daughter Anna volunteered in an inner-city middle school, and our granddaughter Isabelle is currently volunteering in a Cristo Rey school. I continue to learn so very, very much from each of them.

And then—then there is InnovateOhio! Let me take a moment now to recognize and thank my amazing Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted and his wife Tina! Would you both please stand?

Jon is doing transformational things for our state through InnovateOhio, whose mission is to look at every state service through the eyes of our customers—Ohio citizens and our job creators. InnovateOhio will take a leading role in technology projects across the state. It will coordinate projects across our administration to use data to change the way we solve problems. Already, InnovateOhio is working to better collect and use data across agencies in important areas involving the opioid crisis, workforce development, and children's initiatives.

Let's talk about a few more areas where we must invest. We need to invest more in our great state parks, preserves, and natural areas. These God-given gifts are such an important part of what makes Ohio so special and unique and wonderful.

Our wildlife is on the rebound.

I'm told it will be a great year to catch walleye on Lake Erie!

And, we are seeing more and more magnificent bald eagles.

We have so much to appreciate. And we need to support and expand efforts that are working to preserve and protect our state's natural wonders—from Lake Erie to all our lakes and rivers. But, at the same time, we face still some significant challenges.

Water is vital to us wherever we live. From aging infrastructure to failing septic systems to nutrient pollution to threats of lead contamination, communities throughout Ohio face different and unique water problems.

The Western Lake Erie Basin has been especially hard hit by algae blooms. We remember the 2014 water crisis when half-a-million Toledo residents couldn't use their water. And, we've heard from charter boat captains who have said that during blooms, they have to travel farther and farther out into the water because the Lake was so thick and green, it was almost like pea soup!

Our water problems have accumulated over many years, and it will take a dedicated, long-term commitment to achieve real solutions to protect Ohio's water.

Mr. President, I greatly commend the work that you and this chamber have undertaken to help clean up and protect Lake Erie. I look forward to working with you to fund the objectives of Senate Bill 2 to save this jewel of Ohio. And that is why—through the budget that I will submit to you in a few days—we will create a new fund, called the “H2-Ohio Fund,” to invest in targeted solutions to ensure safe and clean water all across the State of Ohio.

We cannot continue to lurch from water crisis to water crisis, and this fund will give us the ability to plan and develop long-lasting solutions. The right thing to do is often not the easy thing to do, and this will not be easy—nor will it be inexpensive. But, the cost of doing this now—the right way—will be far lower than the cost of not doing it at all.

We must make a real commitment not only to water quality, but to all our natural resources. Mr. Speaker, I share your interest in making sure that the air that we breath is as clean as it can be. I look forward to working with you and all the members of the General Assembly on an all-of-the-above energy strategy for our state that not only will ensure that Ohio's economy remains competitive, but that also generates clean electricity that lights our homes and powers our businesses.

And Leader Sykes and Leader Yuko—I enjoyed sitting down and sharing breakfast with you and your leadership teams recently and hearing about the issues that are important to you and your caucuses. I know we will find many areas of common ground and many things to work on together.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Members of the General Assembly—we are poised to lead a new Ohio renaissance—a rebirth of our great state—by facing the problems we have put off for far too long and tackling our challenges head-on!

My greatest desire is to work hand-in-hand with each one of you to address our unfinished business. I know that through our Ohio grit and determination—and by undertaking bold, daring, and transformational efforts—we will move Ohio forward!

In my inaugural address, I spoke of the optimism with which my parents and grandparents lived their lives and how my grandfather planted trees well into his 80s, knowing he wouldn't see them grow big and tall. Yet, he did it, nonetheless.

On the eve of my inauguration as your Governor, Fran and I and some of our children and grandchildren planted another tree on our farm. That tree is a symbol of our optimism, of our

commitment to and our abiding faith in the future of this state, and of our sincerest belief that through our actions now and through our investments today—we will change lives.

My dear friend and former colleague the late Governor George Voinovich was also very much an optimist. Fran and I learned so much from George and Janet when I served as his Lieutenant Governor and later alongside him in the U.S. Senate. And so, with them in my heart and mind today, I would like to conclude my first State of the State address with the closing line of Governor Voinovich's final State of the State address. His uplifting, optimistic words still ring so very, very true today:

“With God’s help and [with] all of us working together, the sun will always shine brightly over this great state of ours—‘beautiful Ohio.’”

Thank you.