



**Gov. John R. Kasich's State of the State Address
Westerville, Ohio
Tuesday, March 6, 2018**

SPEAKER ROSENBERGER: The House will come to order. I want to take the opportunity, as we gather here today, to express my sincere gratitude to the city of Westerville and Otterbein University for welcoming the General Assembly and the Governor here this evening. I also want to make sure we give you a great round of applause for the great welcome you've all given us and the entire General Assembly.

(Applause)

You have truly been gracious hosts, and I look forward to beginning a very impactful and important night in Ohio's history with you all. I also want to particularly thank my friends, Representatives Anne Gonzales and Rick Carfagna, who represent parts of Westerville in the House, as well as Senator Kevin Bacon. You all represent your districts with distinction and honor, and incredible passion and integrity, and I want to thank you all for the work you've put in to make this night such a success.

Tonight, Ohio gathers in Westerville, and I can tell you, we are Westerville Strong.

(Applause)

I just wanted to take the opportunity and a moment to recognize the men and women who put themselves in harm's way – to keep us safe. Just a few weeks ago, of course, the world, as well as Ohio, came together as we took the time to honor Officers Anthony Morelli and Eric Joering, for their

service to this community. And while the tragedy shook us all to our core, it reminded us of the true value of the true heroes who put themselves in the line of duty, who make sure they protect our communities and keep us safe.

And so tonight, I want to take the opportunity, if you're a member of our armed forces or a representative of our police and first responder services, and you're in the audience, please stand and receive our warm welcome and appreciation for your support and your help.

(Applause)

Again, thank you for your service. Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my distinct honor and great pleasure to introduce to you tonight, my good friend, the President of the Ohio Senate, Larry Obhof.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT OBHOF: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Is there a quorum of the Senate present? The Chair recognizes the President Pro Tempore, Senator Peterson.

SENATOR PETERSON: Mr. President, a quorum of the Senate is present.

PRESIDENT OBHOF: Is there a quorum of the House present? The Chair recognizes Speaker Pro Tempore, Representative Schuring.

REPRESENTATIVE SCHURING: Mr. President, a quorum of the House is present.

PRESIDENT OBHOF: A quorum of the 132nd General Assembly being present, this joint session will now come to order.

We invite our guests to please rise as we open with prayer. We will be led in prayer this evening by Pastor James Meacham, Chaplain of the Westerville Division of Police.

(Prayer by Pastor Meacham)

PRESIDENT OBHOF: Thank you Pastor. I'd ask everyone to please remain standing for the presentation of the colors by the Westerville Division of Police Honor Guard, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Presentation of Colors)

(Pledge of Allegiance)

PRESIDENT OBHOF: Thank you, please be seated. Ladies and gentlemen, it is now my distinct honor and pleasure to present the Governor of the great State of Ohio, John Kasich.

GOVERNOR KASICH: Thank you very much.

GOVERNOR KASICH: Well, I want to thank the General Assembly. Of course, my great friend, Cliff Rosenberger, and Larry Obhof, the Senate President, Lieutenant Governor of the state of Ohio, Mary Taylor, and my Cabinet who was all about Westerville today. And I want to thank, of course, Otterbein University. I used to run on your track. I still will. So thank you for allowing us to be here, and President Krendl, who hosted us tonight. And how about just a little bit of appreciation for my family -- my wife Karen, and my daughters Emma and Reese.

You know, I wanted to come to Westerville for several reasons. One, I wanted to thank the people of Westerville for the kindness and the support that you have shown me over so many decades, and to show respect for a town that exemplifies the great towns all across our country where people come together and celebrate the best in us.

I've been here for such a long time that I can remember when we had more gravel roads than we had paved roads, and it was a wonderful town. I would occasionally -- with my wife -- we would walk into Westerville and just would have a great time and visit the quaint shops which are -- many of them are still here. In fact, the pharmacy where I still go -- it's known as the Uptown Pharmacy. I have changed its name to the uptight pharmacy and I go there quite often.

And right across the street is a flower shop. And every time I get there, of course, it's filled with flowers. And I walk in the door and I say, "Hey, do you sell any flowers here?" And they laugh and they roll their eyes, and then I buy some. But I never buy them on the holidays or when flowers are expected. I buy them when I want to give a rose or a daisy to somebody as a way of saying you're special and I love you. And so I've stayed connected here for such a long time, and things were going really great. But as we heard the minister say here a few minutes ago, a few weeks ago something unfolded that none of us who had ever lived in Westerville could ever have imagined. And that was the killing of two great police officers, Eric Joering and Anthony Morelli. Great men. This town came together to honor them in a way -- well, to tell you the truth, I talked to a guy in Germany soon after the shootings -- and he told me -- he said, we have been following it even over here. It did spread worldwide.

And the reaction here was remarkable, I suppose, unless you really understand Westerville. Yes, it's gotten bigger, but it's still a small town at heart. And today, if you go around in the city, people will not take those blue ribbons down. No matter how much people say it's time to move on, people will not take those ribbons down. And the merchants now are flying the flag with the blue stripe, and it has been an amazing outpouring, and we're never going to be the same.

But at the same time that we in Westerville -- that we mourn together, we also celebrate together. But when I think about those blue ribbons, and if you drive through the city of Westerville at night, dotting the landscape, there are blue lights on porch houses. Blue lights in a constant recognition for not just the officers who died, but the fact that we all realize that these first responders are our American heroes, aren't they? God bless those families.

Now, I don't know about you, but this is one of the craziest times in this country I've ever seen in my lifetime. I have friends that will tell me that they will not watch more than five minutes of the news. There are people, families, that have split up over arguments of politics. And when we see all these things, these tragedies, crazy things happening all over our country. And so, therefore, I think it is a great time to reflect. Because in uncertain times, we reflect, and I just want us to go back for a moment to those days when many of us were in college. Do you remember being in the dorm? Do you remember late at night when you would look at your friends and you would say, "What's life all about? Why are we here? What is our purpose? What is my responsibility as a human being?"

You know, we do it back when we were in college, but we even do it today in times of nostalgia, in times of alarm, at times when we are with special people. Late at night we get into a discussion about this.

And, you know, from the beginning of time -- the beginning of time, man has asked that question. "Why? What about us? What are we supposed to do?" And I want to think about the philosophers who have spent time thinking about this question.

Aristotle and Plato. Let's go back for a second to the eleventh grade or even when we were working our way through school. They talked about the ever-lasting time of the human soul. It was an uplifting thought for Aristotle and Plato.

Or how about Jean-Jacques Rousseau? Jean-Jacques Rousseau was kind of the inspiration and the underpinning of the French Revolution.

Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche explored the dark side of human nature, and some have argued that he was an inspiration for the rise of the Nazis.

And Albert Camus, the existentialist. If I were to go around this theater tonight and ask people, "What is the definition of existentialism?" I don't think we would ever reach a point where we could all agree. But Camus was a great one, along with Kierkegaard. And then there was John Locke. John Locke, who believed in natural law, someone with the goodness of man. And many people say that John Locke had a profound influence during the writing of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. So those philosophers have always stood out for me, but I also have studied the theologians.

St. Augustine. Let me tell you what I like best about Augustine. Augustine knew that he had to turn himself over to God, but he said, not yet, because I'm having too good of a time, and I don't want to cut my fun time short by having to follow you. And it was a battle of his wills where he finally became one of the greatest saints in the history of the world.

And then there was Thomas Aquinas. And Thomas Aquinas -- St. Thomas Aquinas was a man who said for the young people to be here tonight, "Faith and reason, they're inseparable." Not just faith, blind faith, and not just reason as we saw from philosophers, but faith and reason can help human beings chart a course for a better tomorrow.

And then we get to Martin Luther. Now, you know, Martin Luther was such a controversial guy. He pounded his thesis on the church door. And he challenged the entire church, the Church of Rome. And he said that the Church of Rome had become corrupt. And as a result of that, they put a bounty on his head, and he had to flee for his life. But, today, he stands out as one of the great of all time.

And then one of my heroes, William Wilberforce. He was a man that put faith into action. My wife and my daughters were in London, and they visited Westminster Abbey. You see, Wilberforce was a guy who said that we need to end the slave trade in Great Britain, that we need to bring manners back to Great Britain, that we need a new day where we learn how to respect one another. And Wilberforce fought over many, many years. He lost his life because of this. He wore himself completely out.

My daughters, when they were in Westminster Abbey, they took a picture of the portrait and the statue that I have on my phone to this very day. So, you know, when we think about the meaning of life, there's two ways really -- maybe just -- no more than two, but two the way I think about it, and those are the humanists.

The humanists in our country are the ones who have charted a course based on reason -- human reason. And they wake up every day with a goal. Their goal is to improve the world. Their goal is to make the world a better place.

But these secular humanists follow that code, and they do great. And many of my friends are secular humanists, and I respect them for it.

But as for me, and maybe for some of us, we need to go deeper. We need to have a more permanent compass. And I want to suggest this to you. Think about the culture of today. Think of how fast it moves. Think about the addiction to the smartphone. Think about the fads. Think about the currents of our culture, the currents of life that change so fast and whip us like a flag on a very windy day.

You see, those currents can throw us off. Oh, I can tell you they absolutely can throw me off, and have. Because of that, I've concluded that human reason is imperfect. It just doesn't work. It can only take us so far from when the winds of change can move us off course and we can find ourselves lost.

You know, for many years now, 30, 40 years, I've been studying and thinking and observing and trying to figure out my purpose. Here's the very interesting thing. Christians, Jews, and Muslims all share a similar view of creation. Let me say that one more time. Our friends of the Islamic faith, our friends who invest in Judaism and Christians today share a similar view of creation.

And I'll tell you what the view is. It's that life is unique, that life is a reflection of our creator. And when I say that life is unique, when we think about all that we see -- and we're just about to see the peepers emerge in the ponds here in another couple weeks or the beautiful wildlife. Everything that we can see, the deer, all the things that bring us great -- so great joy, it's life. But we, human beings, created by the Lord, we're unique and we are made in our creator's image. That's what the theologians say, and I buy it.

And as a result of the fact that we are all made in the image of our creator, everyone deserves respect. Regardless of race, creed, appearance, our station in life, we all deserve respect because we are all created and made in the image of that creator -- of our creator.

And when we're made in God's image, there's a natural pull to all of us to reflect the traits of our creator's character. Think about it. Because we know Him, we know what His character is. We know what His values are. And, folks, these are not these hot-button issues that we yell and scream at each other about. Those hot-button issues in many ways have driven the young away from these kinds of considerations.

Let me tell you what I think these issues are, and I'm sure you have some, because I certainly don't know them all, but let's start with love. You know, and love is not that gooey emotion that we can see on a movie screen. Love is our ability to be able to do something for somebody else hoping they might do it for us, but we're willing to pay a price for the good to help somebody achieve a better life and goodness, even if we don't receive anything in return.

You know, it's been said that you should love your neighbor the way you want your neighbor to love you. But how about just loving your neighbor because it's just the right thing to do?

Compassion. When we slow down -- and we move so fast. I move so fast all the time, but when we slow down and we see somebody who's disabled, when we see somebody, some children, they don't have very nice clothes on. Their shoes are not very nice. Some of them go to the bus stop in the

winter and their coats are so thin, like newspaper, but we can see them. And when we slow down and we stop, we try to put ourselves in their shoes and say, what's their lives like? And how can I be sensitive to who they are as a human being? Yes, compassion is so critical.

Humility. It's been written that humility is the key that unlocks the universe. Boy, is that a tough one, huh? Because then life is not just about you. In fact, what humility does -- and this is a really hard thing. It means that when you look at somebody who may even be in a lower station than you, you ascribe to them greatness -- greatness that surpasses your own.

The issue of forgiveness. I'll never forget in that church down in South Carolina when the woman who was in that church where they broke in and gunned the parishioners down, she went the next day and saw the person who did it and said, "I forgive you." It took me a long time to forgive the man who killed my parents in a drunk-driving accident. Forgiveness is so hard. It's so hard because we feel aggrieved, and we're in search of something, a payback or justice. But forgiveness is something we need to do because it's what we expect to get sometime in our existence.

And then there's responsibility. Personal responsibility. You know what? When you have a gift, you can't bury it. When you have a gift, you have to use it because you're going to be held personally responsible for what you did with what you were given.

And there is the issue of justice. It's sort of connected to forgiveness, in a way. We're all in search of justice all the time. And sometimes, here, we find it. But I believe that we will find perfect justice on the other side of the grave, but we should strive for it here, all of us. And we know what justice is when we're connected to the thoughts about our creator, but ultimately it's up to him.

And I've mentioned respect for others. Because we're all made in that image and personal responsibility -- you know, what it really gets down to is we need to live a life, all of us, a little bigger than ourselves. Live a life a little bigger than ourselves. And you know what it's all about is human connectedness, that we're connected to one another. When the police officers in Westerville were killed, then somebody who lived up near Lake Erie lost a little bit of themselves. When a little boy drifts ashore on a raft from a foreign country and dies on the beach, we all lose a piece of ourselves.

So these values, I must say, I believe are written on our hearts. They're instinctive. I have concluded they are written on our hearts. And let's think about that for a second. Particularly in times of trial.

Do you remember the flooding in Houston, Texas? Do you remember that gang of people that took those little dinghies and they floated those dinghies down the flood-driven streets of Houston, plucking people out of trees and off of their roofs and out of their homes and saving their lives? They had no idea who those people were. And they came from Louisiana, as I recall. And they said, "We're here to save and to serve and to help." Wow. It was just so cool. And I saw it, and we talked about it – our friends talked about it. Or in Florida, with the flooding and the hurricanes. We see how people will help one another in the middle of a tragedy.

How about in Puerto Rico? There's a great chef, Cliff – you and I like this guy. His name is José Andrés. He left his business behind and went to Puerto Rico and served millions of meals. We had people from Ohio that went there. I saw the guys from AEP saying, yeah, got to leave my family because somebody's got to go down there and do something.

Or in Las Vegas, when a man stood in a hotel room high above the ground and opened fire on people who had gone to a concert with their spouses and their friends to just escape the hum-drum or the tension and problems of life. And while those shots were firing? Could you do this? I don't know what I could do. But people jumped in front of people they didn't know and took the bullets themselves. It was just amazing what they were willing to do for somebody they [didn't now] – human instinct. The values are written on our hearts.

And I don't need to tell you about Parkland, do I? Those students are incredible down there. And how about those teachers? Some of whom died because they put themselves in front of the gunman. Oh, those kids are etched in our minds forever. They're going to be great leaders tomorrow. And even in our state, in Chardon, kids died. The gunman opened fire, and teachers put their own lives at risk to chase that gunman out of the school. And the whole town mourned. And I think now the whole town reflects and the town has recovered, but it will never, ever forget what happened there that day.

You know, we have the opportunity to let these values I spoke of come alive in all of us. They can guide our work and our lives. You know, think about it. You got to make a decision. Am I going to quit this job? Am I going to vote for this bill? Am I going to do this? Am I going to fire somebody? Whatever it is – whatever it is – if you go to those values, it allows you to see clearly, as a human

being, what your responsibility is. And when you act on the basis of those values, you'll never look back and you'll never have a regret. We will never have a regret if we look back and do that.

But it can come with a cost. It can come with a high cost when we act on the basis of these values because sometimes those values are at war with the world. I was watching a little thing yesterday on television with my wife, and Bobby Kennedy flashed onto the screen and announced in Indianapolis, "Tonight, Martin Luther King was assassinated." I think he probably knew what was coming, but he wouldn't deviate. He wouldn't change. Yes, he stuck to his values and paid the price.

Deitrich Bonhoeffer. This is a man who returned to Germany because he said, I could not be a pastor, being a German pastor, being in New York, where he had gone. He said, "I have to go back to Germany," where he was arrested for being engaged in a plot to kill Hitler. And they put him in prison, and they did not treat him well in prison. And right before the war ended, they escorted him from that prison, out to the gallows to hang him by the order of the top Nazi command. And as he went, he preached love to the guards. They said, "Truly, we lost an incredible human being."

Natan Sharansky, one of my favorites. He sat in the Soviet gulag. They said to him, "If you will just make a confession we will release you." Because he was protesting the fact that the Soviets would not release the Jews. And all he said was, "Let my people go." And they locked him in solitary confinement. And they went to him and said, "All you have to do is sign a little piece of paper saying that you had done something wrong, because after all, Galileo recanted." And Sharansky thought to himself, if they use Galileo against me, I will never let anybody use me to weaken somebody else. And he sat in that prison for a long time, until he was finally released because of the efforts of Ronald Reagan.

How about the Wells Fargo employee? This gets to where we live. Because we're not King or Bonhoeffer or Sharansky. How about that guy that worked for Wells Fargo? He said, "I'm not going to open any phony accounts for these customers that I have. I won't do it. I'm not going to do it. I'm not doing it because it isn't right and I don't care what they do," and they fired him. He was quoted in one story as saying that they had ruined his life. Did they really? We're thinking about him tonight. I'm going to track him down and call him, and I'm going to tell him about this.

Or how about the lady at HUD? You know, they're making all these massive cuts in the housing and urban development, and they're ordering all this fancy furniture. And this lady went to the tip line. She's been reassigned.

We love these people. Some of them could be us. They have the courage to live what they believed in the face of adversity. They have made an indelible impression. They've inspired us, and what they've done will never be -- will never, ever be forgotten.

So what about our policies and our values here in Ohio? I wanted to talk to you about those virtues and those values. And I don't know whether it was wittingly or unwittingly, but much of what we have done in the state I like to think is a reflection of these virtues and values I've talked about. And let's start for a second with healthcare. How does somebody go to work if they're not healthy? How does somebody go to work if they're sick? Somebody told me -- my wife told me yesterday that they had to check her ID and insurance card when she went to get some care, and she said, well, I mean, who would want to come in here and have this kind of care? They said, well, somebody's sister came in and pretended to be her. You know why she did that? She had no health insurance.

Now in Ohio we have lowered the number of people who are uninsured, and now people can get healthy and can get healthy in a creative way, thanks a lot to the efforts of my dear friend, Greg Moody. So healthcare has been an essential part of what we've done.

And because we've focused on healthcare, we have been able to develop the resources that deal with two other extremely vexing problems.

How about a shoutout to Kevin Love? You'll hear about this. He said in the middle of his basketball career he started to have a meltdown and a breakdown. The issue of mental health -- I said to you many years ago: you can't, if you have mental illness, be living in a jail or sleeping under a bridge. We have to treat you better.

And through the efforts of Tracy Plouck and the whole team, we've been doing much better with the issue of mental health. And by the way, with the help of you, the Legislature, we'll be able in the Capital Bill to rebuild central Ohio's mental health hospital to provide the best care for people who are in need. And you'll be seeing this soon. Okay?

And then we've had enough money to begin to deal with the problem of opiates. And we hear about it all the time. But I want to tell you just a couple short things. Because of all of our focus -- all of our focus, not me, all of us -- we now are ready to announce to all of you that because we have put into place guidelines that are tough and common sense, frankly, they're the best guidelines in America, thanks to you and this team over here. We this last year will see a 30 percent drop in the number of doses that are written, prescriptions for opiates in this state. A 30 percent drop.

We are now experiencing a six-year low in the number of prescribed-opiate deaths, and we've now begun to see heroin level off, more recovery beds. Still a long way to go. But I think we're making progress, ladies and gentlemen, because we want people who have these addictions to get their lives back because they have a lot to do, but we're starting to make progress. And you're going to spend a lot more years working on this, and I wish you all the best.

Pike County. Cliff Rosenberger has got a good heart. He brought a dozen 12, 13, and 14-year-old girls in to see me a couple months ago. They are experiencing the problem of addiction, but it's not their addiction. It's whoever in charge of them. Their mothers, their fathers, their caregivers, in and out of jail, addicted. And these young women were shell-shocked, and they were angry, and they were sad. And towards the end of the meeting -- and Cliff brought them to see me. I was so grateful that he would think I would care enough about them. And at the end of the meeting, one young woman who hadn't said anything, sitting next to somebody on the staff, because she knew the meeting was coming to an end, started to cry. It was a sad, quiet cry because she knew she was going to go back to that nightmare.

Well, working with Cliff and ultimately with Larry here, in a short period of time, and the staff, we're coming to the rescue of those kids, and not just those kids, but a number of others that live in Pike County by providing the kind of -- well, a safe space at the YMCA, counseling for all of them, a place they can go to be able to live a decent life and try to overcome some of these problems, and to have somebody they can talk to and trauma training for people in the community that can understand these are not bad kids, to listen to what they're going through. And we have the churches involved, and we have the community involved, and the state is involved, and ultimately the people in that county are beginning to say, we can do this. And I believe, if we can carry this out and have it be something that is sustaining in Pike County that can be spread across our state and across our

country, we can begin to deal with the problem of rural poverty that has nagged this country since Bobby Kennedy did his tour 50 years ago.

Developmental disabilities. We're mainstreaming kids now. And I remember being at OhioHealth announcing that we were going to get kids out of the sheltered workshop into places and businesses like Kroger or wherever. And mom and dad were sitting out there, and tears were flowing down their face because they thought their kid had a chance. Developmentally disabled are special. They have a special gift and a special way. We're giving them a chance. We're giving them a chance.

Criminal justice reform and prison reform. You know, I heard the other day -- and thank you, Legislature. The local judges now are not sending everybody to prison when they're a low offender. And I want to thank the judge, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, because we work with judges to bring rational thinking into this and to keep them in the local community where they can be rehabbed, get their life back, and the public can be safe. And Gary told me the other day, we have now the lowest entry into our state prisons in 27 years. It's starting to work. Gary came in to see me the other day. He looked so good, so fresh, so young. I said, what are you, getting Botox? What are you doing, Gary? He said, "No, Governor. I'm excited because I'm changing the world." Think about that for a second.

Human trafficking. Thanks, sweetie, for what you've done. Human trafficking. You know that this Highway Patrol -- they actually have seen people driving a truck, a big truck, and in the back of the truck curled up is a 12, 13, or 14-year-old girl who they're trying to ship off to the slave trade business.

And a lot of you have been involved. Teresa, thank you. Changing the laws, it's good.

Job creation. Why do we fight? And, look, Democrats, Republicans, it doesn't matter. We just have to have an environment where small businesses can work and where businesses can grow. And why? It's not because we're going to put some ad on television. It's for one reason. It's because when people have a job, they have dignity. And when they have dignity, they have confidence. And when they have confidence, they have hope. And when they have hope, it helps the whole family. It helps the whole community. It helps everybody. That's why we focused on it.

The environment. Hey, this is really cool. I'm going to announce a new state park. We were in the process. I think we've bought it now. Zehringer's told me 15 times. I hope we finally bought it. We're going to have a new state park, and you're going to be the ones to be able to expand it to the largest state park in Ohio. I hope some of you will come out when we dedicate it. It's going to be called the Jesse Owens State Park, after that great Ohioan who stood up to Hitler and came home with a gold medal.

There's more here, but, you know, education reform and you know how important it is to give kids skills. The workforce – thank you to members who serve on the Workforce Board. People, things are moving so fast, we can't leave them behind. We can't let people lose their jobs and have nowhere to go. We have to give them the skills they need.

And there's so much more to do. You know, education, workforce, addiction, infant mortality, poverty. We just can't get it all, and we can't get it all right. But I believe that because we have been faithful to practicing these values that I have talked about earlier, I believe the state of Ohio is stronger today than it's been in a generation. We are proud to be Ohioans. We are more hopeful. We are more united. And we have set a course for others to follow. Ohio is back, and Ohio is strong again, ladies and gentlemen.

People say, what are you proud of? I said, I'm proud of the fact that we're up in employment, but I'm also proud that we didn't leave anybody behind. Oh, yeah. We can't do it all. We just can't. We tried to treat everybody special. Now, you know, we all fail. I like to say I'm just a slob trying to get through, but I think there's a way back. The problem we run into is speed and haste and ego and all these things, they obscure these values. They distract us, and there are consequences. And everybody in America wants to talk about the failure of the political system. Again, I'll mention that at the end, but let me say just this. How about the business world? How about Wells Fargo? How about Equifax? How about Volkswagen where they lied and distorted and tried to cheat people in terms of the kind of emissions and they just made it all up? It's just dead wrong.

In sports, where if you had a brain injury before the league and the union made an agreement, your people are out. Mike Webster lived in a car as the center for the Pittsburgh Steelers. There's so much pain out there. Can't we take care of those people whose brains were injured so that they and their families don't have to be left alone? And the NCAA scandal that we read about every day,

it's -- what's happened over there? Hollywood, harassment. I'm not going to say a word. It screams at us every day.

And the media, which I so much admire and believe we need, when they turn to hits and clicks for money, they lower the bar. And religion, division, politics in the pulpit. We're preaching the thumb of God coming out of the sky to judge you and condemn you. We've have driven young people away. We need to bring them back because they yearn to believe in something.

And in politics -- you know, the worst thing in life is not to lose an election. The worst thing in life is to serve yourself instead of others. I have to remind myself of that all the time. But we -- when we slow down and we listen, we can be better, can't we? We can go back to what we know mom and dad taught us was the way to live our lives. And my hope is in the better part of each of us as we slow down.

We don't have to go win gold medals. We just do little things that can matter. So the new CEO of the Cleveland Clinic, one of the jewels of our state. This man was in Europe. He moved to Boston. He went to Harvard. He is a doctor. He was rising. He had prestige and power at Harvard. And Toby Cosgrove, at the Cleveland Clinic, started recruiting him to go to the Cleveland Clinic. And people in Boston said, what, are you crazy? You're going to leave Harvard and Boston to go where? To the Cleveland Clinic? And this went on for years. One day he came for a visit. He told me this himself. He came for a visit. He was walking down the hallway with an escort. A simple escort. Just a simple guy trying to take him down, help him navigate the hallways. And the escort sees a woman who's confused, bewildered, and lost. The escort says to the doctor, "Doctor" -- the big-time doctor from Harvard. He says, "Will you just wait here? I have to go help this woman." And he took that woman down the hallway, found the place where she was supposed to be. And the doctor said, "It was at that moment I knew that I was leaving Harvard and moving to Cleveland because that's the kindness that's so compelling. I believe in what I have seen." And he's now the new CEO of the Cleveland Clinic because of one escort's moment of kindness.

I was at a restaurant the other day and this young kid was overhearing me preaching, you know. He said he was a bartender, and the man had one beer, he had a second beer, and he was going to have a third beer. And he mentioned to this young man -- he said, "I think I'm going to probably just kill myself." And the young man called the manager and said, you know, "The man is saying he's going to

go out and kill himself." And the manager went and got the police and they came in, and they took care of the guy. And the police officer came back to the young 23 year old and said, "Young man, I can't prove it, but because you said something, you did something, and you saw something, you saved that man's life."

Or how about last year when we gave that Courage Award to that bus driver? Do you remember that bus driver? He was the guy driving the bus and he had a bus full of people. And he saw somebody getting ready to jump off a bridge. He stopped the bus, got out of the bus, talked the guy off the bridge, and saved his life.

Westerville, what are we supposed to do? Mentor somebody. By the way, we've mentored 85,000 kids in the state. Go tell them what they can be. Encourage them. Tell them they can be something special. Stand against drug abuse. Just start talking about it even to the young people you don't know or somebody who's just lost their job. Just put your arm around them. Fix your school. Fight poverty. Make a donation. You know, how about on our street where that great guy, Frank Schreck, we were going to give a donation. My wife and kids were going to go make a donation to the food pantry in Westerville. I thought the porch was going to break as the neighbors had put so much food on the top of the porch for those people who are hungry.

Visit the sad and the lonely. And just don't visit them right after the accident, because people forget. The little things can really matter. And I believe that the future of our country rests on us. Not the governor, not the president, not the big shots. It's on us. And if there's anything we've seen in Westerville, that when we are together, we unleash a power that can change everything. You see, the hope is in us. It's in us.

Now, what I'm really excited about are the Millennials. I keep talking about the Gen-Xers and the Millennials. And one of these news commentators on Sunday said, "You know, John, I'm a Gen-Xer." I said, "That's fake news if I've ever heard it." But these Millennials have learned from our mistakes. They're more inspired by meaning than they are by money. They see community more than personal gain. They have a global view but a local mission.

Florida, Parkland, those kids. These Millennials and these Gen-Xers, they want to work on the art of the impossible, not the art of the possible. I was interviewed by one the other day, and she kept

saying, well, "Why can't you just do this?" And I'm like, well, you know -- she goes, "Why can't you do this?" No matter what I said, she said, "Why can't you do this?" I love that. I admire it. Why can't we do the impossible? Because I believe that we can.

So to talk about those Millennials, I've got some Courage Awards. The last three that I will give out as the Governor of the state and would encourage you to continue this, if you could. We have a woman here by the name of Nina Schubert. She's a freshman at Kent State. She must be like 18 years old. 18, Nina? 19 years old. She's getting up there. She's 19 years old. She struggled with mental illness and eating disorders throughout her lifetime. At Kent State, she founded the Nightingale Project. You know what it does? It promotes understanding of these issues and it helps others with their mental health to realize their worth and their importance. She's an inspiring example of leadership at a young age on such a difficult issue. You know what? We love you, Nina, for the fact that you're stepping up and stepping out and helping people to get their lives back. Come on up and get a Courage Award, please.

Congratulations. Thank you.

Okay. Now we have -- this guy is -- I don't know what to say. He's ten. Were you the one giving me the high-five before, Mikah? Well, let me tell you. He's from Ashland, and he was homeless for much of his life. His grandma -- okay. He's 10 years old. He likes an X-Box, Patton. He likes an X-Box. Okay. We all do, right? 300 bucks for that X-Box. You know what he told his grandmother? "Take the \$300, Grandma, and buy blankets for the people who are in the homeless shelter so they can be warm." And he gave up his X-Box.

Ten years old. Is that amazing? A great example of compassion, respect for the needs of others, at ten years old. You're the man, Mikah. You're the man!

And then, finally, Chris Hole. She's a hospice nurse. Talk about a gift. She's a hospice nurse from Miamisburg. She was in Vegas. Shots rang out. She didn't run. She started administering CPR on the people who had been wounded. She helped load people into the ambulances, and she said in the middle of it, "It was a sea of blood, but I couldn't go anywhere because this was what I was called to do and this is my job."

You're a thousand times better than I am. And we so appreciate what you did, for you and for so many of the other people that had bravery at the most difficult time that any human being could experience. Chris Hole, ladies and gentlemen.

Folks, I'm going to close on a personal note. A story that really no one has heard before. You know, I graduated from Ohio State and I went looking for a job. Downtown, nobody has hiring -- me. They may have been hiring, but they weren't hiring me. And I looked across the street from over there where, you know, the Huntington building is, and there was the Statehouse. I thought I had nothing to lose. I'd never, ever dreamt that I could get a job, but I went over there. And some of you who have been around a long time remember a man I met. His name was Salty Lewis. Remember him? Salty had a big smile and he had a twinkle in his eyes just like my dad. And he said, "Kid, I'll hire you here, and you'll write resolutions about my Aunt Gertrude or whoever else comes in the door, but I'll hire you."

And I went back the next week, and he said -- he said, "Young man, there is an opening up there for the -- in the Ohio Senate for the Republicans. It's an intern program. They just started it." I think they only have one intern, no staff, one intern. "Why don't you go up and interview for it?" And I did.

And, miraculously, I got the job. And I went to my first day of work, and I ran into my great friend, Bob Blair. I love Bob. He's like a brother to me. I don't know if Don Thibaut's here and some people who have been around me for a thousand years, but Bob is one of them. And we had a great time. And, Bob, you didn't know this, but every once in a while I would sneak out of my little cubbyhole and I would go up on that second floor where the Governor's office was. I didn't really want to be governor, but it was a world I never saw, I never understood. I kind of wanted to figure it out. And I'd look in that glass. I saw Gardner doing that the other day. He wanted something from Lake Erie. I was looking in that glass, right? And then every once in a while I'd work up the nerve -- because, you know, I'm a shy person -- and I'd walk in there. And there was a lady that worked in there by the name of Betty Pappas. And I thought she ran the governor. And I would see her. She'd say, what do you want? And then we'd laugh together and then I would leave. It was just another world and I wanted to understand it.

You know, one night I went down to that door and I looked, and my name was on it. What a journey. My family, my friends, the people who have surrounded me, my team, all I've ever tried to do is to try to lift myself as far as I could go to meet the honor of that office. Any of the offices I've ever held, to lift myself, to reach a little higher so I could be worthy of it. And this job, I've just done everything that I can do. I've done my best. We have to run through the tape. Make no mistake about it. We're not quitting until we turn off the lights because we have so many things to do. And, you know, we're going to run through the tape, but the race isn't over for us. We can't even see the finish line, it's so far in the future.

And to my friends, of course, my beloved family, and the team, together we have a world to change. God bless Westerville. God bless beautiful Ohio. And God bless the wonderful, beautiful, bountiful United States of America. Thank you all very much.

PRESIDENT OBHOF: Please remain in your seats for the retirement of the colors.

(Colors Retired.)

PRESIDENT OBHOF: This session will be concluded. I vote that we adjourn seeing no objection, this session of the General Assembly is adjourned.

