

President Donald J. Trump's 2026 State of the Union Address

- 1 Male Speaker: Mr. Speaker, the President of the United States. (cheers)
- 2 (applause)
- 3 Speaker Johnson: Members of Congress, I have the high privilege and distinct honor of presenting to you the President of the United States.
- 4 (applause)
- 5 (members chanting "USA")
- 6 The President: Well, thank you very much, everybody. It's really an honor. Speaker Johnson, Vice President Vance,
- 7 First Lady of the United States.
- 8 Second lady of the United States.
- 9 Members of Congress and my fellow Americans, our nation is back, bigger, better, richer
- 10 and stronger than ever before.
- 11 Less than five months from now, our country will celebrate an epic milestone in American history,
- 12 the 250th anniversary of our glorious American independence.
- 13 This July 4th, we will mark two and a half centuries of liberty and triumph, progress and freedom,
- 14 in the most incredible and exceptional nation ever to exist on the face of the Earth. And you've seen nothing yet.
- 15 We're going to do better and better and better. This is the golden age of America.
- 16 (applause)
- 17 When I last spoke in this chamber 12 months ago, I had just inherited a nation in crisis

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- 18 with a stagnant economy, inflation at record levels, a wide open border, horrendous recruitment
- 19 for military and police, rampant crime at home and wars and chaos all over the world.
- 20 But tonight, after just one year, I can say with dignity and pride that we have achieved a transformation
- 21 like no one has ever seen before and a turnaround for the ages. It is indeed a turnaround for the ages.
- 22 (applause)
- 23 And we will never go back to where we were just a very short time ago. We're not going back.
- 24 Today, our border is secure. (Audience chants "USA")
- 25 Thank you. Today our border is secure, our spirit is restored, inflation is plummeting,
- 26 incomes are rising fast, the roaring economy is roaring like never before
- 27 and our enemies are scared. Our military and police are stacked and America is respected again, perhaps like never before.
- 28 After four years in which millions and millions of illegal aliens poured across our borders totally unvetted and unchecked,
- 29 we now have the strongest and most secure border in American history by far.
- 30 In the past nine months, zero illegal aliens have been admitted to the United States.
- 31 But we will always allow people to come in legally, people that will love our country
- 32 and will work hard to maintain our country.
- 33 The flow of deadly fentanyl across our border is down by a record 56 percent in one year.
- 34 And last year the murder rate saw its single largest decline in recorded history.

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- 35** This is the biggest decline, think of it, in recorded history -- the lowest number in over 125 years.
- 36** Year 1900, in fact substantially before my wonderful father --
- 37** I had a wonderful father, Fred -- before he was born, substantially before he was born.
- 38** That's a long time ago. He wouldn't like me to say that. But that's a long time ago.
- 39** The Biden administration and its allies in Congress gave us the worst inflation in the history of our country.
- 40** But in 12 months, my administration has driven core inflation down to the lowest level in more than five years.
- 41** And in the last three months of 2025, it was down to 1.7 percent.
- 42** Gasoline, which reached a peak of over \$6 a gallon in some states.
- 43** Under my predecessor, it was quite honestly a disaster; it is now below \$2.30 a gallon in most states
- 44** and in some places \$1.99 a gallon. And when I visited the great state of Iowa
- 45** just a few weeks ago, I even saw \$1.85 a gallon for gasoline.
- 46** Mortgage rates are the lowest in four years and falling fast, and the annual cost of a typical new mortgage
- 47** is down almost \$5,000 just since I took office, one year.
- 48** And low interest rates will solve the Biden created housing problem, while at the same time
- 49** protecting the values of those people who already own a house that really feel rich
- 50** for the first time in their lives. We want to protect those values; we want to keep those values up. We're going to do both.
- 51** And we are going to keep it that way. The stock market has set 53 all-time record highs

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- 52** since the election. Think of that, one year -- boosting pensions, 401(k)s
- 53** and retirement accounts for the millions and millions of Americans are all gaining.
- 54** Everybody's up, way up. In four long years, the last administration got less than \$1 trillion
- 55** in new investment in the United States. And when I say less, substantially less. In 12 months,
- 56** I secured commitments for more than \$18 trillion pouring in from all over the globe.
- 57** Think of it, much less than \$1 trillion for four years versus much more than \$18 trillion for one year.
- 58** What a difference a president makes.
- 59** A short time ago we were a dead country, now we are the hottest country anywhere in the world,
- 60** the hottest.
- 61** As thousands of new businesses are forming and factories, plants and laboratories are being built, we have added
- 62** 70,000 new construction jobs in just a very short period of time. It's getting bigger and bigger and stronger.
- 63** Nobody can believe what they're watching. American oil production is up by more than 600,000 barrels a day
- 64** and we just received from our new friend and partner, Venezuela, more than 80 million barrels of oil.
- 65** American natural gas production is at an all-time high because I kept my promise to drill baby drill.
- 66** More Americans are working today than at any time in the history of our country.
- 67** Think about that, any time in the history of our country, more working today and 100 percent of all jobs
- 68** created under my administration have been in the private sector.

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- 69** We ended DEI in America.
- 70** (applause)
- 71** We cut a record number of job killing regulations and, in one year, we have lifted 2.4 million Americans,
- 72** a record, off of food stamps.
- 73** And for all of these reasons, I say tonight, members of Congress, the state of our Union is strong.
- 74** Our country is winning again. In fact, we're winning so much that we really don't know what to do about it.
- 75** People are asking me, please, please, please, Mr. President, we're winning too much.
- 76** We can't take it anymore. We're not used to winning in our country. Until you came along, we were just always losing,
- 77** but now we're winning too much. And I say no, no, no, you're going to win again.
- 78** You're going to win big; you're going to win bigger than ever. And to prove that point -- to prove that point,
- 79** here with us tonight is a group of winners who just made the entire nation proud.
- 80** The men's gold medal Olympic hockey team, come on in.
- 81** (applause)
- 82** (Audience chants "USA")
- 83** (applause)
- 84** Go ahead. (applause)
- 85** (Audience chants "USA")

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- 86** That's the first time I've ever seen them get up. And actually, not all of them did get up.
- 87** But they beat a fantastic Canadian team in overtime, as everybody saw -- as did the American women
- 88** who will soon be coming to the White House.
- 89** They were in the Oval Office before and I just want to say a second, very big congratulations to Team USA.
- 90** But I have to say that -- and I told them this and we took a vote of the team.
- 91** I said, anybody votes no, I'm not doing it. So they stood there and they weren't about to say no,
- 92** because I've never seen a goaltender play as well as goalie, Connor Hellebuyck.
- 93** Think of it, 46 shots on goal. And I asked him, the one shot, the one where you put your stick in the back
- 94** and it hit the neck of your stick and bounced off, do you practice that, or was that a little lucky?
- 95** He refused to answer that question. But I just want to tell you
- 96** that the members of this great hockey squad will be very happy to hear based on their vote and my vote,
- 97** and in this case, my vote was more important, that I will soon be presenting Connor
- 98** with our highest civilian honor, which we will be given and which has been given to many athletes over the years.
- 99** But when I say many, not too many, like 12. It's called the highest civilian honor in our country,
- 100** the Presidential Medal of Freedom.
- 101** Great athletes have gotten that, very great, the best and I thought he deserved it. And I did take a vote, every single one of them.
- 102** I said, I'm not giving it if anybody says no. And every single one of them rapidly put up their hand.

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- 103** So I want to thank you all. What a special job you did, what special champions you are.
- 104** Thank you very much.
- 105** I'm also pleased to say that the next time the Olympic torch is lit, it will be here in America for the 2028 Olympics
- 106** and it's the summer version right in Los Angeles. We're going to do a good job in Los Angeles.
- 107** And Los Angeles is going to be safe just like Washington DC is now one of the safest cities in the country.
- 108** And this year, and I must say, I got them both. I got them in my first term and I was disappointed
- 109** because I didn't think I'd be the president when this happened. But strange things took place and now
- 110** I've got them because I got the Olympics and I got the 2026
- 111** FIFA World Cup and I wanted to claim the 250th, but I didn't get away with that one.
- 112** I couldn't claim that one for myself, but we're getting the World Cup, so we have the World Cup and the Olympics coming
- 113** and that is exciting news.
- 114** So this will be a year to celebrate our country and the heroes who have kept it free, men like Buddy Taggart.
- 115** At age 17, Buddy volunteered to defend America in World War
- 116** II, serving in the Pacific under the great General Douglas MacArthur. He fought bravely in the famous
- 117** Battle of Manila, worked so hard. He was badly wounded and almost killed by enemy machine guns in Luzon.
- 118** And 81 years ago this month, he liberated the largest internment camp in the Philippines,
- 119** one of the largest anywhere in the world. But he earned many honors, including a Purple Heart and a Bronze

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- 120** Star, came home started a family and tonight he is in the gallery looking forward to July 4th, 2026, his 100th birthday.
- 121** So Buddy, you're a brave man and we salute you. Even in times of challenge, setback and immense heartache,
- 122** the spirit of 1776 has always shown through very brightly.
- 123** It was July 4th of last year when flood waters tore through a girls' summer camp in central Texas,
- 124** one of the worst things I've ever seen. I was there. Rising 26 feet in the matter of minutes,
- 125** tragically claiming many, many lives. You all remember that one. As the waters threatened to sweep her away, 11 year old
- 126** Millie Kate McClelland closed her eyes and prayed to God.
- 127** She thought she was going to die. Those prayers were answered when Coast Guard rescue swimmer
- 128** Scott Ruskin descended from a helicopter above. Nobody knew where he came from.
- 129** It was Scott's first ever rescue mission, a young guy, but very brave, very, very top, always top in his class.
- 130** And he lifted not just Millie Kate, but 164 others to safety.
- 131** People watched Scott from a distance and they couldn't believe what they were seeing. The winds were blowing, the rain was pouring,
- 132** everything was going and that rapid water, nobody's ever seen anything like it. They said, wow, that's something.
- 133** Tonight, Scott and Millie Kate are here together, reunited for the very first time.
- 134** Thank you, Scott, Millie Kate.
- 135** And Petty Officer Ruskin, I'm pleased to inform you that I am now awarding you the Legion of Merit
- 136** for extraordinary heroism, which is what it was, extraordinary heroism. Thank you.

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- 137** And I'd like to have the military aid to please come down
- 138** and take care of the service, military aid. Thank you very much. Take care of that very important service.
- 139** Thank you very much. From 1776 to today, every generation of Americans
- 140** has stepped forward to defend life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.
- 141** And they really doing it for the next generation, but now it's our turn. Together, we're building a nation where every child
- 142** has the chance to reach higher and go further, where government answers to the people,
- 143** not the powerful and where the interests of hardworking American citizens are always our first and ultimate concern.
- 144** That is the debt we owe to the heroes who came before us and that is the promise
- 145** we must keep to America for our 250th year.
- 146** Last year, I urged this Congress to begin the mission by passing the largest tax cuts in American history
- 147** and our Republican majorities delivered so beautifully. Thank you, Republicans.
- 148** All Democrats, every single one of them, voted against these really important
- 149** and very necessary massive tax cuts.
- 150** They wanted large scale tax increases to hurt the people instead.
- 151** But we held strong and with the Great Big, Beautiful Bill, we gave you no tax on tips,
- 152** no tax on overtime and no tax on Social Security for our great seniors.
- 153** And we also made interest on auto loans tax deductible -- the first time --

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- 154** but only if the car is made in America.
- 155** Recently in Pennsylvania, I met Megan Hemhauser, a devoted mom who home schools her children --
- 156** beautiful, two children -- during the day while waiting tables at night as her husband works overtime operating very heavy equipment.
- 157** Megan is here this evening and she's happy to tell you that she is so, so much richer
- 158** because, with no tax on tips, no tax on overtime and our expanded child tax credit
- 159** done again by Republicans, Megan and her husband will take home more than \$5,000 extra just for the year
- 160** cutting her tax bill in more than half.
- 161** Megan, please stand up. We're fighting for you, Megan. (applause)
- 162** Thank you. Thank you, Megan. We're fighting for you, Megan.
- 163** Under our bill parents like Megan can also activate their children's brand-new Trump Accounts and I didn't name it.
- 164** I didn't name it. I did not name that.
- 165** Nobody believes me, but I did not name it. It was named by a very tall man sitting right there in the third row.
- 166** Nice man, a good man. Tax free investment accounts for every American child.
- 167** This is something that's so special and has taken off and gone through the roof. Millions will be prefunded courtesy of the US Treasury
- 168** and private individuals like Michael and Susan Dell, who have donated \$6.25 billion to fund the Trump Accounts
- 169** for 25 million American children. (applause)
- 170** They're great people.

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- 171** You know, I asked Michael Dell, how do you make all that money? He said, well, I just sat in my dorm in school,
- 172** and I made computers and I'd sell them to people. And I just kept selling and selling and selling
- 173** and pretty amazing story. That's called the American Dream. He sold a lot of computers, a lot of those laptops.
- 174** So, I congratulate him on that, but I really thank him and Susan, as well as others like Brad Gerstner a very tremendous guy.
- 175** He was behind it right from the beginning, Brad Gerstner. Thank you, Brad.
- 176** So, with modest additional contributions, these young people's accounts could grow to over \$100,000
- 177** or more by the time they turn 18. Think of it, how much money is that for somebody that started with nothing?
- 178** Over \$100,000, could be much more than that. To make this investment in our children's future
- 179** go to TrumpAccounts.gov, TrumpAccounts.gov. And a lot of people are doing it.
- 180** That setting every record in the book. It's popular. They knew what was going to -- what it was going to take.
- 181** I'm so proud of them. I'm so proud of the people that got it started. Now it's just taken off. One of the primary reasons
- 182** for our country's stunning economic turnaround, the biggest in history where the Dow Jones broke 50,000
- 183** four years ahead of schedule and the S&P hit 7,000
- 184** where it wasn't supposed to do it for many years, were tariffs.
- 185** I used these tariffs, took in hundreds of billions of dollars to make great deals for our country,
- 186** both economically and on a national security basis. Everything was working well.
- 187** Countries that were ripping us off for decades are now paying us hundreds of billions of dollars.

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- 188** They were ripping us so badly, you all know that. Everybody knows it, even the Democrats know it,
- 189** they just don't want to say it. And yet these countries are now happy and so are we.
- 190** We made deals, the deals are all done and they're happy. They're not making money like they used to
- 191** but we're making a lot of money. There was no inflation, tremendous growth. And the big story was how Donald Trump
- 192** called the economy correctly and 22 Nobel Prize winners in economics didn't,
- 193** they got it totally wrong. They got it really wrong. And then just four days ago,
- 194** an unfortunate ruling from the United States Supreme Court, it just came down. It came down, very unfortunate ruling.
- 195** But the good news is that almost all countries and corporations want to keep the deal that they already made.
- 196** Right, Scott? Knowing that the legal power that I as president
- 197** have to make a new deal could be far worse for them. And therefore, they will continue to work
- 198** along the same successful path that we had negotiated before the Supreme Court's unfortunate involvement.
- 199** So, despite the disappointing ruling, these powerful country saving,
- 200** it's saving our country the kind of money we're taking in, peace protecting. Many of the wars I settled
- 201** was because of the threat of tariffs. I wouldn't have been able to settle them without them. Will remain in place under fully approved
- 202** and tested alternative legal statutes and they have been tested for a long time.
- 203** They're a little more complex, but they're actually probably better. Leading to a solution that will be even stronger than before.
- 204** Congressional action will not be necessary. It's already time tested and approved.

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- 205** And as time goes by, I believe the tariffs, paid for by foreign countries, will, like in the past,
- 206** substantially replace the modern-day system of income tax, taking a great financial burden off the people that I love.
- 207** Moving forward, factories, jobs, investment and trillions and trillions of dollars will continue
- 208** pouring into the United States of America because we finally have a president who puts America first.
- 209** I put America first. I love America.
- 210** For decades, before I came along, we had the exact opposite.
- 211** From trade to health care, from energy to immigration, everything was stolen and rigged in order to drain the wealth
- 212** out of the productive hardworking people who make our country great, who make our country run.
- 213** Under Biden and his corrupt partners in Congress and beyond, it reached a breaking point with the Green New Scam,
- 214** open borders for everyone. They poured in by the millions and millions from prisons,
- 215** from mental institutions. They were murderers, 11,888 murderers.
- 216** They came into our country; you allowed that to happen. And record-setting inflation that cost the typical family
- 217** \$34,000 in just a speck of time. Now the same people in this chamber
- 218** who voted for those disasters suddenly used the word affordability, a word --
- 219** they just used it. Somebody gave it to them, knowing full well that they caused
- 220** and created the increased prices that all of our citizens had to endure.
- 221** You caused that problem; you caused that problem.

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- 222** They knew their statements were a lie. They knew it. They knew their statements were a dirty, rotten, lie.
- 223** Their policies created the high prices. Our policies are rapidly ending them.
- 224** We are doing really well. Those prices are plummeting downward.
- 225** The price of eggs is down 60 percent.
- 226** Madam Secretary, thank you. The cost of chicken, butter, fruit, hotels, automobiles,
- 227** rent, is lower today than when I took office, by a lot. And even beef, which was very high,
- 228** is starting to come down significantly. Just hold on a little while, we're getting it down.
- 229** And soon you will see numbers that few people would think were possible to achieve just a short time ago.
- 230** Nobody can believe when they see the kind of numbers and especially energy, when they see energy going down to numbers like that.
- 231** They cannot believe it. It's like another big tax cut.
- 232** I'm also confronting one of the biggest rip-offs of our times, the crushing cost of health care, caused by you,
- 233** since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, sometimes referred to as Obamacare.
- 234** Big insurance companies got rich. It was meant for the insurance companies, not for the people.
- 235** With our government giving them hundreds and hundreds of billions of dollars a year
- 236** as their stock prices soared 1,000, 1,200, 1,400 and even 1,700 percent, like nothing else.
- 237** That's why I introduced the great health care plan. I want to stop all payments to big insurance companies
- 238** and instead, give that money directly to the people so they can buy their own health care,

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- 239** which will be better health care at a much lower cost.
- 240** In addition, my plan requires maximum price transparency.
- 241** That's a big deal. Sounds so simple, so big.
- 242** And I did that in my first term and the Democrats immediately terminated it with full knowledge
- 243** that they were doing a very bad thing for the people. Costs we're going to go way up and that's what happened. And now I'm bringing them way down on health care
- 244** and everything else. I'm also ending the wildly inflated cost of prescription drugs like has never happened before.
- 245** Other presidents tried to do it, but they never could. They tried. Most didn't try, actually, but they tried.
- 246** They said they tried. They couldn't do it. They didn't even come close. They were all talk and no action, but I got it done.
- 247** Under my just enacted Most Favored Nation agreements, Americans who have for decades paid
- 248** by far the highest prices of any nation anywhere in the world for prescription drugs
- 249** will now pay the lowest price anywhere in the world for drugs, anywhere, the lowest price.
- 250** So in my first year of the second term,
- 251** should be my third term, but strange things happen.
- 252** I took prescription drugs, a very big part of health care from the highest price in the entire world to the lowest.
- 253** That's a big achievement. The result is price differences of 300,
- 254** 400, 500, 600 percent and more, all available right now at a new website called trump.gov.
- 255** And I didn't name that one either, by the way.

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- 256** And here tonight is the very first customer ever to get that big discount, and it is big, Catherine Rayner.
- 257** For five years, she and her husband have struggled with infertility and they turned to IVF.
- 258** One drug has been costing Catherine \$4,000 to purchase.
- 259** But a few weeks ago, she logged on to the website and got that same drug that cost costs \$4,000,
- 260** got it for under \$500, a reduction of much more actually than \$3,500.
- 261** Catherine, we are all praying for you and you're going to be a great mom.
- 262** So now I'm calling on Congress to codify my Most Favored Nation program into law.
- 263** Now the one thing I'm not sure it matters because it's going to be very hard for somebody that comes along after me to say,
- 264** let's raise drug prices by 700 or 800 percent. But John and Mike, if you don't mind, codify it anyway.
- 265** They may do it. Codify it anyway. Thank you. Many Americans are also concerned
- 266** that energy demand from AI data centers could unfairly drive up their electric utility bills.
- 267** Tonight, I'm pleased to announce that I have negotiated the new Ratepayer Protection Pledge.
- 268** You know what that is. We're telling the major tech companies that they have the obligation to provide
- 269** for their own power needs. They can build their own power plants as part of their factory,
- 270** so that no one's prices will go up, and in many cases, prices of electricity will go down for the community and very substantially down.
- 271** This is a unique strategy never used in this country before. We have an old grid. It could never handle the kind of numbers,
- 272** the amount of electricity that's needed. So I'm telling them they can build their own plant. They're going to produce their own electricity.

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- 273** It will ensure the company's ability to get electricity while at the same time, lowering prices of electricity for you
- 274** and could be very substantial for all of your cities and towns. You're going to see some good things happen
- 275** over the next number of years. Another pillar of the American dream that has been under attack is homeownership.
- 276** With us tonight is Rachel Wiggins, a mom of two from Houston. She placed bids on 20 homes
- 277** and lost all of those bids to gigantic investment firms that bypassed inspection, paid all cash
- 278** and turned those houses into rentals, stealing away her American dream. She was devastated.
- 279** Stories like this are why last month I signed executive order to ban large
- 280** Wall Street investment firms from buying up in the thousands, single-family homes.
- 281** And now I'm asking Congress to make that ban permanent because homes for people -- really, that's what we want.
- 282** We want homes for people, not for corporations. Corporations are doing just fine, Rachel, thank you very much. Good luck with your home.
- 283** You'll get one soon.
- 284** We're also working to make it easier for Americans to save for retirement. And under this administration,
- 285** we will always protect Social Security and Medicare. They are not protecting it for our seniors.
- 286** We will always protect Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid.
- 287** Since I took office, the typical 401-K balance is up by at least \$30,000. That's a lot of money.
- 288** We have millions and millions of people, because the stock market has done so well, setting all those records. Your 401(k)s are way up.
- 289** Yet, half of all of working Americans still do not have access to a retirement plan with matching contributions from an employer.

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- 290** To remedy this gross disparity, I am announcing that next year, my administration will give these often forgotten
- 291** American workers, great people, the people that built our country, access to the same type of retirement plan
- 292** offered to every federal worker. We will match your contribution with up to \$1,000 each year,
- 293** as we ensure that all Americans can profit from a rising stock market. Let's also ensure that members of Congress
- 294** cannot corruptly profit from using insider information.
- 295** They stood up for that. I can't believe.
- 296** I can't believe it. Did Nancy Pelosi stand up, if she's here?
- 297** Doubt it. Pass the Stop Insider Trading Act without delay.
- 298** I wasn't sure if anybody, even on this side, was going to applaud for that. I'm very impressed. Thank you. I'm very impressed.
- 299** But when it comes to the corruption that is plundering -- really, it's plundering America.
- 300** There's been no more stunning example than Minnesota, where members of the Somali community
- 301** have pillaged an estimated \$19 billion from the American taxpayer. We have all the information and,
- 302** in actuality, the number is much higher than that. And California, Massachusetts, Maine
- 303** and many other states are even worse. This is the kind of corruption
- 304** that shreds the fabric of a nation, and we are working on it like you wouldn't believe.
- 305** So, tonight, although started four months ago, I am officially announcing the war on fraud
- 306** to be led by our great Vice President, JD Vance.

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- 307** (applause)
- 308** He'll get it done and, if we're able to find enough of that fraud,
- 309** we will actually have a balanced budget overnight. It'll go very quickly.
- 310** That's the kind of money you're talking about. We'll balance our budget.
The Somali pirates who ransacked Minnesota,
- 311** remind us that there are large parts of the world where bribery, corruption
and lawlessness
- 312** are the norm, not the exception. Importing these cultures through
unrestricted immigration
- 313** and open borders brings those problems right here to the USA. And it is
the American people who pay the price
- 314** in higher medical bills, car insurance rates, rent, taxes and perhaps most
importantly crime.
- 315** We will take care of this problem. We're going to take care of this
problem. We are not playing games.
- 316** Delilah Coleman was only five years old in June 2024
- 317** when an 18-wheel tractor-trailer plowed into her stopped car traveling at
60 miles an hour or more.
- 318** The driver was an illegal alien let in by Joe Biden and given a commercial
driver's license
- 319** by open borders politicians in California. Doctors said Delilah would never
be able to walk or talk,
- 320** have a good life. She wouldn't even be able to eat again. But against all
odds,
- 321** she is now in the first grade, learning to walk. And she's here this evening
with her dad Marcus,
- 322** a fantastic man. Delilah, please, you are a great inspiration. Please stand
up.
- 323** Thank you, Delilah. Many, if not most, illegal aliens do not speak English
and cannot read even the most basic road signs

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- 324** as to direction, speed, danger or location. That's why tonight I'm calling on Congress
- 325** to pass what we will call the Delilah Law, barring any state from granting commercial driver's licenses
- 326** to illegal aliens.
- 327** And yesterday, as you probably saw at the White House, I hosted a ceremony with Americans
- 328** who lost their treasured loved ones to the scourge of illegal immigration.
- 329** People came into our country -- how we allowed this to happen with our open borders. These are the Angel Moms and Families
- 330** that for decades our government betrayed and our media totally ignored -- totally.
- 331** It was terrible, hard to believe actually. In 2023, a 16-year-old high school cheerleader
- 332** named Lizbeth Medina was supposed to perform in her town's
- 333** Christmas parade, but she never arrived. Her mother Jacqueline went home to look for her
- 334** and she found her lying dead in a bathtub bleeding profusely after being stabbed 25 times.
- 335** Lizbeth's killer was a previously arrested illegal alien who had broken in and brutally --
- 336** just brutally extinguished the brightest light in her family's life, violently and viciously.
- 337** Her heartbroken mother is in the gallery to remind everyone in this chamber exactly why we are deporting illegal alien criminals
- 338** from our country at record numbers and we're getting them the hell out of here fast.
- 339** We don't want them.
- 340** Thank you very much, Jacqueline. Thank you. We can never forget that many in this room

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- 341** not only allowed the border invasion to happen before I got involved,
- 342** but indeed they would do it all over again if they ever had the chance. If they ever got elected, they would open up those borders
- 343** to some of the worst criminals anywhere in the world. The only thing standing between Americans
- 344** and a wide-open border right now is President Donald J. Trump and our great Republican patriots in Congress.
- 345** Thank you. Thank you.
- 346** As we speak, Democrats in this chamber have cut off all funding for the Department of Homeland Security.
- 347** It's all cut off. It's all cut off. They have instituted another Democrat shutdown,
- 348** the first one costing us 2 points on GDP. 2 points we lost on GDP,
- 349** which probably made them quite happy actually. Now they have closed the agency responsible
- 350** for protecting Americans from terrorists and murderers. Tonight, I'm demanding the full and immediate restoration
- 351** of all funding for the border security, homeland security of the United States
- 352** and also for helping people clean up their snow. We have no money because of the Democrats,
- 353** and it would be nice -- we'd love to give you a hand at cleaning it up, but you gave no money.
- 354** Nobody's getting paid; it's a shame. So, you have to think about it. We have, in case you didn't know, a pretty large snowstorm out there.
- 355** One of the great things about the State of the Union is how it gives Americans the chance to see clearly
- 356** what their Representatives really believe. So, tonight, I'm inviting every legislator to join
- 357** with my administration in reaffirming a fundamental principle. If you agree with this statement,

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- 358** then stand up and show your support. The first duty of the American government
- 359** is to protect American citizens, not illegal aliens.
- 360** Isn't that a shame? You should be ashamed of yourself, not standing up. You should be ashamed of yourself.
- 361** That is why I'm also asking you to end deadly sanctuary cities
- 362** that protect the criminals and enact serious penalties for public officials
- 363** who block the removal of criminal aliens, in many cases, drug lords, murderers all over our country.
- 364** They're blocking the removal of these people out of our country and you should be ashamed of yourself.
- 365** (Audience chants "USA")
- 366** And perhaps most importantly, I'm asking you to approve the Save America Act
- 367** to stop illegal aliens
- 368** and others who are unpermitted persons from voting in our sacred American elections.
- 369** That cheating is rampant in our elections. It's rampant. It's very simple, all voters must show voter ID.
- 370** All voters must show proof of citizenship in order to vote.
- 371** And no more crooked mail-in ballots except for illness, disability, military or travel, none.
- 372** And this should be an easy one, and by the way, it's polling at 89 percent, including Democrats, 89 percent.
- 373** And even the new communist mayor of New York City, I think he's a nice guy, actually, speak to him a lot.
- 374** Bad policy, but nice guy. Just said they want people to shovel snow.

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- 375** They got hit hard. Wants them to shovel snow. But if you apply for that job, you need to show two original forms of ID
- 376** and a Social Security card. Yet, they don't want identification
- 377** for the greatest privilege of them all, voting in America. No, it's no good, no good.
- 378** Both Republicans and Democrats overwhelmingly agree on the policy that we just enunciated
- 379** and Congress should unite and enact this common sense, country-saving legislation right now
- 380** and it should be before anything else happens.
- 381** And the reason they don't want to do it, why would anybody not want voter ID? One reason, because they want to cheat.
- 382** There's only one reason. They make up all excuses. They say it's racist. They come up with things.
- 383** You almost say, what imagination they have. They want to cheat, they have cheated
- 384** and their policy is so bad that the only way they can get elected is to cheat and we're going to stop it. We have to stop it, John.
- 385** And here is one more opportunity to show common sense in government.
- 386** In the gallery tonight are Sage Blair and her mother, Michelle.
- 387** In 2021, Sage was 14 when school officials in Virginia sought to socially transition her to a new gender,
- 388** treating her as a boy and hiding it from her parents. Hard to believe, isn't it?
- 389** Before long, a confused Sage ran away from home. After she was found in a horrific situation in Maryland,
- 390** a left-wing judge refused to return sage to her parents because they did not immediately state
- 391** that their daughter was their son. Sage was thrown into an all-boys state home

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- 392** and suffered terribly for a long time. But today, all of that is behind them
- 393** because sage is a proud and wonderful young woman with a full ride scholarship to Liberty University.
- 394** Sage and Michelle, please stand up.
- 395** And thank you for your great bravery and who can believe that we're even speaking about things like this.
- 396** 15 years ago, if somebody was up here and said that, they'd say, what's wrong with him?
- 397** But now we have to say it because it's going on all over, numerous states, without even telling the parents.
- 398** But surely, we can all agree no state can be allowed to rip children from their parents arms
- 399** and transition them to a new gender against the parents will. Who would believe that we've been talking about that.
- 400** We must ban it and we must ban it immediately.
- 401** Look, nobody stands up. These people are crazy. I'm telling you, they're crazy.
- 402** Amazing. (Inaudible) boy, oh boy. We're lucky we have a country with people like this.
- 403** Democrats are destroying our country, but we've stopped it just in the nick of time, didn't we?
- 404** No one cares more about protecting America's youth than our wonderful First Lady, now a movie star.
- 405** She's a movie star, can you believe it? Who would have believed that?
- 406** Over the past year, she has had an incredible impact championing AI legislation advancing a landmark executive
- 407** order on foster care and helping secure \$30 million to launch the Melania Trump Foster
- 408** Youth to Independence Initiative. It's a tremendous -- really, a tremendous thing that happened

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- 409** and had a lot of bipartisan support. She gets much better bipartisan support than I do.
- 410** I get none. She gets a lot. Someday you're going to have to tell me how you did that.
- 411** And students and educators in every state have joined the First Lady's efforts in the presidential AI challenge,
- 412** keeping America's next generation positioned to succeed and strongly succeed in the future.
- 413** Tonight, we welcome two young people whose lives reflect the First Lady's impact,
- 414** Cierra Burns and Everest Nevermont. Thank you both. And Melania, thank you.
- 415** I know how hard you worked on it. Thank you very much.
- 416** I'm very proud to say that during my time in office, both the first four years and in particular this last year,
- 417** there has been a tremendous renewal in religion, faith, Christianity and belief in God, tremendous renewal.
- 418** This is especially true among young people, and a big part of that has -- had to do with my great friend Charlie Kirk,
- 419** a great guy, great man.
- 420** So, last year Charlie was violently murdered by an assassin and martyred, really martyred for his beliefs.
- 421** His wonderful wife Erika is with us tonight. Erika, please stand.
- 422** Thank you, Erika -- been through a lot. In Charlie's memory, we must all come together
- 423** to reaffirm that America is one nation under God, and we must totally reject political violence of any kind.
- 424** We love religion and we love bringing it back and it's coming back at levels
- 425** that nobody actually thought possible. It's really a beautiful thing to see. Above all, unleashing America's promise

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- 426** requires keeping our communities safe. We have made incredible strides, yet dangerous repeat offenders continue to be released
- 427** by pro-crime Democrat politicians again and again.
- 428** We are honored to be joined tonight by a woman who's been through hell, Anya Zarutska.
- 429** In 2022, she and her beautiful daughter -- so beautiful, what a beautiful young woman.
- 430** Iryna fled war torn Ukraine to live with relatives near Charlotte, North Carolina.
- 431** And by the way, what's going on with Charlotte? Last summer, 23-year-old Iryna was riding home on the train
- 432** when a deranged monster, who had been arrested over a dozen times
- 433** and was released through no cash bail, stood up and viciously slashed a knife through her neck and body.
- 434** No one will ever forget -- there were people on that train, no one will ever forget the expression of terror
- 435** on Iryna's face as she looked up at her attacker in the last seconds of her life.
- 436** She died instantly. She had escaped a brutal war only to be slain by a hardened criminal
- 437** set free to kill in America, came in through open borders.
- 438** Mrs. Zarutska, tonight, I promise you we will ensure justice for your magnificent daughter Iryna.
- 439** How do you not stand? How do you not stand? I'm asking this Congress to pass tough legislation
- 440** to ensure that violent and dangerous repeat offenders are put behind bars and, importantly, that they stay there.
- 441** Starting last summer, I deployed our National Guard and federal law enforcement to restore law
- 442** and order to our most dangerous cities, including Memphis, Tennessee, big success; New Orleans,

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- 443** Louisiana, big success; and our nation's capital itself, Washington DC where we have almost no crime anymore
- 444** in Washington DC. How did that happen?
- 445** In fact, crime in Washington is now at the lowest level ever recorded,
- 446** and murders in DC this January were down close to 100 percent from a year ago.
- 447** They don't like to hear that. One of the -- sick people. One of the brave service members who helped achieve
- 448** this stunning turnaround was 20-year-old West Virginia Army National Guard Specialist, Sarah Beckstrom.
- 449** After a four-month deployment, she voluntarily extended her service, and her rank was going to be lifted.
- 450** She was doing so well. They were so proud of her. But the very next day she was on patrol near the White House
- 451** when she was ambushed and shot in the head by a terrorist monster from Afghanistan,
- 452** shouldn't have been in our country. And all because she wore the uniform of our nation,
- 453** she was shot. He traveled here because he didn't like people wearing our uniform, he was sick and deranged.
- 454** Shouldn't have been in our country. Sarah Beckstrom died in order to defend our capital.
- 455** And we are honored to be joined by her wonderful parents. Gary and Evalea, your daughter was a true American patriot,
- 456** and she will be greatly missed. She was a great person. I saw reports on her; they've never seen anything like it.
- 457** So sorry, thank you very much. A great young lady. I saw reports that were like perfect.
- 458** She was perfect. Serving alongside Sarah that day was Staff Sergeant Andrew Wolfe.
- 459** The terrorist shot Andrew in the head, and no one thought he could possibly make it.

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- 460** The two of them, Sarah and Andrew, both shot violently in the head, neither was expected to make it.
- 461** They weren't even given a chance, except his wonderful mother named Melody
- 462** who I spoke to the same night, and she was so positive. The doctors thought that Andrew was gone,
- 463** but his mother said no, no, Mr. President, Andrew will be fine. He's going to make it. I've never seen anything like it.
- 464** I mean he was given almost no chance. She said I have no doubt, sir, he's going to be OK.
- 465** This was a conversation that I had with her that night with her son laying hopelessly in bed, blood all over.
- 466** Everybody is praying. She said sir, he will be OK. The doctors didn't understand what she was saying
- 467** and, after looking at the results of the damage done, neither did I. She was so strong and conclusive
- 468** that even Andrew's great father felt she didn't really understand the gravity of the situation,
- 469** but she turned out to be right. Right, Melody? She turned out to be right.
- 470** Amazing, actually. I said where does this woman come from? She's the most positive person I've ever met.
- 471** With God's help, Andrew has battled back from the edge of death -- and we're talking about the edge of death,
- 472** on his way to a miraculous recovery. He's got a little work to do, but he's doing great.
- 473** Nice to see -- he's a good-looking guy. Nice to see you. Thanks, Andrew. Thank you very much.
- 474** So, Andrew, while you're up, now I'm going to ask a highly respected
- 475** General James Seward to present Staff Sergeant Andrew Wolf and the great family of Sarah Beckstrom
- 476** with the award created by our late great president, George Washington himself. It's called the Purple Heart.

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- 477** We love you all. Love you. We're proudly restoring safety for Americans at home
- 478** and we are also restoring security for Americans abroad.
- 479** Our country has never been stronger. In my first 10 months I ended eight wars, including Cambodia.
- 480** Isn't it funny? They're sick people. Cambodia and Thailand.
- 481** Pakistan and India, would have been a nuclear war. 35 million people said the prime minister of
- 482** Pakistan would have died if it were not for my involvement. Kosovo and Serbia, Israel and Iran,
- 483** Egypt and Ethiopia, Armenia and Azerbaijan,
- 484** the Congo and Rwanda and, of course, the war in Gaza, which proceeds at a very low level.
- 485** It's just about there. And I want to thank Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner
- 486** for your help. Thank you, Steve. Thank you, Jared.
- 487** And I also want to thank the man they report to, Secretary of State Marco Rubio. Thank you, Marco.
- 488** People like you. You know, Marco got 100 percent of the votes when he was in --
- 489** I think our next one was about 54 percent. And some of the Democrats are now saying,
- 490** I can't believe we approved that guy. And he said, it's an honor
- 491** that they feel that way, right, Marco? You have done a great job, great secretary of state. I think he'll go down as the best ever.
- 492** Under the ceasefire, I negotiated every single hostage, both living and dead has been returned home.
- 493** Can you believe that?

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- 494** Nobody thought it was possible. Nobody thought that was possible.
- 495** Both living and dead. And those parents who had a dead son, their boy, they'd always tell me their boy,
- 496** they wanted him as much as though he were living. It was an amazing period of time and they came back.
- 497** And when we got all of the living hostages back and many, many before them but I always said those last 20 are going to be very tough,
- 498** but we got many, many more, hundreds. But I said those last 20 are going to be tough.
- 499** We got them back. But we only got back 14 or 15 of the dead, of the 28.
- 500** And believe it or not, Hamas worked along with Israel and they dug and they dug and they dug.
- 501** It's a tough -- it's a tough thing to do, going through bodies all over,
- 502** passing up 100 bodies sometimes for each one that they found.
- 503** Tough job. And they finally got it back to 27.
- 504** And then Steve and Jared, they got it back to 28. They found all 28. Nobody thought that was possible, but we did it.
- 505** And I remember the family of the 28th.
- 506** They were so -- grieved, but they were so happy, as happy as it's possible -- possible to be.
- 507** They had their boy back. The mother said, sir, we have our boy back. What a period of time that was, but we got them all back.
- 508** So thank you both very much. Great job.
- 509** And we're working very hard to end the ninth war, the killing and slaughter between Russia and Ukraine,
- 510** where 25,000 soldiers are dying each and every month. Think of that, 25,000 soldiers are dying a month,

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- 511** a war which would have never happened if I were president, would have never happened. As President, I will make peace wherever I can,
- 512** but I will never hesitate to confront threats to America wherever we must.
- 513** That's why in a breakthrough operation last June, the United States military obliterated
- 514** Iran's nuclear weapons program with an attack on Iranian soil, known as Operation Midnight Hammer.
- 515** (applause)
- 516** For decades, it had been the policy of the United States never to allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon, many decades.
- 517** Since they seized control of that proud nation 47 years ago, the regime and its murderous proxies
- 518** have spread nothing but terrorism and death and hate. They've killed and maimed thousands
- 519** of American service members and hundreds of thousands and even millions of people
- 520** with what's called roadside bombs. They were the kings of the roadside bomb.
- 521** And we took out Soleimani. I did that during my first term, had a huge impact.
- 522** He was the father of the roadside bomb.
- 523** And just over the last couple of months with the protests, they've killed at least, it looks like 32,000 protesters,
- 524** 32,000 protesters in their own country. They shot them and hung them.
- 525** We stopped them from hanging a lot of them with the threat of serious violence.
- 526** But this is some terrible people. They've already developed missiles
- 527** that can threaten Europe and our bases overseas and they're working to build missiles

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- 528** that will soon reach the United States of America. After Midnight Hammer, they were warned to make no future
- 529** attempts to rebuild their weapons program in a particular, nuclear weapons,
- 530** yet they continue starting it all over. We wiped it out and they want to start all over again.
- 531** And are at this moment again pursuing their sinister ambitions. We are in negotiations with them.
- 532** They want to make a deal, but we haven't heard those secret words, we will never have a nuclear weapon.
- 533** My preference --
- 534** My preference is to solve this problem through diplomacy. But one thing is certain,
- 535** I will never allow the world's number one sponsor of terror, which they are by far to have a nuclear weapon,
- 536** can't let that happen.
- 537** And no nation should ever doubt America's resolve. We have the most powerful military on earth
- 538** I rebuilt the military in my first term. We're going to continue to do so.
- 539** Also, we just approved \$1 trillion budget. We have no choice. We have to be strong,
- 540** because hopefully we will seldom have to use this great power that we built together.
- 541** It's really called peace through strength and it's been very, very effective.
- 542** So thanks to Republican in Congress, we're investing that record number of dollars, have no choice,
- 543** in the United States armed forces, also creating a lot of jobs, but we're not even doing it for that reason.
- 544** Because as I said, we have more jobs, more people working today than ever before in the history of our country.

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- 545** And NATO countries, our friends and allies, and they are, they're our friends and they're our allies, have just agreed at my very strong request
- 546** to pay five percent of GDP for military defense rather than the two percent, which they weren't paying;
- 547** we were paying for almost all of them. Now they're paying five as opposed to not paying for it.
- 548** And getting that 5 percent was something which everyone said would never be done, could not happen. We got it really easily with one meeting
- 549** and a big difference between 2 percent that's not paid. We were paying the freight of many of them.
- 550** Very few were paid out. Now 5 percent then they're paid. And everything we send over to Ukraine is sent through NATO
- 551** and they pay us in full. They pay us totally in full. Every branch of our armed forces
- 552** is setting records for recruitment. This is so exciting.
- 553** And every service member recently received a warrior dividend of \$1,776.
- 554** You know, they put it on my desk. We got the money from tariffs and other things, a lot of money we have. We have much more money than people understand.
- 555** have to rebuild that program a little bit, but it won't take long. But we got the money and it was \$1,775
- 556** and they wanted my approval. And I said what's the number. \$1,775.
- 557** I said, wait a minute, for one more dollar we can have 1776. It's going to -- I said we're going to figure that out.
- 558** I never asked anybody if we could afford it. One more dollar, I said \$1,776. And I said that's good.
- 559** And I'll tell you what, our military -- that was four months ago, our military, I never see a person in the military
- 560** that doesn't thank me for it. So, we're honored to do it. They deserve it and we call it \$1,776, It was great.
- 561** And we love our military; we love our law enforcement. We love our firemen, you know the firemen don't get mentioned enough.

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- 562** We love our firemen.
- 563** We're also restoring American security and dominance in the Western Hemisphere, acting to secure our national interests
- 564** and defend our country from violence, drugs, terrorism and foreign interference.
- 565** For years, large swaths of territory in our region, including large parts of Mexico, really large parts of Mexico,
- 566** have been controlled by murderous drug cartels. That's why I designated these cartels
- 567** as foreign terrorist organizations, and I declared illicit fentanyl as a weapon of mass destruction.
- 568** And with our new military campaign, we have stopped record amounts of drugs coming into our country and virtually stopped it
- 569** completely coming in by water or sea. You probably noticed that.
- 570** We very seriously damaged their fishing industry also. Nobody wants to go fishing anymore.
- 571** We've also taken down one of the most sinister cartel kingpins of all. You saw that yesterday.
- 572** In January, elite American warriors carried out one of the most complex spectacular feats
- 573** of military competence and power in world history. No one's seen anything like it.
- 574** Foreign leaders, I won't tell you who, called me and they said very impressive, very good.
- 575** They couldn't believe -- they all watched; they saw what happened. This is a different fighting force than we had years ago
- 576** when we fought to tie. No, it's a great fighting force. I'm so proud of it. Look at Space Force.
- 577** Space force is my baby because we did that. My baby's becoming so important.
- 578** And America's armed forces overwhelmed all defenses and utterly defeated an enemy -- good fighters --

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- 579** to end the reign of outlaw dictator Nicolas Maduro and bring him to face American justice.
- 580** And this was an absolutely colossal victory for the security of the United States.
- 581** And it also opens up a bright new beginning for the people of Venezuela.
- 582** We're working closely with the new president of Venezuela, Delcy Rodriguez, to unleash extraordinary economic gains
- 583** for both of our countries and to bring new hope to those who have suffered so terribly.
- 584** They really did suffer. With us tonight is Alejandro Gonzalez. She grew up in a tight knit Venezuelan family
- 585** and was especially close to her beloved uncle, Enrique. But after Enrique ran for office and opposed Maduro,
- 586** he was kidnaped by Maduro's security forces and thrown into the regime's really infamous prison
- 587** in Caracas. Alejandro feared she would never see her uncle again.
- 588** She feared for her own life also. But since the raid, we have worked with the new leadership,
- 589** and they have ordered the closure of that vile prison and released hundreds of political prisoners
- 590** already with more to come. Alejandro, I'm pleased to inform you
- 591** that not only has your uncle been released, but he's here tonight.
- 592** We brought him over to celebrate his freedom with you in person. Enrique, please come down.
- 593** Thank you, Enrique. Have a good time. Nice to have you back, Enrique.
- 594** There were many heroes on that January raid to capture Maduro, really great heroes. It was very dangerous.
- 595** They knew we were coming; they were all set. But the deeds of one warrior that night will live forever in the eternal chronicles of military valor,

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- 596** Chief Warrant Officer Five, Eric Slover, planned the mission and was the flight
- 597** lead in the cockpit of the first helicopter. A big, beautiful, powerful helicopter,
- 598** it was a massive Chinook carrying, as you can imagine, many, many American warfighters.
- 599** Wearing the dog tags his wife Amy had blessed with holy water before he left,
- 600** she knew it was going to be a rough one. Eric steered the Chinook under the cover of night
- 601** and descended swiftly upon Maduros' heavily protected military fortress. This was a major military installation
- 602** protected by thousands of soldiers and guarded by Russian and Chinese military technology.
- 603** How did that work out? Not too good. While preparing to land,
- 604** enemy machine guns fired from every angle and Eric was hit very badly in the leg
- 605** and hip, one bullet after another. He absorbed four agonizing shots,
- 606** shredding his leg into numerous pieces. And yet, despite the fact that the use of his legs
- 607** was vital to a successful helicopter flight -- legs are the most important part of flying a helicopter --
- 608** to deliver the many commandos who would capture and detain Maduro was the only thing Eric was thinking about.
- 609** Then even as he was gushing blood, which was flowing back down the aisle -- a helicopter lands at a steep angle --
- 610** the machine gun stood right in front of him. They were right in front of him, two machine gunners, who escaped the wrath of the previous planes.
- 611** Eric maneuvered his helicopter with all of those lives and souls to face the enemy and let his gunners eliminate the threat --
- 612** turned the helicopter around so the gunners could take care of business, saving the lives of his fellow warriors

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- 613** from what could have been a catastrophic crash deep in enemy territory.
- 614** Only after safely landing the helicopter with all the warriors aboard in the exact right spot,
- 615** which was vital to the mission, we probably would have had maybe cancel the mission if that didn't happen,
- 616** Eric told his copilot, also wounded but not as gravely, to take over, I'm about ready to pass out.
- 617** The success of the entire mission and the lives of his fellow warriors hinge on Eric's ability to take the searing pain,
- 618** it was unbelievable what's happened to his legs, of the bullets and keep on flying and landing
- 619** and people knew what was happening. Everybody in the back of the helicopter knew
- 620** because they saw the blood pouring down the aisle. Chief Warrant Officer Slover
- 621** is still recovering from his serious wounds, but I'm thrilled to say that he is here tonight
- 622** with his wife Amy. Eric and Amy, come on in. (applause)
- 623** (Audience chants "USA")
- 624** So we have a surprise for Eric and Amy. In recognition of Eric's actions above
- 625** and beyond the call of duty, I would now like to ask General Jonathan Braga
- 626** to present Chief Warrant Officer Slover with our nation's highest military award,
- 627** the Congressional Medal of Honor. (applause)
- 628** Well, thank you very much, Eric and Amy, great to get to know you.
- 629** I met with them and with a lot of their fellow warriors at Fort Bragg recently. You notice the name Fort Bragg,

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- 630** we have it back, we brought it back. We won the First World War with it, the Second World War with it and then they decide to change the name,
- 631** but we changed it back. Everybody wanted it changed back too.
- 632** And 10 of Eric's fellow warriors from that incredible night of victory
- 633** will also be receiving medals at a private ceremony that will soon be held at the White House,
- 634** and Eric, you'll be there. Thank you.
- 635** Thank you, Eric. That's a big one. Tonight, We've celebrated
- 636** many truly extraordinary American patriots, but there is one last living legend to honor before we go.
- 637** He is one more heroic American aviator,
- 638** navy fighter pilot Royce Williams served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam,
- 639** flying more than 220 missions. In the skies over Korea in 1952,
- 640** Royce was in the dogfight of a lifetime, legendary dogfight.
- 641** Flying through blizzard conditions, his squadron was ambushed by seven Soviet fighter planes.
- 642** It was his first aerial combat of the war and despite being massively outnumbered and outgunned, Royce led the takedown of four enemy jets
- 643** and almost destroyed the others, vanquishing his adversaries while taking 263 bullets to his own plane
- 644** and being seriously hurt. His story was secret for over 50 years.
- 645** He didn't even want to tell his wife, but the legend grew and grew.
- 646** But tonight, at 100 years old, this brave Navy captain is finally getting the recognition he deserves.

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- 647** He was a legend long before this evening. Royce, please stand up and I will ask the First Lady of the United States
- 648** to present Captain Royce Williams with his Congressional Medal of Honor.
- 649** (applause)
- 650** Thank you, Royce, and thank you, Eric. I've always wanted the Congressional Medal of Honor,
- 651** but I was informed, I'm not allowed to give it to myself and I wouldn't know why I'd be taking it. But if they ever open up that law,
- 652** I will be there with you someday. But, you know, that's our highest honor,
- 653** Congressional Medal of Honor. And that's a big thing and it's an honor to be in the same room with you.
- 654** Thank you both, very much, Eric, thank you.
- 655** Thank you. 250 years is a long time in the life of a nation,
- 656** but in another sense, it's really a mere moment in the eye of history.
- 657** Two of the gentlemen we met in the gallery this evening took their first breaths one century ago,
- 658** 100 years before that on July 4th, 1826,
- 659** the author of the Declaration of Independence, brilliant.
- 660** Thomas Jefferson drew his last breath. Just a single long human lifespan
- 661** separates the giants who declared and won our independence from the heroes
- 662** who stand among us tonight. Everything our nation has done, everything we have achieved
- 663** has been the work of those few great lifetimes. In those brief chapters, Americans built this nation from 13 humble colonies

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- 664** into the pinnacle of human civilization and human freedom, the strongest, wealthiest,
- 665** most powerful, most successful nation in all of history, Americans ventured out across the daunting
- 666** and dangerous continent. We carved paths through an unforgiving wilderness,
- 667** settled a boundless frontier and tamed the beautiful but very, very dangerous wild West.
- 668** From empty marshes and wide-open plains, we raised up the world's greatest cities.
- 669** Together, we mastered the world's mightiest industries, shattered history's monstrous tyrannies,
- 670** and we liberated millions from the chains of fascism, Communism, oppression and terror.
- 671** Americans lifted humanity into the skies on the wings of aluminum and steel.
- 672** And then we launched mankind into the stars on rockets powered by sheer American will and unyielding American pride.
- 673** We wired the globe with our ingenuity, we captivated the planet with American culture,
- 674** and now we are pioneering the next great American breakthroughs that will change the entire world.
- 675** All of this and so much more is the enduring legacy, unmatched glory of the hardworking patriots
- 676** who built and defended this country and who still carry the hopes and freedoms
- 677** on all of humanity's backs. For years, they were forgotten, betrayed and cast aside,
- 678** but that great betrayal is over and they will never be forgotten again because when the world needs courage,
- 679** daring vision and inspiration, it is still turning to America.
- 680** And when God needs a nation to work his miracles, He knows exactly who to ask.

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- 681** There is no challenge Americans cannot overcome, no frontier too vast for us to conquer,
- 682** no dream too bold for us to chase, no horizon too distant for us to claim.
- 683** For our destiny is written by the hand of Providence and these first 250 years were just the beginning.
- 684** From the rugged border towns of Texas to the heartland villages of Michigan.
- 685** From the sun kissed shores of Florida to the endless fields of the Dakotas.
- 686** And from the historic streets of Philadelphia to right here in our nation's capital,
- 687** Washington DC, the Golden Age of America is upon us.
- 688** The revolution that began in 1776 has not ended; it still continues because the flame of liberty
- 689** and independence still burns in the heart of every American patriot.
- 690** And our future will be bigger, better, brighter, bolder and more glorious than ever before.
- 691** Thank you. God bless you and God bless America. (applause)