



**Office of the Mayor
City of Los Angeles
ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA**

**Dare to Dream, Promise to Deliver
The 2013 State of the City Address
Remarks as Prepared for Delivery
Royce Hall, UCLA
April 9, 2013**

Let me begin today with two simple words...

Simple, heartfelt words: thank you.

Thank you for allowing me the honor to serve as your Mayor.

It has been the privilege of a lifetime to lead the city of my birth...

The city where my Mom raised me to see possibility around every corner...

The city of opportunity my grandfather came to, over a hundred years ago.

Never in my wildest imagination did I ever think that a young boy from City Terrace would have the opportunity to be here among you like this...as your Mayor.

As I take in this moment, I'm reminded of something my mother told me when I was sixteen.

I had recently been kicked out of high school.

I had dropped out of another.

It was morning.

I sat at the kitchen table, bruised and bloody from a fight the night before and with a bandage on my arm.

My Mom came in, she was horrified...

Pointing to the bandage, she said, "What's that?"

I told her: "It's a tattoo...a second one...I got it last night."

She began to cry.

She knew I had given up on myself.

Her voice shook and she said: "You don't believe in you. But I believe in you. You are destined for greatness, and you don't even know it."

Now, when it comes to the part about greatness, I think we *all* know that was a mother's pride speaking.

But I do know she was right about this: I had no idea what lay ahead.

I had no idea that close to four decades later, I would have the honor to serve this city and its residents.

So, I thank you.

As Angelenos, we are fortunate and blessed to live in this city.

At the edge of the continent that once defined the American frontier, we are now a gateway.

A gateway to the future. A gateway to the hope and promise of this great country.

And over the last eight years, I have been fortunate and blessed to partner with you to realize the hope and promise of this great city.

Above all, thank you to the neighborhood groups and the community organizations, the businesses, the philanthropies and the foundations, and the hundreds of thousands of volunteers for standing with me.

For partnering with me to make Los Angeles, our home, a better place.

Eight years ago, we dared to dream.

Dream of a safer city...

A greener city...

A more mobile city...

A city of opportunity where every kid had a desk in a good school with great teachers.

But we didn't just dare to dream...

We promised to deliver. And we did.

Now, there have been some bumps in the road...

Some detours...

Some missteps...

And yes, some failures.

But we kept our cool, and we kept our promises.

We knew success didn't come easy, or over night.

We knew it was going to be like that Billie Holiday song:

"The difficult we'll do now - the impossible will take a while."

Because we dared to dream, because we didn't fear failure but learned from it, because we persisted...

I am proud to say the state of our city is strong and growing stronger by the day.

LA is on the move.

And it starts with our economy.

After the worst recession in generations, we're finally turning a corner.

But the road forward is still long. The want ads are still required reading for too many Angelenos, and the durability of this recovery is hardly guaranteed.

So one thing is clear.

We must maintain a relentless focus on job growth.

We can't go back to the old days and the tired old ways.

We can't just sit back and let our palm trees do our marketing.

If we want more business in LA, we have to change the way LA does business.

That's the reason we have spearheaded the creation of the City's first Economic Development Department.

Its mission will be simple and straightforward: make job creation job number one.

We have led with the carrot, not the stick to attract the innovators, the inventors and the entrepreneurs who will power our 21st Century economy.

We gave every new business a three year exemption from our local business tax, and we extended it another three years.

Angelenos, I am proud to report, the number of new businesses grossing over 500,000 dollars a year has more than doubled in the City of Los Angeles since 2010!

We are on the move.

We've taken aggressive measures to support our housing and construction sectors and get LA building again.

The forecast for housing permits in 2013 is up 320% from 2009.

We want to keep going full steam ahead.

We've reformed the permitting process, created a Case Management Office to give businesses hands on support so they can get plans approved sooner, stores opened quicker and goods to market faster.

LA is on the move.

Real prosperity, durable prosperity is shared prosperity. LA can't be two cities.

So at every stage over these eight years, every day and in every way, we've fought for jobs for the working families of Los Angeles.

But not just any jobs.

Good jobs, decent jobs, jobs that pay a living wage.

With our Local Hire initiative, we said local projects will employ local workers so everyone has a stake in economic development.

We fought for project labor agreements that give our working families a greater measure of security.

And we paddled hard to put LA workers in a position to catch the next wave of good jobs.

Our Clean Tech Incubator has become the heart of Downtown's growing green tech hub.

A burgeoning "Silicon Beach" of new tech companies is blooming in Venice and Playa Vista.

And our workforce strategy targeting training and permanent placement for workers has put over 200,000 Angelenos - more than twice the population of Santa Monica - in living wage jobs!

The Great Recession dealt a heavy blow to the bottom lines of our businesses and households.

They weren't the only ones. When the market crashed, the bottom fell out of our City Budget too.

But even if we stumbled, we did not fall.

Staring what became a billion dollar structural shortfall in the face, we made the tough decisions.

For the sake of prosperity in the long-term, we shared sacrifice in the short-term.

This was the right decision, and we made it together.

So many talk so much about smaller government.

We didn't just talk, we walked the walk.

We consolidated city departments.

We reduced the city workforce by more than 5,000 positions.

We worked with our unions and reined in employee pension and health care costs.

Most current employees now contribute more toward their retirement and health care, nearly doubling their contribution from six to eleven percent.

New civilian employees will retire at 65, not 55, and they will retire with 75% not 100% of their salary.

We can and we must do more!

Because what we've done so far has worked.

We held our city together even as other cities - cities right here in Southern California - fell apart.

We're on the move, and we must keep up the momentum.

In less than two weeks, I will deliver my final budget.

It will build on the foundation of fiscal responsibility and smart investment that we have built in the last eight years.

It will be balanced, it will include a fully funded reserve, and will accomplish one more thing:

It fully funds a 10,000 Officer Los Angeles Police Department.

I want to make two points about the police buildup.

First, I know there are those who say that ten thousand was just a number.

No it wasn't - It was a promise.

A promise to Angelenos that when it came to securing their basic safety and peace of mind, I wasn't going to be satisfied with half-steps and business as usual.

I was going to raise the bar, meet it and then challenge my successor to raise it again.

Because if anything - and as Chief Beck will rightly testify - we need even more officers to support community policing.

Second, while building our force to ten thousand strong, we also built the LAPD into one of the most diverse police forces anywhere in America.

And folks, we flipped the script. We built a department that looks more like Los Angeles.

With the progressive leadership of Chief Beck, we built stronger bridges to the community.

Our rank-and-file officers have overcome a legacy of suspicion and misunderstanding.

They have built more trust, more respect, and more credibility in communities of color than ever before.

The LAPD did more than simply comply with the federal consent decree.

They took it to heart and made its reforms their own.

Now the LAPD is a national model for how the command staff, the community and the cops on the street can work together to turn a department around.

These efforts speak for themselves.

Violent crime and homicides are down 49% since 2005.

Property crime is down 30%.

LA is on the move.

Neighborhoods that used to be no-go zones...

Parks that were a public menace...

Have been turned around.

And not just because we have more officers.

But also because we zeroed in on the gang problem.

Eight years ago, we didn't have a gang strategy.

We had a patchwork of programs assembled under the shopworn motto of 'divide by fifteen.'

This status quo was untenable, and for the sake of our children, for the sake of the city, we had to break decisively with the past.

Together we implemented a comprehensive gang reduction strategy.

We pledged to focus resources on those communities most plagued by violence.

We promised to develop programs that addressed the root causes of why young people join gangs.

From Summer Night Lights to our Violence Intervention Training Academy our gang reduction program is a national and international model.

It's a model because it works.

Gang crime is down. Way down.

Eight years ago at the beginning of 2005, there were 1755 gang crimes.

At the beginning of this year, there were 784.

A 55% decrease.

At the beginning of 2005, there 87 gang related murders.

This year? Twenty nine.

A 66% decrease.

More cops, smart, proven policies and programs, a committed dedication to constitutional policing.

This is now the LA way!

For the last eight years, we have put our shoulders to the wheel to change our reputation as America's Capital of Congestion.

Thanks to our commitment, we're on the move to becoming a model of big city mobility.

With over \$40 billion in new local funding, we are doubling the size of our rail network.

Angelenos are taking advantage of their newfound freedom to ride.

Metro Rail ridership is up and up big.

9 million people step on and off Metro's trains each month.

9 million!

That's why I say, LA is on the move.

As we've laid more tracks, we've also expanded more carpool lanes, including on the 405 and the 5.

Keeping a promise I made in 2005, we've blazed a trail and become the only city in the world to modernize and synchronize each and every traffic signal.

Drivers see fewer brake lights and more green lights, and their commute times drop -up to 24%.

We led the modernization of LAX and created 40,000 jobs.

We rode — and fell hard — for bicycles!

And now, we're peddling hard to put in 1,600 miles of bike lanes and bike paths.

We made the case and we made the sale for historic transit investments that will pay dividends for generations of Angelenos.

Together, we passed Measure R.

We persuaded a partisan Congress to enact the bipartisan America Fast Forward.

Now when cities like LA invest their hard-won, local transportation dollars, they can get federal support to make those dollars go further, faster.

But sadly, when it comes to raising revenue to invest in commonsense transportation solutions, the fight isn't over till it's over.

We've got to get back in the ring and start the next round.

For too long, a small minority has been able to cast a veto on our common future.

We need to change the California Constitution and allow a majority of voters to approve new taxes for our roads and rails!

Giving Angelenos real alternatives to the single passenger automobile is part and parcel of our overall commitment to making Los Angeles a more sustainable city.

Imagine saying in 2005 that by 2013, LA would be a world leader in the drive to create the 21st Century sustainable city.

People would have thought you were joking.

No one's laughing now.

In the last eight years, we've racked up a whole set of big city environmental 'firsts.'

We've become the first city in the country to shake our addiction to dirty power as we divest from coal.

We've reduced the City's carbon emissions by nearly 30% - more than any other major U.S. city.

From coast to coast, we have the largest urban Feed-in-Tariff Solar program.

We cut water use by twenty percent and now use less water per capita than any other major U.S. city.

We increased our use of renewables from four to twenty percent.

Cut air pollution at the Port of Los Angeles in half.

Increased recycling rates to over 75%.

We opened up over six hundred and fifty acres of new parkland in Los Angeles.

We laid the foundation for transforming the LA River from an urban blight into a natural beauty.

Our river will be the watery ribbon linking a network of parks, nature trails, walkways and bike paths that will enhance the mobility of millions of Angelenos and will increase the connectivity of our city's cherished communities.

I know that green is a fashionable color these days.

But our commitment to sustainability isn't a passing fad.

A city like LA must be on the frontline of creating a sustainable future.

The physical footprint of the world's cities is small - only 2% of the earth's surface.

But our carbon footprint is supersized.

Cities use more than two-thirds of the energy and put out more than 70% of the globe's carbon emissions.

Cities are a major part of the problem, but they can be a major part of the solution.

If there are any silver linings to climate change, that's one.

If we green our cities, we can take a significant step toward greening the planet.

For the last eight years, we have worked hard to take on the mantle of environmental leadership.

For the sake of Mother Earth, now is not the time to give it up.

Before I close, I want to reflect on the place we have gathered tonight UCLA, my alma mater. This is one of the finest universities public or private anywhere in the world.

For over nine decades, it has educated class after class of students, lighting the fire of curiosity in young minds.

I am lucky enough to count myself among these fortunate generations of students.

I came here thanks to an affirmative action program.

And because of that, some say I came in the back door.

But one thing is for sure, I got out the front door.

UCLA propelled me along a path that led to City Hall and back to this stage tonight.

I sat on Janss Steps, I soaked up knowledge and inspiration, because I had help and support.

I had the help and support of my Mom and dedicated teachers who believed in me and pushed me, even when I didn't believe in myself.

That's why I always ask the kids in my Partnership schools..."Do you believe in you?"

And I always have them respond, "I believe in me!"

This is why I have championed education reform. It's personal for me.

I know with all my being the life altering difference a dedicated teacher can make. But it is also more than that.

My commitment goes back to that biblical reminder, "To whom much is given, much is expected."

As community leaders, as elected officials, as neighborhood advocates, as men and women of influence and means, we have a special responsibility to the city that has given us so much.

And central to this duty must be a responsibility to do right by our children and their schools.

In the past eight years, we have made stride after stride in keeping faith with this basic covenant.

The number of LA schools meeting the state standard of 800 on the Academic Performance Index has more than doubled.

The number of failing schools has dropped from one in three to one in eleven.

The graduation rate has risen from less than half to almost two-thirds.

The number of schools that have been transformed from the bottom up is more than 160.

The number of charters has jumped three fold.

The number of high performing charters has shot up nine fold.

LA is now a leader in giving parents and their kids the education choices they need and deserve.

Since 2008, our twenty-two Partnership Schools - schools people had written off - had said couldn't change - have made tremendous progress.

One year after our Partnership took over Jordan High in Watts, the students achieved the biggest gains in API scores for any high school in the entire state.

The number of Partnership 10th graders passing their high school exit exams has jumped by 17 points.

And this past school year, if the Partnership were its own school district, we would have outpaced every district in California in terms of API growth!

Our schools, our children, are on the move.

Which is why it has been so disheartening to see our mayoral candidates devote so little time to a serious discussion of how to deliver a quality education for all our children.

Education reform can't be a footnote on a campaign mailer or fodder for an attack ad.

Improving our schools must be front and center of a real debate and discussion.

It is time for our candidates to demonstrate the 'fierce urgency of now 'when it comes to ensuring that all, not some, not many, but all of our children have access to great schools.

It is time that they presented us with their comprehensive visions to make our schools shine.

We don't want to hear about one or two planks in a plan about an audit of this or a piecemeal change in that - we want the whole plan.

Because on May 21st, we don't want to just elect a mayor, we want to elect a leader.

We want to choose someone who won't nibble cautiously around the edges.

We want someone who will demonstrate a core commitment to our kids.

We want to hear:

How you will think bigger...

How you will be bolder...

How you will be better...

July First will be your moment!

Embrace it!

Take your rightful place of leadership alongside the Mayors of New York and Chicago and cities across the country.

Advocate tirelessly and relentlessly for educational opportunity for all.

We've come too far!

Our kids need a champion - be that champion!

We have always pushed against frontiers.

We have always sought to move farther, to do more.

Our frontiers used to be defined by geography by mountains, valleys and coasts.

Now the future is the frontier.

As day continues to break on this new century, Angelenos must push forward and do what we've done best: dare to dream, promise to deliver.

Tom Bradley said it best, "People cut themselves off from their ties of the old life when they come to Los Angeles. They are looking for a place where they can be free, where they can do things they couldn't do anywhere else."

The old life, the old world, the old Los Angeles is fading in the rear view mirror.

The old Los Angeles was a city of smog and gridlock, a city that was under-policed and insecure, a city that had let its schools deteriorate into factories of failure, a city known more for its divisions than its diversity.

The old world was the analog world, the world of snail mail, of land lines, of newsprint.

The new world is a digital world of global networks, smart phones and mobile apps.

A little more than a decade into the new century, Los Angeles is embracing this new world, embracing the future.

The result is a city where the foundation of prosperity and opportunity is strong and growing stronger.

Los Angeles has always been a place where people do things impossible anywhere else.

It's the story my grandfather handed down to my Mom, and my Mom handed down to me.

I know it's your story too.

We don't take NO for an answer.

We think big.

We swing for the fences.

We believe that in LA we can have an economy that includes everyone.

We can deliver the safety our people need.

We can be the cleanest and the greenest big city in America.

We can restore the promise of a free, quality public education.

We can build tomorrow, today.

Dare to dream, Los Angeles!

Promise to deliver!

Thank you, and may God bless you all.

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