



Good afternoon.

First, help me thank Imani Carpenter for that awesome introduction.

I would also like to thank the hardworking teachers and staff at Horace Mann Middle School for allowing me to address the city from their campus.

As a proud alumnus of Horace Mann, these hallways feel like hallowed ground.

I am grateful for educators like C. Michael Tidwell and the late Dr. Marian Lacey who poured so much in me and believed in my God-given potential.

I also want to thank the Little Rock City Board of Directors for their attendance today and their commitment to join me in working for and uniting OUR city... as well as City Manager, City Attorney, and city department directors. Thank you for your presence.

And I must express my gratitude for you - the citizens of Little Rock.

Every day that I step foot in 500 West Markham Street, I do so with great humility knowing that the only reason I am there is because you shared my vision for unifying Little Rock.

At the start of the day, I walk into City Hall carrying the aspirations of Hillcrest families and ambitions of small business owners in the South End and Southwest Little Rock.

At the end of the day, I walk out of City Hall thinking about creating a better Little Rock for the children in college Station, Granite Mountain, and those in Chenal Valley.

As your mayor, I promised that I would do everything in my power to unify our city, stimulate job growth, and strengthen our economic standing in the region.

I understand it is my responsibility to lead the charge to make Little Rock the city of choice and to re-establish our swagger as our State's Capital City.

And, as a son of Little Rock, I vow to be a leader that will make

you proud. My hope is that I am doing just that.

As we stepped into office on January 1st, we inherited a City with enormous opportunity to be the next great American city of the New South.

But it's a city with some structural, financial, and organizational challenges that were keeping her from reaching her true potential.

Our city was without a Police Chief and at the same time plagued with a need to draw the community and police department closer to one another.

As a city we were without a strategic plan to address a decade of stagnant job growth, and we had groups of citizens who felt unheard, underrepresented, underserved, and without opportunities to grow in a city they loved and called home.

We were operating within fractured and disconnected governmental organizational structure that was keeping us from being accountable, clear, and transparent to and for our citizens.

We also faced some financial challenges. Revenue growth has

not kept pace with the increased cost of providing services.

Sales-tax growth has underperformed expectations; staffing costs have continued to become a larger part of the City's budget; and the inability to collect internet sales tax has a negative impact on the budget.

We recognized these challenges when we started our campaign and we will face these challenges head on, because our potential is great and the foundation of our city is strong.

We are excited that our City's January sales tax receipts were up more than 6% from this time last year. We look forward to continued progress in Little Rock and are working for you every day to create a better Little Rock.

In fact, in the short 87 days since we have been in City Hall, we have already made significant strides in making Little Rock a stronger and more united City.

My administration has taken action to improve public safety. And in the spirit of transparency, we held public forums so citizens could have an opportunity to offer input into the selection of our new Police Chief.

And after much prayer, deliberation, and consultation with the City Board and citizens of Little Rock, I hired Keith Humphrey as the new police chief of the Little Rock Police Department.

I believe that this was a critical step in improving relations between law enforcement and the community.

As further proof of our commitment to repairing relationship with law enforcement, on or around April 1 we will issue a Request for Proposals to purchase body cameras for the Little Rock Police Department.

And in our efforts to be accountable, clear, and transparent, we released Arkansas' first Critical Incident Video regarding the February 22nd Officer-Involved Shooting.

We moved swiftly to address crime this year and met with the Department of Justice to identify additional resources to help Little Rock Police Department better protect our communities.

In addition, to provide increased support and resources to families who are impacted by violent crimes, we are in the process of securing resources to fund advocates for victims of domestic violence.

We are also starting the process of employing an additional 100 police officers over the next four years, with plans of including 20 police officers in the amended 2019 budget.

And to further improve the relationship between our first responders and the communities they serve, we have asked our City Attorney to draft an ordinance to change LRPD's No-Knock Warrant policy.

We have also requested that our City Attorney draft an ordinance to create the Little Rock Community Review Board. Upon receipt of the final versions of those ordinances, I will ask my colleagues on the Board of Directors to pass both ordinances because it's time for a fairer and safer Little Rock.

Reducing crime takes real leadership and a holistic approach to get there. But the Little Rock I know and love is worth fighting for.

As a banker, I had the opportunity to finance countless small businesses across town.

I personally identified with the needs and concerns of the business owners and vowed to create a Little Rock that was open for business.

Thus far, we have done just that.

In my short time in office, I've met with a number of Little Rock-based businesses, such as the education tech company Apptegy, Bank OZK, and TY Garments, which is the ONLY manufacturer of Adidas apparel in the U.S. I thanked them for their business and discussed how to keep them in Little Rock and attract other businesses to our great city.

We also announced the AFTERGLOW Aircraft Solutions expansion to Little Rock, which will create 60 new jobs at the Clinton National Airport.

We look forward to making more announcements in the near future regarding job growth in our City.

And as you may have seen in the news or on social media, we are actively recruiting TopGolf to open a location in Little Rock.

We have had a number of telephone conversations and meetings about this opportunity.

We remain hopeful that Top-Golf and other businesses find Little Rock to be a great place to do business.

It's time to attract new businesses and create more jobs in our city.

After 2 weeks in office we implemented and executed a new organizational structure within city government.

This new structure reorganized the roles and responsibilities of the Mayor and the City Manager. My campaign promised to have a stronger and more accountable mayor and this reorganization has already fulfilled that promise.

I vowed to you during the campaign and during my swearing in that change was coming... and change has come to City Hall. Because it's time for more efficient and accountable city government.

In the spirit of unity, the City of Little Rock launched its inaugural Martin Luther King Day Unity Program, and addressed the need for intentionality and intersectionality in respect to all our citizens at the "Community Conversation" by Immanuel Baptist.

We have also showed unity, when I called for the brothers and sisters of our Fraternal Order of Police and Black Police

Officers Association to hold a joint leadership meeting, the first of its kind.

We also demonstrated unity by scheduling joint meetings between the two groups with each of the final four candidates for police chief, which also had never been done before.

When the government shutdown was in effect, we stood up for Federal employees to provide food and necessary items through our “Little Rock Cares” campaign.

And in our efforts to unify all public sectors of our community, I hosted the first ever public CEO roundtable with Charles Frazier of Rock Region Metro,

Gretchen Hall of Little Rock Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, Bryan Day of the Little Rock Port Authority, Greg Ramon of Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority, Tad Bohannon of Central Arkansas Water, Ron Mathieu of Clinton National Airport, Nate Coulter of Central Arkansas Library System, and Michael Poore of the Little Rock School District.

We are grateful for their work in helping improve the state of our city through their various quality of life initiatives.

For instance, Rock Region Metro's streetcar ridership is up 300% compared to this time last year with its fare-free program.

Also, we look forward to Flexzone-a pilot on-demand community shuttle service with smaller vehicles that is coming to our city streets in July.

This will be similar to ride-sharing services offered through Uber or Lyft.

Rock Region has also partnered with LRSD to provide transportation for all high school students.

We are working to ensure a BRIGHT FUTURE by meeting the needs students have away from school, that may impact their learning.

We often hear the negative about our school district, but LRSD is doing great things. And I want to boast about our district just a little bit.

The district employs nearly 200 National Board Certified Teachers, the most in the state. Two Little Rock high schools, my alma mater, Parkview, and Central High, are ranked 3rd

and 6th nationally by US News and World Report.

And \$20 million in scholarships are awarded to our graduating students annually.

LRSD also has partnered with Central Arkansas Library System to provide 24-hour access to libraries for research, driver's education, ACT prep, and foreign language development.

That's worth boasting about!

The City of Little Rock has also proudly partnered with CALS to administer the "Be Mighty Campaign" which addresses the needs of hungry children in our city.

CALS also recently opened a Business and Technology Center at Williams Library on Chester Street and offers more than 500 free classes every year throughout our City to help our residents prosper in our tech age.

The Port of Little Rock continues to expand, adding land and rail for current and future manufacturers that call Little Rock home.

And our airport has experienced 12 consecutive months of passenger increases, with departing passengers up nearly 11% compared to this time last year.

We have four NEW nonstop flights to Denver, Austin, Washington DC, and Orlando.

An additional nonstop flight to Destin will begin in May.

In addition to the renovations, our airport boasts a 93% satisfaction ranking, compared to the national average of 86%.

Jobs, education, and quality of life contribute to a greater city. It's time for all of us to work towards a united Little Rock that serves EVERY resident in our city.

We know that to have a strong city we need a strong education system, and Little Rock's government must be strong partners with Little Rock School District, Pulaski County Special School District, and Little Rock's charter schools.

That's why I have visited more than a dozen schools in my first 87 days, and it is why we are working with LRSD Superintendent Mike Poore, Parks & Recreation, and

Community Programs to start our Summer Reading Program this summer.

I have also asked that any discretionary funds from the state be used to support summer and after school initiatives and more seats for pre-k students- instead of a voucher program.

And our position has not changed when it comes to returning control of LRSD back to the people of Little Rock.

I still stand firm that local control should have been returned yesterday, BECAUSE it's time for our city to unite in support of our public schools.

As I often say, I am a proud product of Little Rock Public Schools, and I believe that ALL students - no matter their neighborhood or socioeconomic status - deserve a world-class education.

Many attempts have been made to positively change the course of our school district and charter schools. The State takeover of LRSD has fallen short.

It IS TIME we look at new ways to truly improve our schools.

Local Control, alone, is not enough. We need local control to take the next step... a total reimagining and reinvention of education in Little Rock. We have been using the same principles for education, expecting different results.

IT'S TIME to be creative.

IT'S TIME to be bold.

IT'S TIME to be DIFFERENT.

This is why I plan to implement Little Rock's 2020 Education Roadmap - our efforts to ensure our City takes responsibility for its future - OUR students.

We intend to launch the 2020 Roadmap by appointing Little Rock's Chief Education Officer.

He or she will determine how the City can work with our Governor, legislature, neighboring school districts, charter schools, our community, and other local stakeholders to create a SINGLE SCHOOL DISTRICT south of the Arkansas River.

I will also ask the Chief Education Officer to explore the

opportunity for this new single district to be governed by the City of Little Rock with true local control.

ONE CITY. ONE DISTRICT.

We must ensure Little Rock offers great schools-whether through one public school district, public charters, parochial, or private schools-because we KNOW the future of Little Rock depends on the success of every child, regardless of their school or neighborhood.

Through L-R 2020, the City would be committed to elevating the teaching profession, empowering parents with quality choices, and reassessing school spending and resource allocation.

We believe enhancing pre-k options for all, ensuring adequate transportation options for charter schools, and supporting summer and afterschool initiatives would be a better use of any supplemental resources, and the City of Little Rock would be responsible for doing so.

IT'S TIME we take responsibility for educating our children.

We've made significant progress in the first three months, and

we expect to continue making significant strides throughout 2019 and my entire term as your Mayor.

Realizing that our children are our most precious assets, we intend to continue implementing Little Rock's Master Plan for Children, Youth, and Families by identifying unmet needs and increasing program quality and accountability.

To further our goal of more efficient and effective government, we will seek additional funding and promote accountability for all taxpayer dollars.

ACCORDINGLY, we will develop a plan to reinvigorate our Intergovernmental Relations Office and Grants Management Division to aggressively pursue federal resources to support key public safety, economic development, and community development priorities.

In addition, I have appointed citizens to both the compensation and leave time task forces to conduct a full review of those respective policies so that our City's government is operating efficiently and equitably.

AND, we will continue making strides to stimulate economic development in 2019. For example, I will begin developing Little Rock's first Small Business Growth Plan.

Because we know economic development is a result of a city's quality of life, we will ensure alternative modes of transportation in Little Rock by implementing an e-scooter ordinance.

We will issue a Request for Proposal this spring to obtain the best vendors for our City.

We will also expand the Sidewalk Replacement Program to promote walkability and curb appeal in all areas of Little Rock.

Public Safety will always remain a pillar of my administration.

This year we will open Fire Station 24 on Stagecoach Road, north of Baseline, to accommodate the residents of that community

by addressing response times and adequate coverage.

Unifying this city remains my internal "why." We will work to ensure every Little Rock resident feels included in our City.

With that said, we will create Little Rock's Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and rebrand the Little Rock Racial and

Cultural Diversity Commission as the Little Rock Human Rights Commission incorporating the concerns of Little Rock's LGBTQ community into the existing mission of the racial and cultural diversity commission.

Likewise, we will work with LRPD leadership to onboard an LGBTQ liaison within its Community Policing Unit.

Because it's time your Mayor works for you to bring about tangible results this year and each year of the next three years.

The formation of the transition board of directors was my first step in bringing real results and establishing a plan to unite Little Rock and focus on jobs growth.

This diverse group - co-chaired by Antwan Phillips and Will Rockefeller - was strategically handpicked to oversee the 8-citizen led subcommittees of more than 100 members that evaluated every facet of city government.

I also want to thank the other members of the transition board:

Dr. Jay Barth;

Gus Blass, III;

Tamika Edwards;

Senator Joyce Elliott;

Kathryn Hazelett;

Baker Kurrus;

Cristina Monterrey;

John Rutledge;

and Dr. Sara Tariq.

This diverse group of leaders developed a strategy to unify and create a better Little Rock.

The transition report, entitled “The Scott Script,” evaluated the following issues that were addressed during our campaign:

Economic Development;
Education;
Finance;
Inclusion;
Mobility;
Public Safety;
Quality of Life;
and Transformation and Government Reform.

This was a difficult and tedious task, but it was necessary.

Thank you to the men and women on the Transition Board and the citizen-led subcommittees who volunteered their time and talent to put forth The Scott Script.

There is so much untapped potential in our city, and I'm grateful for those who shared their talent to create this report.

It was awesome to see people from different walks of life and different ideologies come together in the spirit of unity to create a better Little Rock.

The Scott Script contains a number of great ideas that will move our city forward, to help our city transition from being disconnected to connected and to help unify this city to reach its full potential of being the greatest city in the new south.

Now, I will share just a few of those recommendations that we will work to accomplish over the next three years:

The Finance Subcommittee recommends that the City partners with the State of Arkansas to implement social impact bonds.

We may need to raise revenues under a more traditional model to address city wide needs, but social impact bonds will allow us to focus on addressing specific social needs in our city with resources and investment from the private sector.

This will unite our city in providing solutions to prevailing social issues.

The Quality of Life Subcommittee recommends that we implement the “Scott Stroll.”

I will meet and walk with residents in their neighborhoods to actively walk and talk about their goals for their

neighborhood.

By promoting individual health and wellness, we're also promoting the health and wellness of our city as a whole.

Scott Stroll will ensure that all residents have an opportunity to establish a relationship with their Mayor.

The Transformation and Governance Subcommittee recommends that we transform our government to become even more accountable to you.

As we discussed during the campaign, we move toward a more representative government, including moving away from at-large directors and requiring that each member of the City Board must obtain 40% of the votes of their electorate to win an election.

This will unite our city by promoting a more representative form of government.

The Public Safety Subcommittee recommends the implementation of an independent community review board.

As I mentioned earlier, this recommendation is already in the works in order to re-establish trust between residents and law enforcement.

The Inclusion Subcommittee recommends the evaluation and promotion of more diversity in the City's suppliers.

We will work to conduct a wholesale assessment of City of Little Rock supplier diversity initiatives and policies.

We will also work to create a broad-scale program to increase diversity in the city's purchasing policies through implementation of a supplier diversity management system for use by both suppliers and buyers.

This will unite our city by ensuring that our city's suppliers are as diverse as our residents.

The Mobility Subcommittee recommends the creation of the Little Rock Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund.

This Opportunity Fund will promote more cost inclusive development while benefitting investors with potential capital gain savings.

This will unite our city by ensuring that private

development promotes the public good without displacement or gentrification.

The Economic Development Subcommittee recommends the creation of a Red Tape Commission to initiate the cultural change in in the planning and development process.

The Red Tape Commission would be comprised of small businesses owners to review City Code, licensing, permitting, zoning, planning, and any additional touch points between small businesses and City Hall in order to improve services and reduce red tape.

This will unite our city by promoting growth, development, and opportunity.

And again, these are a just a few of the number of great recommendations developed by the Transition Team and Subcommittees. The Scott Script will be released soon and everyone will have an opportunity to review these goals.

We know that the recommendations put forth in this report are just that - recommendations.

We will explore the budgetary, legal, and staffing implications

of these recommendations before committing to them.

And those adopted recommendations from this citizen-led report will serve as a roadmap for moving Little Rock forward.

Eighty-seven days have passed since I was sworn in as Mayor on stage at the Robinson Center and I gave my word change was coming. Well I have kept my word, and I will continue to keep my word: it is a new day in Little Rock.

As a son of Little Rock, as your Mayor and as an ordained minister, I can testify that the State of the City of Little Rock is strong and it is my responsibility to make sure that the City of Little Rock is stronger in the years ahead.

If you want to change Little Rock, I can't do it alone. If we want to make Little Rock the best version of itself, you must stay engaged.

Please continue to hold my City Hall accountable.

And I encourage you to continue holding ME accountable.

And together, we will build a Little Rock that works for

everyone.

We will build a Little Rock that exhibits the untapped potential and ingenuity of our residents.

Yes, we will build a Little Rock that will be the economic envy of the South.

Little Rock, let's get to work.

Thank you, and God bless Little Rock, Arkansas.