

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
104th GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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Speaker Welch: "The House will be in order. Members will be in their chairs. We shall be led in prayer today by Pastor John Hannah. Pastor Hannah is with New Life Covenant Southeast in Chicago. Pastor Hannah is the guest of Senator Preston today. Members and guests are asked to refrain from starting their laptops, turn off all cell phones, and to rise for the invocation and.. and which will also followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. But please, at this time, welcome my friend, Pastor Hannah."

Pastor Hannah: "Good afternoon, everyone. To the governor, to the Speaker of the House, to all the Senators and elected officials, to my Senator, Senator William Preston, I wanted to welcome each of you all to come to beautiful City of Chicago to the South Side, and make sure you visit the 16th District to see everything that is going on. So, today, God, we pray for wisdom and discernment, that you will make decisions regarding this budget guided by truth, integrity, and the greater good. Today, we pray for unity and cooperation, that you will work across political division for the common good of our state. We pray for protection and strength, that you will be kept safe from harm, threats, and undue pressure. We pray for humility and servant leadership, that you will lead with humility, putting the needs of all the people first. We pray for compassion and justice, that you would advocate for the vulnerable and uphold justice for all. We pray for integrity and honesty, that you will be truthful, transparent, and free from any corruption whatsoever. We pray for your personal and your family life, that your families will be strengthened and not suffer from

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the demands of public service. We pray for courage and conviction, that you will stand firm in what is right, even when it is unpopular. We pray for peace and stability, that you will promote policies that lead to national global peace. And, lastly, we pray for spiritual awakesness, that you will seek and know God and know that it is him who has blessed you to sit in the seat that you sit in for his people. And we say amen."

Speaker Welch: "We will be led in the Pledge of Allegiance today by Representative Canty."

Canty - et al: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Speaker Welch: "Roll Call for Attendance. Leader Gabel is recognized to report any excused absences on the Democratic side of the aisle."

Gabel: "Speaker, let the record show that Representative Andrade is excused today."

Speaker Welch: "The record will reflect. Leader Keicher is recognized to report any excused absences of the Republican side of the aisle."

Keicher: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have Representative Charlie Meier excused for today."

Speaker Welch: "The record will reflect. Have all recorded themselves who wish? Have all recorded themselves who wish? Have all recorded themselves who wish? Mr. Clerk, please take the record. With 116 Members present and answering the roll call, a quorum is present. Mr. Clerk, Committee Reports."

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Clerk Hollman: "Committee Reports. Representative DeLuca, Chairperson from the Committee on Cities & Villages reports the following committee action taken on February 18, 2025: do pass Short Debate is Senate Bill 1082. Representative Gong-Gershowitz, Chairperson from the Committee on Judiciary - Civil reports the following committee action taken on February 19, 2025: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 24, House Bill 28, and House Bill 1077. Representative Morgan, Chairperson from the Committee on Health Care Licenses reports the following committee action taken on February 19, 2025: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 1365. Representative Andrade, Chairperson from the Committee on Transportation: Vehicles & Safety reports the following committee action taken on February 19, 2025: do pass Short Debate is House Bill 1120 and House Bill 1226. Introduction of resolutions. House Resolution 140, offered by Representative Halbrook; and House Joint Resolution 15, offered by Representative Halbrook, are referred to the Rules Committee."

Speaker Welch: "Members, Members, the regular session will stand in recess. The doorkeeper is recognized for an announcement."

Doorkeeper Hill: "Mr. Speaker, the Honorable President Harmon and the Members of the Senate are at the door and seek admission to the chamber."

Speaker Welch: "Madam Doorkeeper, please admit the Honorable Senators. Would the Members of the House and our guests from the Senate and our other guests please take their seats? Shhh. Would the Members of the House and our guests from the Senate and our distinguished other guests please take their seats? As designated in House Joint Resolution #7, the hour of noon

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having arrived, the Joint Session of the 104th General Assembly will now come to order. Mr. Clerk, is a quorum of the House present?"

Clerk Hollman: "A quorum of the House is present."

Speaker Welch: "President Harmon, is a quorum of the Senate present in this chamber?"

President Harmon: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A quorum of the Senate is present."

Speaker Welch: "There being a quorum of the House and a quorum of the Senate in attendance, this Joint Session is convened. Welcome, everyone, to the House of Representatives. I'd like to take a moment to recognize some very distinguished guests who are present with us in the chamber. I would like to recognize the chief justice of the Illinois Supreme Court, the Honorable Mary Jane Theis. I'd like to recognize, from the Illinois Supreme Court, the Honorable Justice P. Scott Neville, Jr.; from the Illinois Supreme Court, the Honorable Justice David K. Overstreet; I love his haircut, the honorable attorney general from the great State of Illinois, the Honorable Kwame Raoul; our honorable secretary of state, Honorable Alexi Giannoulias; our madam comptroller, the Honorable Susana Mendoza; the honorable treasurer for the State of Illinois, the Honorable Michael W. Frerichs; and our auditor general, Auditor General Frank Mautino. Also joining us on the floor today is the chief of staff to the governor of this great state, Ms. Anne Caprara is here. Also joining us, deputy governor for budget and economy, Mr. Andy Manar is here. Also joining us is the senior advisor to the governor for policy and legislation, Ms. Emily Miller is here. And

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also joining us on the floor today, the director of the Governor's Office of Management and Budget, Ms. Alexis Sturm is here. The Chair recognizes the House majority leader, Representative Gabel."

Gabel: "Mr. Speaker, I move for the adoption of Joint Session Resolution #1."

Speaker Welch: "Mr. Clerk, read the resolution."

Clerk Hollman: "Joint Session Resolution #1. Be it

RESOLVED, That a committee of eleven be appointed, six from the House, by the Speaker of the House, and five from the Senate, by the President of the Senate, to wait upon Governor JB Pritzker and invite him to address the Joint Assembly."

Speaker Welch: "Representative Gabel has moved for the adoption of the resolution. All those in favor signify by saying 'aye'; all those opposed... opposed say 'nay.' In the opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. And the resolution is adopted. Pursuant to the resolution, the following are appointed as a committee to escort the governor. The appointments from the House are as follows: Representative Buckner, Representative Delgado, Representative Gabel, Representative Guzzardi, Representative Jacobs, and Representative Rosenthal. President Harmon."

President Harmon: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The appointments from the Senate are: Senator Belt, Senator Halpin, Senator Villanueva, Senator Balkema, and Senator Fowler."

Speaker Welch: "Will the Committee of Escorts please convene at the rear of the chamber and await the governor. Madam Doorkeeper, you are recognized for an announcement."

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Doorkeeper Hill: "Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, his excellency, the governor of the State of Illinois, JB Pritzker, and his party wish to be admitted to this chamber."

Speaker Welch: "Madam Doorkeeper, please admit our honorable governor and his party. Members and guests, the honorable governor of this great state, Governor JB Pritzker."

Governor Pritzker: "Thank you very much. Speaker Welch, President Harmon, Minority Leader McCombie, Minority Leader Curran, Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton, my fellow constitutional officers, the Members of the 104th General Assembly, Chief Justice Theis and the members of the Supreme Court, First Lady MK Pritzker, honored guests, and all the people of the great State of Illinois, I'm JB Pritzker, and I'm grateful to be here to deliver my seventh State of the State and Budget Address. In 1818, the first Illinois Constitution mandated that the governor 'shall from time to time give the general assembly information of the state of the government, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall deem expedient.' Remarkably, as far as I can tell, every single year for 207 years, in one fashion or another, Illinois governors have stood before this body to do what our first constitution mandated of them. These messages have reflected the unique times during which each governor served. Our second governor, Edward Coles, advocated for the abolition of slavery decades before Abraham Lincoln, passionate in his entreaty that it was a matter of justice and humanity. Dwight Green, our 32nd governor, implored Illinoisans at the start of the Second World War to not let the tragic spirit of despair overcome us. I like what this

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tradition represents. No matter what budget circumstances, no matter if there's a world war or a deadly pandemic, no matter how many governors and legislators have been elected and installed, every year our democratic process begins again. And every year, we come together as democratically elected Representatives of the people to acknowledge that the power they grant us with each election and reelection is not unlimited. It's traditions like this one which bring together all our branches of government to stand in respect of each other, that underpin the guardrails of our democracy. The only power that the constitution truly recognizes is a power that is capable of humbling itself before our people. Since I became governor, each of our budgets has been an effort to strengthen the fiscal foundation upon which we could all confidently build prosperity throughout Illinois, in good years and in bad. Together, so far, we've paid down more than \$12 billion in debt, grown a Rainy Day Fund of more than \$2 billion, improved our pension funded ratio, and earned nine credit upgrades, which are the first in a quarter century. And we invested in things that matter to Illinoisans: education, health care, public safety, infrastructure, and job creation. Every single one of these budget years has presented its own unique set of difficulties. This year is no exception. Here's the good news: We've made responsible investments, and Illinois is better built for the long term. That means that lean budget years are a challenge and no longer a catastrophe. Overcoming a challenging budget year starts with growing our economy. Because every business we add, every dollar we invest, every worker we employ, every

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entrepreneur we uplift, strengthens our resiliency. For too many years, Illinois lacked an organized effort to attract, retain, and expand businesses, payrolls, and career opportunities. Global CEOs and site selectors have told me Illinois was never on their radar screen because for decades our state wasn't proactively competing for their new factories or headquarters like other states were. That's all changing thanks to the work of this General Assembly and our new Team Illinois economic development organization. This state has so much to offer: among the best in the nation for workforce talent, innovation, clean energy, abundant fresh water, fertile soil, educational and scientific institutions, and so much more. I've been across the country and around the world with Illinois business leaders showing our wares to company leaders looking for a place to expand, and we've had real success. In 2019, CNBC's list of Top States for Business ranked Illinois 30th out of 50 states. Today, we're 15th. Our economy is over \$1.1 trillion and growing, the fifth largest in the United States and the 18th largest in the world. We're now... we're now ranked number two in the nation for corporate expansions and relocation destinations. And you can see that progress, from Du Quoin to Decatur to Manteno to Belvidere. Back in 2016, Mitsubishi closed its only U.S. plant in Normal, Illinois. The community's future was in jeopardy. Along came Rivian Automotive, which bought the idled plant and brought new life to the factory, and in turn, to the community. Not satisfied with that, Team Illinois worked with the General Assembly to support Rivian's decision to invest \$1.5 billion more in a factory expansion. In 2018, there were 27 Rivian

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employees in Normal. There are now thousands. When... when Vaughan & Bushnell Manufacturing, an economic engine and community institution in Bushnell for over 150 years, was on the verge of closing, hundreds of jobs and the future of the community were at risk. A small town where generations of Illinoisans had laid down roots, built lives, and raised families could have disappeared. Team Illinois immediately began working with the company and local officials to make sure that that didn't happen. Those efforts compelled Marshalltown Company to step in and acquire Vaughan & Bushnell, keeping the jobs right here in Illinois and keeping a small town together. Bushnell Mayor Robin Wilt is here with us today. Would you please stand and be recognized? When her community was in need, Mayor Wilt rolled up her sleeves and worked with my team to keep it together. She didn't worry about partisan politics or budget games. Her focus was, as ours should be, on the working families who depend on our ability to get results. Voortman Steel, Kellanova, PsiQuantum, Prysmian Group, Nexamp, Manner Polymers, and so many more, representing tens of billions of dollars of investment and revenue, these are just some of the new facilities and headquarters that have moved to Illinois or expanded here in just the last few years. And they're an important part of the vital new economic foundation of this state. Economic growth is an essential ingredient that allows us to move beyond challenging budget years like this one. None of this happens without fiscal responsibility. I'm proud to say that this year's budget proposal is balanced and responsible. It represents some hard sacrifices and moderated

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spending. We're preserving the progress that we've made over the last six years, streamlining certain departments to do more with less, and delivering for our residents without raising their taxes. Like so many other states, our FY26 revenue will grow at a slower rate than we experienced in recent years. For example, state-sourced revenue increased 15.9% in 2021 and 13.2% in 2022. We expect to finish this year with 5% revenue growth. But for 2026, our forecast projects a 1.9% increase, much more modest, in part because the U.S. economy is projected to grow at a slower pace. While we hope this is temporary in nature, I am not going to base a budget on bloated revenue estimates. I have never done that. And therefore, our spending must reflect reality. We have to live within our means. New discretionary spending is increasing by less than 1% in the FY26 budget. Other expenditures are mandatory: full pension payments, inflation on health care coverage, and debt paydown, for example. This proposed budget enacts cost-saving operational efficiencies, improves productivity, curtails new hiring at agencies, consolidates unnecessary segregated funds, eliminates dormant boards and commissions, and overhauls state purchasing to save taxpayers money. Each and every year I have proposed a balanced budget, and each and every year the General Assembly has passed a balanced budget. As always, I stand ready to work with Members of the General Assembly to deliberate and negotiate the final budget. But let's be clear, I will only sign a balanced budget. If you come to the table looking to spend more, I'm going to ask you where you want to cut. I have made difficult... I have made difficult decisions,

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including to programs I have championed, which is hard for me, just as I know some of the difficult decisions you will have to make will be hard for you. I believe strongly that we must continue our firm commitment to building up the Rainy Day Fund, new funding for public schools, investing in economic growth and jobs, and improving much-needed services to working families and to the most vulnerable. These are things that we cannot compromise on, particularly when we face the uncertainty of the federal government's haphazard ready, fire, aim tactics toward everyday Americans. I know it's in fashion at the federal level right now to just indiscriminately slash school funding, health care coverage, support for farmers, and veterans' services. They say they're doing it to eliminate inefficiencies. But only an idiot would think that we should eliminate emergency response in a natural disaster, education and health care for disabled children, gang crime investigations, clean air and water programs, monitoring of nursing home abuse, nuclear reactor regulation, and cancer research. Here in Illinois, 10 years ago, we saw the consequences of a rampant ideological gutting of government. It genuinely harmed people. Our citizens hated it. Trust me, I won an entire election in part on just how much they hated it. So, while this budget makes sacrifices, it preserves Illinois' progress toward delivering what children and families need most. We ought to be focused on making life more affordable for everyday Illinoisans. With the new tariffs that are already put in place by President Trump and the ones that he has proposed, the cost of everyday goods like tomatoes and beef and beer is likely to rise again.

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It's confounding that when this happens, it seems like large corporations just hike up prices to drive up profits, while everyday people get stuck with the bill. It's not right, and we ought to call out the federal government and the companies on it. We can do something about it at the state level. Last year, we lowered taxes on parents when we enacted the Child Tax Credit and permanently eliminated the state grocery tax, together saving Illinoisans more than half a billion dollars per year. This year, we're going to need to do even more to address high prices and counteract Trump's tariffs that will raise taxes on working families. At the top of the list, we need to lower health care costs. One of the great ironies of our modern age is that breakthroughs in research are producing medications that can treat and even cure long-standing chronic diseases, but the high cost of these drugs are making them unaffordable for people who need them the most. What's causing that? Well, patients, health care providers, and independent pharmacists will all tell you that pharmacy benefit managers, or PBMs, are driving up prices. PBMs are middlemen in the health care industry. They extract extra profit from patients through opaque and often predatory tactics. They are not doctors, but they work with insurance companies to deny people the drugs and treatment doctors prescribe. Not only are they driving up health care costs for Illinois families by hundreds of millions of dollars per year, but they're also putting small, local, independent pharmacies out of business. Michelle Dyer of Macoupin County is a pharmacy owner. Will you please stand and be recognized? Michelle was forced to close three of her stores after years

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of skyrocketing PBM fees. Her livelihood was threatened and so were her patients. She's not alone. We're talking about rural small businesses being ruined by large pharmacy store chains that own PBMs. Michelle and all the independent, family-run pharmacies are under threat and they deserve a level playing field. That's why I'm introducing the Prescription Drug Affordability Act to reign in the unfair practices of PBMs, reduce drug costs for Illinois patients by hundreds of dollars per year on average, and protect independent pharmacists. We'll also give full statutory authority to the Illinois Department of Insurance to examine the books and records of PBMs and require them to submit to annual reporting and auditing. We're going to end the overcharging for drugs that people rely on, from insulin for diabetics to chemotherapy for cancer patients. Now, millions of Illinoisans have had an unexpected illness or accident that left them owing thousands of dollars in medical bills that they may never be able to pay. Today, I'm announcing a second batch of medical debt cancellations, made possible through our landmark program established last year. Over 100,000 Illinoisans have now seen their medical debt automatically erased. This is a great example of the creative policies that have allowed us to transform the lives of our people for the better while remaining fiscally prudent. So far, \$900,000 has allowed us to eliminate over \$128 million in medical debt owed by middle class and working-class families, saving them over a thousand dollars on average. Last year, we enacted the Healthcare Protection Act, allowing doctors and patients to make their own medical decisions

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without interference from insurance companies. It will save Illinoisans money while improving the quality of medical care in this state. Well, this year, we're going to take it a step further. We're going to stop insurance companies from blocking access to mental health. We can do that by banning prior authorization for all behavioral health care. And for rural Illinois families and those who live far away from certain medical care, we'll require insurance reimbursement for reasonable travel costs associated with medical appointments when the distance traveled exceeds network adequacy requirements. The days of unchecked health insurance greed are coming to an end here in Illinois. Predatory practices are being dismantled one by one, and we're going to lower the cost of health care for working families. One of the biggest affordability challenges people are facing is housing. Amid the construction supply chain challenges of the last few years, along with higher interest rates, Illinois' housing inventory decreased more than the national average. That's got to change. Last year, I appointed a director of housing solutions and formed an advisory committee of housing experts. They proposed a slate of reforms to unlock new financing, attract capital, incentivize builders, and eliminate unnecessary barriers to housing construction. This year, I'm asking the General Assembly to put those recommendations to work so that we can make Illinois housing more affordable and economical. While this is a year for tightening our belts, we've made real progress toward giving every Illinois child the support they need to live a healthy and prosperous life. Let's not lose that forward momentum.

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Our historic investments in evidence-based funding have made a profound impact on student success. In 2024, reading scores for Illinois' eighth graders were the second highest in the nation, and their math scores were fifth highest in the nation. On top of that good news, high school graduation rates in Illinois have reached a 14-year high. I believe in building on what works. So, despite the challenges that we're facing this year with the budget, my budget proposal increases our commitment to evidence-based funding for public education so that we can put new resources in underfunded schools first. Improving the classroom environment and limiting distractions is vital to student achievement, and in conversations with educators and parents around the state, there is one thing they commonly cite as an impediment to learning in the classroom: cell phones. Furthermore, cyberbullying has expanded at alarming rates, and it's time for Illinois to take measures to protect our kids. That's why this session, I'll move forward with legislation requiring all school districts in Illinois to adopt a cell phone policy that bans the use of phones during classroom instruction. More focus on learning will bring even greater success for kids across our state. According to U.S. News and World Report, Illinois ranks number seven in the nation for pre-K to 12 education, and that's one reason why so many of our students go to college. And our MAP grant and AIM HIGH scholarship programs, along with our state universities' free college offers like the Huskie Pledge and Illinois Promise, are making university education in Illinois more affordable. But making it more accessible would help us keep the best and brightest students

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here at home. So, I propose we pass the Public University Direct Admission Program Act introduced by Majority Leader Kimberly Lightford last year. It... it would allow students to know before they apply whether they qualify for admission to any or all of our state's public universities. That way a student can apply with no fee and full confidence in their acceptance. More kids in Illinois will stay and go to school here, and that's great for our state's families and our economy. Along those lines, I... I want to offer one final proposal focused on one of the jewels of the Illinois education system, our community colleges. Yeah. Illinois is home to one of best community college systems in the nation, third largest in size and still growing. Last fall, enrollment at Illinois community colleges grew for the third consecutive year, outpacing the national average by almost 3%. One of those students is Melissa McKaig of Jerseyville who is here today. Will you stand, Melissa? Melissa is a nursing student at Lewis and Clark College... Community College and a... a student trustee, along with being a devoted mother and grandmother. Melissa wants to pursue a baccalaureate degree in nursing, but the cost and the commute to a school farther away will make it too expensive. There are people like Melissa all across Illinois who want to get a four-year degree to make a better living. We should make that easier for them. And that's why I'm proposing that we allow community colleges to offer four-year baccalaureate degrees for in-demand career paths: nursing, advanced manufacturing, early childhood education, and beyond. I mean, with lower tuition rates and greater presence across the state, especially in rural areas,

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community colleges provide the flexibility and the affordability that students need. This is a consumer-driven, student-centered proposal that will help fill the needs of regional employers in high-need sectors and create a pathway to stable, quality jobs for more Illinoisans. This is my seventh State of the State Address, and I've come before you to present a budget in good years and in bad, in years of crisis and years of relative stability. There's a whole industry of backseat bellyachers in this state and around the country who make a profession out of rhetorically tearing down Illinois and suggesting that if we would just enact one of their magic bean fixes that we would never face another difficult budget year. But there's one thing that I've learned as governor, there are no magic bean fixes. And each year, there's some difficulty that requires us to work hard to overcome it. This year, the surfacing difficulty is Donald Trump's and Elon Musk's plan to steal Illinois' tax dollars and deny our citizens the protection and the services that they need. I want to offer a few examples. Twenty million Americans, 700,000 of them here in Illinois, will lose health care coverage if congressional Republicans are successful in their effort to cut the Affordable Care Act, and rural hospitals across Illinois will be shuttered. The Trump administration cut off funding for food safety inspectors for nearly a month, impacting more than 70 meat and poultry facilities in Illinois. Without these inspectors, the supply chain collapses, prices go through the roof, from farmers to truckers to meat packers to retailers, jobs will be lost. Meals on Wheels programs, which home-deliver 12 million meals

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per year to 100,000 seniors and people with disabilities in Illinois, are on the federal chopping block. This is real. The new administration and the Republican Congress and Elon Musk intend to take these programs away. For all the Illinoisans watching at home, let me be clear: This is going to affect your daily lives. Our state budget can't make up for the damage that is done to people across our state if they succeed. There are people, some in my own party, who think that if you just give Donald Trump everything that he wants, he'll make an exception and he'll spare you some of the harm. I'll ignore the moral abdication of that position for just a second to say, almost none of those people have had the experience with the president that I do. I once swallowed my pride to offer him what he values most, public praise on the Sunday news shows, in return for ventilators and N95 masks during the worst of the pandemic. We made a deal. And it turns out his promises were as broken as the BiPAP machines he sent us instead of ventilators. Going along to get along does not work, just ask the Trump-fearing red state governors. You can boo all you want until your constituents lose these services. Those Trump state, red state governors are dealing with the same cuts that we are, and I won't be fooled twice. Last week, our federal courts returned a verdict rightfully condemning the once unchecked power of a former Speaker of this House. Now, if you applauded that decision like I did, then I expect you to defend and applaud those same federal courts as they check this president in his quest for unrestrained power. I've been reflecting these last four weeks on two important parts of my life: my

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work helping to build the Illinois Holocaust Museum and the two times that I've had the privilege of reciting the oath of office for Illinois governor. As some of you know, Skokie, Illinois once had one of the largest populations of Holocaust survivors anywhere in the world. In 1978, Nazis decided that they wanted to march there. The leaders of that march knew that the images of swastika-clad young men goose stepping down a peaceful suburban street would terrorize the local Jewish population, so many of whom had never recovered from their time in German concentration camps. The prospect of that march sparked a legal fight that went all the way to the Supreme Court. It was a Jewish lawyer from the ACLU who argued the case for the Nazis, contending that even the most hateful of speech was protected under the First Amendment. As an American and as a Jew, I find it difficult to resolve my feelings around that Supreme Court case, but I am grateful that the prospect of Nazis marching in their streets spurred the survivors and other Skokie residents to act. They joined together to form the Holocaust Memorial Foundation and built the first Illinois Holocaust Museum in a storefront in 1981, a small but important forerunner to the one I helped to build 30 years later here. I do not invoke the specter of Nazis lightly, but I know the history intimately and have spent more time than probably anyone in this room with people who survived the Holocaust. Here's what I've learned: The root that tears apart your house's foundation begins as a seed, a seed of distrust and hate and blame. The seed that grew into a dictatorship in Europe a lifetime ago didn't arrive overnight. It started with everyday Germans mad about

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inflation and looking for someone to blame. I'm watching with a foreboding dread what is happening in our country right now. A president who watches a plane go down in the Potomac and suggests, without facts or findings, that a diversity hire is responsible for the crash. Or the Missouri attorney general who just sued Starbucks, arguing that consumers pay higher prices for their coffee because the baristas are too 'female' and 'nonwhite.' The authoritarian playbook is laid bare here: They point to a group of people who don't look like you and tell you to blame them for your problems. I just have one question: What comes next? After we've discriminated against, deported, or disparaged all the immigrants and the gay and lesbian and transgender people, the developmentally disabled, the women, and the minorities, once we've ostracized our neighbors and betrayed our friends, after that, when the problems we started with are still there staring us in the face, what comes next? All the atrocities of human history lurk in the answer to that question. And if we don't want to repeat history, then for God's sake, in this moment, we better be strong enough to learn from it. I swore the following oath on Abraham Lincoln's Bible: 'I do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of Illinois, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of governor according to the best of my ability.' My oath is to the constitution of our state and of our country. We don't have kings in America, and I don't intend to bend the knee to one. I'm not speaking up in service to my ambitions but in deference to my obligations. If you think I'm overreacting

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and sounding the alarm too soon, consider this: It took the Nazis one month, three weeks, two days, eight hours, and 40 minutes to dismantle a constitutional republic. And all I'm saying is that when the five-alarm fire starts to burn, every good person better be ready to man a post with a bucket of water if you want to stop it from raging out of control. Those Illinois Nazis did end up holding their march in 1978, just not in Skokie. After all the blowback from the case, they decided to march in Chicago instead. Only 20 of them showed up, but 2,000 people came to counter protest. The Chicago Tribune reported that day that the rally sputtered to an unspectacular end after 10 minutes. It was Illinoisans who smothered those embers before they could burn into a flame. Tyranny requires your fear and your silence and your compliance. Democracy requires your courage. So, gather your justice and humanity, Illinois, and do not let the tragic spirit of despair overcome us when our country needs us the most. Thank you."

Speaker Welch: "Will the Committee of Escorts please come forward to escort the governor from the chamber? Will the Committee of Escorts please come forward to escort the governor from the chamber? President Harmon is recognized for a motion."

President Harmon: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the Joint Session do now arise."

Speaker Welch: "President Harmon has moved that the Joint Session do now arise. All those in favor signify by saying 'aye'; all opposed signify by saying 'nay.' In the opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. And the Joint Session will now arise. The regular session will come to order. The regular session will

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come to order. Shhh. Representative Mayfield, do you seek recognition?"

Mayfield: "Yes. Personal privilege, please."

Speaker Welch: "Please state your point."

Mayfield: "Civil rights activist, educator, politician, and trailblazer..."

Speaker Welch: "Representative, one moment. One moment. Shhh. Please allow the Member to state her point. Representative."

Mayfield: "Thank you, Speaker. As the first Black woman to serve in the United States House of Representatives, Shirley Chisholm was truly a woman of firsts. Representing New York's 12th Congressional District from 1969 to 1983, her support shattered barriers and laid the foundation for future generations of women and people of color in politics. She fought on the frontlines advocating for women's rights, racial and economic justice, anti-poverty initiatives, educational adjustments, and social justice. A fulfilling and influential career like hers could never be achieved without perseverance and cannot be summed up in a few brief remarks like these. Nevertheless, I'm going to highlight a few of the Representative Chisholm's many accomplishments. Upon embarking... upon embarking upon her journey as a United States Representative in 1968, she immediately got to work. She helped to expand the food stamp program, establish the special supplemental nutritional program for women, infants, and children, also known as WIC, sponsored programs to help underprivileged students attend college, introduced legislation to end the Vietnam War, and promote gender and racial equality, improve the Fair Housing Act, and granted

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unemployment benefits to domestic workers. Introducing over 50 pieces of legislation, she was committed to establishing and improving measures for groups that many times were underrepresented and left in the shadows. A true mover and shaker, she cofounded the National Organization of Women and the National Political Congress of Black Women. Beyond that, in 1971, she was a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus, where she made it her mission to be a voice for racial equality and justice. Her work is a testament to hard work, dedication, and never being afraid to challenge the norms. We can all take a page out of Shirley's book. The work that we are here to do is for the people who trust us with their lives. They come first, and every decision we make must take them into account. Black history is American history. Thank you so much."

Speaker Welch: "Thank you, Representative. Committee announcements."

Clerk Hollman: "The following committees will be meeting this afternoon: Meeting at 2:30 p.m. is Gun Violence Prevention in Room 118, Labor & Commerce in Room 114, and State Government Administration in Room C-1. All of the committees were canceled."

Speaker Welch: "Leader Keicher, you seek recognition?"

Keicher: "Point of personal privilege, please, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Welch: "Please state your point."

Keicher: "I think as many of you know, I'm not a very emotional person. But as a Republican, as a man who has defended people of the Jewish faith repeatedly, I'm personally offended that I had to sit here and repeatedly hear the governor of this

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state accuse Members of my party as being Nazis in a lazy trope to launch a national campaign instead of pointing out the work that has similarly been done in Argentina. I think the Republican Caucus of both the House and the Senate deserve an apology from the governor, as it's a lazy trope, instead of talking about the debt-ridden problems that this state really needs to be focused on. I apologize for I... my emotion, Mr. Speaker, but I'm beside myself with what I just had to witness. Thank you."

Speaker Welch: "Mr. Clerk, Agreed Resolutions."

Clerk Hollman: "Agreed Resolutions. House Resolution 139, offered by Representative Hoffman. House Resolution 141, offered by Representative Weber. And House Resolution 142, offered by Representative Didech."

Speaker Welch: "Leader Gabel moves for the adoption of the Agreed Resolutions. All those in favor say 'aye'; all those opposed say 'nay.' In the opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. And the Agreed Resolutions are adopted. And now, allowing perfunctory time for the clerk, Leader Gabel moves that the House stand adjourned until Thursday, February 20, at the hour of noon. At the hour of noon. All those in favor say 'aye'; all those opposed say 'nay.' In the opinion of the Chair, the 'ayes' have it. And the House stands adjourned."

Clerk Hollman: "House Perfunctory Session will come to order. Introduction and First Reading of House Bills. House Bill 3868, offered by Leader McCombie, a Bill for an Act concerning appropriations. House Bill 3869, offered by Representative DeLuca, a Bill for an Act concerning education. First Reading

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of these House Bills. There being no further business, the House Perfunctory Session will stand adjourned."