

INAUGURAL ADDRESS (As Prepared for Delivery)

The Honorable Dannielle M. Glaros

Chair, Prince George's County Council, District 3

Monday, December 3, 2018

Good morning Prince George's County! Congratulations Council colleagues!

The psalmist said it so well. "This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it."

I am truly amazed by the tremendous favor God has bestowed upon our beloved County, and as Council Chair, I am deeply humbled to stand before you on behalf of your new County Council!

Being chosen to lead and serve this great County is a signal honor, and we are all very proud and excited to celebrate our progress, this inaugural ceremony and our next four years together!

To our wonderful citizens; elected leadership past and present; family members; honored guests; neighbors and friends - thank you so much for being here. Your presence and support on this joyful day means the world to all of us.

None of us could do this job and do it well, without the love and support of our families, and we want them to know we are forever grateful. Their patience and understanding allows us as elected officials to focus on a life of public service.

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If I may take a moment of personal privilege, I want to thank my parents; my husband Steve, and our children Lillian and Evan, who motivate me to be better every single day, and are always available for hugs after a long day.

Our thanks also to the Inaugural 2018 Planning Committee for this outstanding event. You have worked long and hard during this leadership transition to make today a success. Your tireless efforts are very much appreciated.

We are deeply grateful to our departing Council colleagues who have served their second and final terms under term limits - The Honorable Andrea C. Harrison, Mary Lehman, Obie Patterson, and Karen R. Toles, as well as outgoing County Executive Rushern L. Baker, the third.

Together, we worked over the last eight years to further the transformation of Prince George's County into an economic powerhouse in our region. Breaking ground on major new projects across the County, including a new hospital, and celebrating a multitude of grand openings, our collective leadership has given rise to a much stronger, more robust Prince George's County.

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The legacy of our predecessors and countless other public servants has laid the foundation we are blessed to build upon today. Their invaluable contributions and commitment to this County we all call home is a beacon for all who are elected leaders in this great and awesome County.

The 2018 elections saw a historic number of women and people of color run for, and win, elected offices throughout our country; and very shortly on this stage, we will bear witness to our own historical first in Prince George's County – as County Executive-Elect Angela Alsobrooks, who becomes the first woman to hold the seat, takes the Oath of Office.

This Council congratulates our County Executive-Elect for successfully shattering the glass ceiling that others have been chiseling at for such a long time. Together, in leadership, we will propel our County forward to deliver the very best for our residents.

This is truly a moment of profound change in County Government, a moment which gives us the opportunity to take a deeper look at how we govern, how we empower and engage our residents, and how we deliver for our communities.

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With a new and expanded Council we have a fresh, energetic team of lawmakers, united by a positive vision for the County and her people, and focused on the critical issues facing our County.

We are eager as Council Members to make a difference in the lives of Prince Georgians through our leadership and service. Together, we are bound to the unfolding story of Prince George's County.

Having taken the oath to uphold the County Charter, this Council is committed to placing the best interests of the County first. Our success as a County will be measured by our ability to consider all viewpoints and balance all perspectives, forging a relationship that serves our County well.

As Cesar Chavez said, "We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community...Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own."

Four of us are returning to the Council to serve our second terms – myself, and Council Vice Chair Todd Turner, Council Member Derrick Leon Davis and Council Member Deni Taveras.

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Most of our expanded 11-member local legislature, however, are new faces on the Council, or familiar faces, now in new places! We welcome Council Members Tom Dernoga, Jolene Ivey, Rodney Streeter, Monique Anderson-Walker, and Sydney Harrison as well as our two, new voter-approved At-Large Members – Council Member Mel Franklin and Council Member Calvin S. Hawkins, the second.

As the baton is passed, and we run the next leg of our legislative agenda, this Council will continue to build on legacy initiatives that transcend transition – housing opportunities for all; transformative economic development; updated zoning regulations; a world class education for our young people; access to quality healthcare; refuge for those in need; regional cooperation; and a balanced budget that speaks to our shared priorities.

During the term of this new Council, we will see major projects move forward to completion, and new places grow over the next four years.

The new hospital – University of Maryland Capital Region Health, anchoring Downtown Prince George's at the Largo Town Center, will open its doors, and transform healthcare delivery in our County and our local economy.

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Suitland will be at the center of a renaissance anchored by development that was envisioned over 20 years ago when The Honorable Wayne K. Curry led our County.

And, we will take our first rides on the new 16-mile Purple Line light rail.

Working together, we will build a Prince George's County where lives and communities are transformed, and economic progress is achieved. Prince George's County is a competitive force across our region and in our nation, and the energy of this new 11-member County Council and our new County Executive ensures the best is yet to come.

This new Council looks forward to working with every stakeholder - civic leaders, businesses, nonprofits and neighborhood groups - to identify the most effective ways to extend our partnership for the greatest mutual benefit.

We also understand that for Prince George's County to succeed, our citizens must be confident that their voices are heard and that we are making the best decisions for the good of our residents and communities.

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Over the next four years, as part of our mission, we will employ initiatives to address the concerns of Prince Georgians, enhance our Quality of Life, and yes, Together, Strengthen Our Communities.

Working together for an even better, stronger Prince George's County will mean growing communities that we are anchored to, strive to care for, and feel proud of; celebrating a County where children and their families can live fulfilled lives and pursue their dreams; and creating a place that our young people, seniors and veterans can continue to call home.

The tapestry that is Prince George's County is full of astonishing beauty, with riches that stretch from Accokeek to Laurel, and everywhere in between. Our rural areas are beautiful treasures. Our Metro stations are just beginning to emerge with activity. And there is abundance and opportunity waiting to be discovered and cultivated across this County from all our outstanding community assets, including Bowie State University, Prince George's Community College, the University of Maryland College Park and Joint Base Andrews.

Our tapestry is also woven with a diversity that is hard to find in any other County in this region. And, the core of our strength—the thread that weaves us together is made up of the people of this vibrant County. Our creativity, passion, and fearlessness sets us apart.

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We are living in critical times in our nation – fragmented by acts of hate and violence, and a lack of civility, and too often divided by racism, discrimination, and intolerance. Prince Georgians know there is no hope in the embrace of deep divisions.

But the same diversity we treasure as our strength in Prince George's County, some inexplicably see as a threat. In our community, we know it is our collective experiences and perspectives shared through many lenses that allow us to see clearly and continue to progress.

Our immigrant community—from India, the Philippines, and Syria. From Cameroon, Nigeria, and Liberia. From the Dominican Republic and Jamaica to El Salvador and Mexico, and from all nations in between-- are an integral part of the fabric of America and of Prince George's County. No matter where you come from; no matter your native language; your race or ethnicity; where you were born; or when you arrived here, this is your County, and we welcome your immeasurable contributions to our collective community story.

The Koran leads us well on this point, “And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and your colors. Indeed, in that are signs for those of knowledge.”

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Representing our community means making sure everyone has a fair shot at opportunity, and shares in the prosperity we are building in our County. Life-changing impact is not by accident—it is vision, determination, and courage that changes lives and creates generational change.

Prosperity enables critical investments in our communities, but we must continue to work to ensure we advance equity and reduce disparity, and that all Prince Georgians move forward with the County's progress. Mary Church Terrell, an African-American activist championed: We must "Lift as we Climb."

There is no challenge before us that we cannot solve when we act as a community and make use of all our talents. There cannot be any hidden figures if we are to capture the abundance and opportunity that is Prince George's.

Imagine what can happen if we harness our talents for the better and in service of all. Imagine what this County can become as we unite, magnify, and create more possibilities with each moment that we act as one County.

Successfully shaping our County story, and meeting our challenges from this day forward involves all of us. Improving our quality of life and continuing to embrace and expand the progress in Prince George's County will take all of us pushing forward together.

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Only together, can the gifts of Prince George's County be shared and unwrapped by all.

Only together, can we strengthen our County, our communities, our families and realize our fullest potential.

Only together, as one County, can our tapestry, our story, and our County shine bright.

With grateful hearts, the members of this Council humbly thank Prince Georgians for your trust and confidence, and for the privilege to serve.

Lifted by the momentum of this day, you can count on the energy, commitment, and collective abilities of this Council to work for you.

May God bless you all, and God bless Prince George's County.

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