

Sara Rodriguez Sworn in as 46th Lieutenant Governor

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"We've got a lot of work ahead of us" says new lieutenant governor.

MADISON — Lt. Gov. Sara Rodriguez was sworn in today as the 46th lieutenant governor of the state of Wisconsin during Wisconsin's 2023 Inauguration Ceremony, where she delivered her Inaugural address.

Below are Lt. Gov. Rodriguez's remarks as prepared for delivery:

Good afternoon, Wisconsin!

I am humbled, honored, and thrilled to be standing here today as the 46th Lieutenant Governor of the great state of Wisconsin.

This is an immense responsibility, and I know I have big shoes to fill—thank you, Lt. Gov. Barnes, for your leadership and service.

I want to begin today with some gratitude.

First and foremost, to my family—my husband Baltazar and my children, Nicolas and Sofia—thank you for your love and support each step of the way, and especially now as we head into this new, exciting—albeit chaotic—chapter of our life.

Gracias por su apoyo y su paciencia. Los amo.

Also, to my mother, who taught me that service to community was a basic expectation of anyone living under her roof; to my brother and sister-in-law, who are raising three amazing

children; my brother-in-law, who has shown me what strength looks like in raising his two children after my sister passed away; to my uncle, a life-long farmer, who drove hours to be here to support me today. Thank you all.

Thank you to the amazing team of staff and volunteers who put their hearts into making today possible and to my friends and colleagues who showed up to offer what they could. I am so grateful for your support. We did this together, and I am so incredibly proud.

And to my running mate, our governor, Tony Evers! Thank you, Tony. I look forward to continuing to work together to do the right thing for the people of our state.

And last, but certainly not least: to the Wisconsinites who showed up, turned out, and used their vote and their voice to protect democracy, to defend basic human and civil rights, and to show that there is far, far more that unites us than divides us—thank you. I will strive every day to make you proud of your state.

Over the last year, I had the pleasure of traveling all over our great state to meet folks and families in their homes and businesses to hear about their lives and their challenges—and I had the chance to share a little bit about my own story, too.

I'm a born-and-raised Wisconsinite from Waukesha County. I'm the granddaughter of dairy farmers. I'm the proud daughter of a working-class family—my father was a Vietnam veteran who fixed telephones for Wisconsin Bell, and my mother was a proud union member as a teaching assistant for children with special needs.

I'm now a mom of two teenagers, 13 and 16. And yes, there is some sighing, eye-rolling, and they're very embarrassed that I'm putting them on the spot right now.

I'm a nurse and public health professional who worked for more than 20 years answering calls at all times of the night, on the weekends, over the holidays—you name it—to take care of my patients, friends, and neighbors.

So, the lesson I learned from my conversations with Wisconsinites who I met out on the road won't surprise you: we aren't all that different.

Every family, like mine, wants to earn a good living, to have access to quality, affordable healthcare, and to send their kids to good schools and maybe even help them save a little for college—and, yes, even if there's an eye roll or two along the way.

Every family wants to be healthy. As a clinician, I know that the medicine we give you, the procedures that we do, is such a tiny fraction of how healthy we are. It's where we live, the air we breathe, the water we drink, and if we have a good-paying job to pay for food on the table and can afford the life-saving medications we need. So, what I know for sure is this: quality, affordable healthcare doesn't just save lives, it's good for our economy and a family budget. □

Every family knows that fully funding our public schools is an investment in our kids and our

future and that investing in affordable childcare and early education, maternal and infant health, and paid family leave will ensure our families succeed.

We want to reduce gun violence with commonsense gun safety reform, safe communities for kids to play in, clean water to drink, and to know that we're leaving our kids with a better world than the one we inherited.

And, yes, we believe that reproductive healthcare is healthcare and that every person should have the right to make their own reproductive healthcare decisions without interference from elected officials who know nothing about their faith, their family, or their circumstances.

And that building greener, more sustainable infrastructure will create family-supporting jobs and strengthen our economy, all while delivering on the promise to leave future generations that come after us with a better planet.

I ran for the State Assembly and then to be your lieutenant governor because these were the issues that were heavy on my mind—as a mother, as a small business owner, as a healthcare provider, and as a Wisconsinite. And, over the past several months, we saw it everywhere we went: Wisconsinites are strong, resilient, and ready for the bold, urgent solutions Gov. Evers and I have been fighting for to address the challenges we face—solutions that won't change who we are as a state, but instead ensure our state can be all we've set out to be.

There isn't a one-size-fits-all solution to our challenges. It's going to take all of us working together, bringing our ideas to the table, and connecting the dots to build the sort of future we want for our state.

And all of those things that unite us will continue to be our focus these next four years, finding common ground, working across the aisle, and always trying to do the right thing for Wisconsin and the people of our state. It's what Gov. Evers has been doing over the past four years, and it's what we're going to continue to do to keep Wisconsin moving forward, together.

We've got a lot of work ahead of us, but I promised to always answer the call—and I meant it. I could not be prouder or more humbled to be a part of building that future as your lieutenant governor. Thank you!