



STATE OF MICHIGAN
JOCELYN BENSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

Inauguration Remarks – January 1, 2023

Governor Whitmer, Lt. Governor Gilchrist, Attorney General Nessel, members of the Michigan Supreme Court, state lawmakers, my family, friends, and distinguished guests

Four years ago, I stood before you all and declared that it was a new day for democracy here in the state of Michigan.

And indeed, it was.

I stood before you then, alongside my two mentors, the late United States Senator Carl Levin and the late Judge Damon Keith, both of whom are no longer with us, and I committed to each of you and the citizens of Michigan that as Michigan's Secretary of State I would work and fight every day to protect every vote, every voice, and our democracy.

And did we ever.

We carried out the highest turnout elections in our state's history and Michigan is now a national leader in fair, secure, and accessible elections.

Our votes are also safe and secure thanks to local election officials and election workers who stand guard over the integrity of our elections.

Our legislative districts are drawn by citizens in a nonpartisan manner.

We've instilled a new standard and expectation for excellent customer service from our state government, and now everyone, no matter where you live, can be in and out of a Secretary of State branch office in under 30 minutes.

We did all of this together.

But our work is not yet done.

We are in an era of misinformation and bad actors continue to spread lies about our democracy to advance their own agendas. They seek to silence your voices and diminish your ability to hold your government accountable.

They will not prevail.

I stand before you today with the firm belief that every citizen deserves to live in a state where their voices are heard and where truth prevails. Where government works for everyone and where we work together – as democrats, republicans and independents – to ensure our state is safe, strong, and free.

That's who we are as Michiganders and as Americans.

In the years ahead we must fight to re-center our political discourse on the facts and the truth. We must fight to ensure government operates transparently to earn the trust of all citizens.

We must fight to enact stronger protections for the people who make our democracy work – the local clerks and election workers across our state who stand guard over the integrity of our elections.

And we must continue to fight to ensure every voice is heard and every vote is counted. We're going to do more. Because I'm a fighter. And I'm just getting warmed up.

We will emerge from this time in our history with a stronger democracy and a stronger Michigan.

It is the greatest honor of my life to serve as your Secretary of State.

I am grateful for your trust and your support, and I am ready to continue working hard and fighting harder every day in my service to you and to the interests of our state, our people, and our democracy.

Thank you. Now let's get back to work.