



**ANTHONY RENDON**  
**Speaker of the Assembly**

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**DECEMBER 5, 2016**  
**SWEARING-IN CEREMONY REMARKS**

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*\*As prepared for delivery*

Members, thank you for putting your faith in me.

This is an honor I am proud to accept, and will work diligently to earn.

Honored guests, friends, and family—ordinarily, this is a day when Speakers offer pleasantries and plans for the year ahead.

But this is no ordinary time.

And I would be remiss in my responsibility to this house, to the people I represent, and to my conscience, if I did not acknowledge that.

Members, 75 years ago this week, the United States was drawn into the Second World War.

That war was an existential threat against this nation's people and its principles.

We have faced other threats these last 75 years: the Cold War and nuclear proliferation, the turmoil of the 1960s, the betrayal of Watergate, and now climate change.

These past 75 years have also seen us make important progress in civil rights, environmental protection, public health and social justice.

At this moment, I believe our nation is facing another major existential threat – and a threat to the progress that we have attained.

Californians may accept the lawfulness of the November election, but millions of us do not accept the sentiment delivered by this election.

And it is up to us to pass policies that would firewall Californians—and what we believe—from the cynical, short sighted, and reactionary agenda that is rising in the wake of the election.

White nationalists and anti-Semites have no business working in the White House.

And the Justice Department of the United States has no business working to dismantle the voting rights, civil rights, equal rights, and reproductive rights of the American people.

In August of 1988, President Reagan apologized to Japanese-Americans for their internment by saying “here we admit a wrong; here we reaffirm our commitment to equal justice under the law.”

Yet rather than echoing that commitment to equal justice, the next administration has talked about those internment camps as a justification for offensive new policies.

In a speech she made in 1940, with an eye toward the looming war, Eleanor Roosevelt said this:

“We cannot tell from day to day what may come. This is no ordinary time. No time for weighing anything except what we can do best for the country as a whole. And that responsibility rests on each and every one of us, as individuals.”

That is the responsibility we each accepted when we swore to support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of California against all enemies—foreign AND domestic.

Californians should be wary of the national calls for unity and healing.

Unity must be separated from complicity.

And we must be defiant whenever justice, fairness, and righteousness require.

Californians do not need healing. We need to fight.

We need to fight to protect our people and their rights.

We need to fight to protect our economy and its growth.

The Assembly and Senate will work side by side to enshrine into law existing protections for all Californians.

We will be saying loud and clear if you are a woman, your rights are in force here in California.

If you need health care coverage, we will do all we can so you can find it here in California.

If you are Muslim or LGBT, or anyone whose rights and safety are increasingly under fire, you are equal here in California.

And with HR 4, today we are saying if you are an immigrant you are welcome here in California.

In short, California will be saying, in the defiant words of Winston Churchill:

“Today we may say aloud before an awestruck world, we are still masters of our fate, we are still captains of our souls.”

Others speak of their identity.

But we too have an identity in California.

An identity of inclusion.

And we will do whatever we can to protect that identity.

Of course, the potential threats from the new administration are not the only struggle we face as Californians.

There are home-grown challenges, as well.

A transportation system that is over-crowded and crumbling.

Housing costs so high families can't make ends meet, employers can't recruit, and cops and teachers can't live where they work.

We tried to address these issues in the last session.

We made some progress, but we did not succeed.

And that is a mark on what was otherwise a tremendous session.

Members, we have no choice but to solve the housing and transportation crises in the term ahead of us.

These crises affect each and every one of our districts.

If we don't step up and solve them, our economy will decline. And the people we represent will suffer.

This house has solved tough challenges before.

That's why California's in the strong economic shape we are.

Members, we just said goodbye to the Assembly Class of 2010.

When they were sworn-in they faced having to close a 26 billion dollar budget deficit.

A deficit that would have been much lower were it not for the first act taken by an inexperienced, celebrity Governor seven years before.

Thanks to smart decisions and tough choices by voters, the Legislature, and an experienced Governor, we have turned the state around.

We increased funding for public schools and community colleges by more than 50% over the past five years.

And higher education funding is greater than it's ever been—though we must continue to do more.

We have—as the Legislative Analyst projects—strong, multi-billion-dollar structural balances into the future.

We have a debt ratio on track to drop below 5%, and a robust Rainy Day Fund that takes us off the cycle of “boom and bust” budgeting.

And we have—as the LAO also notes—the ability to withstand a recession like the 2001 downturn—without the need for service cuts or middle class tax increases.

While the budget has mainly been driven by Democrats since voters restored that ability, there are areas where the Assembly has achieved bipartisan success as well.

Looking out at the faces before me, I am optimistic we can do the same again.

Especially on housing and transportation, which have historically been bipartisan issues.

Finally, I would like to note that today, we welcome new members, returning members, and newly returning members.

Farmers and Teachers. Veterans and first responders. Prosecutors and public defenders. Scientists and small business owners.

All of us sent here to represent our districts. To make laws. And—equally important—to perform the oversight that ensures laws are carried out in the best interests of the people of California.

It is increasingly apparent that those interests will not be a concern for the next President—for the bullies, bigots, and billionaires he has chosen for his cabinet—or for the majority in Congress that is already salivating at the prospect of ending Medicare.

It is up to us to look after the interests of the people of California.

Whether you actively worked to oppose the next President, or stayed silent hoping he would go away, it is now up to all of us to preserve California and protect its people.

Members, this is no ordinary time.

And it will require an extraordinary effort from each of us.

We are here to do the people's business.

And we can't allow it to just be business as usual.