Republican Perspective

Rep. Gloria Mendoza

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Watch on YouTube: https://youtu.be/gU9jLw5h1SI
Watch on YouTube (Spanish): https://youtu.be/2LUqAq0DcFA

Hello, Washington. Hola, Washington.

I am Gloria Mendoza, state representative for the 14th Legislative District in central Washington.

Although I was born in Mexico, I have called the Yakima area home for more than 45 years.

I am a former farmworker, harvesting everything from apples to cherries, pears to hops.

I am a small business owner.

And I was the first female mayor of Grandview, the third largest city in Yakima County.

But the biggest honor of my life is being a mother to my three children – Surielah, Jesahel, and Keivan.

Like many of you, my life hasn't always been easy. Being a farmworker isn't easy. Running a business isn't easy.

And being a single mother isn't easy. There were times that I struggled but I kept on fighting. Through all of the grit and the grind, my children and I stuck together. We worked hard. We fell down seven times, and we got up eight. And eventually, we built our own American Dream.

I am proud to live in Washington state. Our state has given me so many opportunities and has incredible potential.

But our state also has some serious problems. Problems that continue to get worse under one-party politics.

While today marks the first day in office of a new governor, it also marks the 40th straight year of Democratic governors. What has 12 years of Jay Inslee's administration and 40 years of governors from one party brought Washington?

We are now the fourth most expensive state to live in. And Washingtonians pay among the highest prices in the nation for basic necessities like gas, groceries, and housing.

Washington is now one of the five most dangerous states, with the third highest crime rate and the fewest number of police officers per capita.

We have the third largest homeless population in the country, including the largest increase in chronic homelessness.

Washington is the third most expensive state to buy a home. And 73 percent of families have been priced out of the market.

Over 60 percent of Washington students are failing to meet grade-level standards in math. And 50 percent are failing to meet reading and writing standards. Unfortunately, scores are even worse for children from low-income and minority families.

Washington parents have to spend 35 percent of their income just to send two children to child care, more than the cost of tuition at the University of Washington.

And now – even though employment, wages, the stock market, and state tax collections are rising – our state is facing an operating budget deficit as high as 10 billion dollars.

But what has all this spending achieved?

After spending 5 billion dollars the last decade to combat homelessness, our state's chronic homeless population has increased by 530 percent.

And despite record investments in child care, 63 percent of children under five can't even access it.

Rather than reexamining programs, Democratic leaders are proposing new taxes – on our homes, our income, our jobs, and even on innovation itself – just to keep up the status quo.

One additional tax hike is too much for Washington families to bear. It doesn't have to be this way.

Here in the Legislature, Washington State Republicans are offering a bold agenda to take our state from last to first, in all areas of government.

We want to improve life for all Washingtonians. We want safer neighborhoods, cleaner air, better schools, more affordable housing, and shorter commutes.

And we have a plan to do it.

First, we need to make Washington safe again.

Our state ranks first for retail theft and second for vehicle theft.

These crimes not only hurt their victims, but ultimately affect all Washingtonians who end up paying higher prices for goods and insurance, deal with locked up merchandise at stores, and live in fear.

Republicans have a plan to toughen penalties for vehicle theft and organized retail theft. Because our state should be focused on protecting victims – not criminals.

We must also tackle the homeless crisis.

Homelessness has skyrocketed in our state, leading to widespread encampments. These encampments are hazardous to the health, hygiene, and safety of the people living in them – and the communities they surround.

The current strategy is not working. We need housing and treatment.

Republicans want to remove homeless encampments near water aquifers, schools, and parks. And we want to ensure that those who are unwilling to help themselves are steered into the appropriate detox or mental health facilities.

Because true compassion means lifting people out of dangerous and inhumane conditions, not giving them the tools to stay there.

And, of course, we must address the drug crisis.

Washington is an epicenter of fentanyl overdoses, but our new governor once asked the Legislature to decriminalize all drugs – including fentanyl, meth, and heroin.

Republicans have a plan to remove fentanyl from the streets by toughening penalties on manufacturers and dealers, while treating addiction by increasing the availability of drug treatment facilities.

And we want to protect children from deadly situations by removing them from homes where caregivers are abusing fentanyl.

After the destructive defund the police movement, it is time to finally fund the police.

Republicans want to provide hiring and retention incentives for local law enforcement, so our state will no longer be last in the nation in the number of police officers per capita.

In addition to making our communities safer, Republicans also want to make Washington more affordable for working families.

We want to eliminate taxes on diapers and other essentials for babies and moms. And we want to eliminate taxes on food, so parents don’t have to pay the state just to enjoy a quick and easy meal with their kids.

Finally, we want to make our schools the best in the nation. This means they should be well-funded but also accountable.

A decade ago, Washington students ranked in the top 10 of all states for both math and reading. Despite record funding, our students are now failing math and reading at unprecedented levels and are being passed up by students in states like Idaho and Mississippi.

That's why Republicans are focused on funding students, not systems.

We are proposing legislation to put reading coaches in elementary schools, to fund more apprenticeship opportunities, and to create options for parents whose kids are trapped in failing schools.

And that's just a snapshot of our ideas. We also have solutions for improving our roads and ferry system, so your commute is shorter and more dependable.

Solutions for reducing the cost of buying or renting a home. And solutions for ensuring access to cleaner, more reliable energy.

All without raising new taxes that will make jobs harder to find, and necessities harder to afford.

You will hear more from us on these issues and others in the upcoming months. Like I said, Republicans have a plan to take our state from last to first. And we are focused on policies that actually improve your lives in measurable ways.

Don't let Olympia politicians distract you with their discussions of President Trump and national politics. Yes, national issues matter. But your governor and state legislators were elected to fix problems in this Washington – not the other one. And as you've heard, this Washington has a lot of problems that need to be fixed.

That's why Republicans will be spending 105 days focused on improving the lives of people who live here, in our Washington.

Washingtonians, it is time to unite and advocate for responsible leadership in our state. It has never been more urgent.

I invite you to join us for better governance for the well-being of your neighbor and the integrity of our institutions. We have seen what 40 years of same-party governance has done to our state.

And we hope you will join us in our mission to reclaim our standing as the best state in the nation.

Thank you for your time today. May God bless you and your family, and our great state.

Thank you. Gracias, dios los bendiga. God bless you.