



Steuart Pittman
County Executive

Prepared Remarks for Inauguration

December 3, 2018

Thank you.

Thank you to my incredible wife, Erin Drage Pittman. To my sons Sam and Andy, and my daughter Jesse.

Thank you to my Mother and my siblings. And thank you to my Father whose spirit happens to fill this stage.

Thank you to the elected officials here, who encouraged and advised me as I transitioned from citizen to public servant. I will continue to seek your wise counsel.

And thank you to each of you who took the time from your day to attend this gathering.

Thank you to the teachers, the police, and the firefighters ...
the community leaders, the farmers, and the riverkeepers...
the union members, the business owners, and the immigrants,...
the white folks, the black folks, and the brown folks,...
the Democrats, the independents, and the Republicans.

And thank you to Everyone else who put your trust in me to lead this county into the future.

Thank you to Steve Schuh, for your dedicated service to this county.

Thank you also for setting the standard of professionalism and civility that guided our staffs through a smooth transition of government.

The residents of this county owe you a debt of gratitude.

I also want to thank everyone on this stage. We have the speakers you have been inspired by.

We have public servants who work in our schools, in our fire department, and in our police department. We have advocates for the environment, and I am very proud to say that we have our new Anne Arundel County Council, a young, energetic highly qualified group of new public servants with a supermajority of women.

They will be sworn in at 3pm today in the Council Chambers.

I am humbled to stand on this stage with all of you.

We started the campaign that led to this moment on a cold day last December. We gathered in a barn, and we were 300 strong. From there we grew.

It wasn't just me on that platform. It was more than a dozen candidates for local office. No press attended, because nobody thought we would win.

Most of us did win.

Our campaign theme was Putting Communities First. Nobody dared to ask me what that really meant.

Now that we are moving from campaign to governing, I want you to know what Putting Communities First means.

The communities we seek to honor are those that I thanked at the start of this speech.

It is also the seventeen neighborhoods where we held forums during the campaign.

It's the diverse communities defined by trade, by hobby, by national origin, ... by faith, by race, and by cause.

Communities are however we choose to connect ourselves to one another.

In other words, if you want a voice in this government, you don't get it by who you know or how much money is in your bank account. You get it by building community.

Of course, we'll listen to individuals directly. In fact, we already are. 1363 of you have shared your ideas at PittmanTransition.com.

You'll see more of these forms in the future, and you'll have plenty of public hearings to speak at.

But if you want more influence, my advice is to organize.

Find others with the same concerns. Bring them together and speak up. That's how you create community and that's how you get heard.

I have one more piece of advice for those of you who want to make change. Find other communities that share your perspective, and build a coalition.

When communities unite, we all move forward.

Reforms that seem simple from the outside become more complex on the inside of government. Progress will stall. That's when you must act.

Our agenda is ambitious and I want to share it with you today. I hope that you will do more than listen to my words.

I want you to think about who will benefit and how you can bring those people together to make sure that we succeed.

The framework for our efforts mirrors the work of our transition committees and the priorities you shared during the campaign.

The focus is ... yes, you guessed it ... communities.

Safe, healthy, thriving, empowered, sustainable, and educated communities.

1. We start with the most sacred obligation of government. We will create safe communities.

- We will form a gun violence prevention commission that will not rest until our students, our workers, our neighbors and our families are safe.
- We will honor, respect, and protect our police, our firefighters, our emergency medical personnel, our detention officers, and all of the public servants who facilitate their operations.
- We will do this by staffing them adequately, paying them fairly, and listening when they have something to say.
- Our work against gangs, drug dealers, and every other threat to our welfare will rely on the cooperation and engagement of communities. When we come together, we are safe.

- Our criminal justice system will enforce our state and local laws, but immigration enforcement will be left to the feds. We will issue a report on the impacts of 287g and then we will kiss it goodbye.
2. We will create healthy communities.
 - Opioid addiction is a health crisis. An epidemic. Nobody should be denied treatment. Nobody.
 - And all of us must come together to support and heal our neighbors who suffer from addiction.
 - We will install a permanent, experienced, forward-thinking Health Officer, and we will do it soon. Opportunities for community-based health initiatives with private sector support are spreading across the country. We need to be at the forefront of this movement.
 - Our county will be known for outdoor recreation. We will continue the good work of County Executive Schuh to improve our parks, connect our trails, and open access to our water. We must do this for our health, both mental and physical.
 3. We will create thriving communities.
 - Small Area Plans are back, and through them you will have a loud and clear voice as we draft our new twenty-year General Development Plan
 - We will strengthen the Adequate Public Facilities ordinance to ensure that we implement fiscally and environmentally responsible growth strategies.
 - And without delay we will begin talks with the State to acquire the Crownsville Hospital Center, so that finally, we can transform this tainted jewel at the heart of our County into a place where healing happens through the powerful medicine of nature.
 4. We will create empowered communities.
 - We will promote both livable wages and affordable housing. If you work in our county you should be able to afford to live in our County.
 - We will partner with our business community and even our developers to consistently and efficiently apply fair regulatory oversight, and create the certainty that allows community supported development projects to move forward and improve the quality of our lives.
 - And we must expand transportation options in this county to connect our residents with economic opportunities.
 5. We will create sustainable communities.
 - I will take the threats of climate change and sea-level rise seriously, because with 530 miles of shoreline, our future depends on it.

- Our will pursue no net loss in our Forest Conservation efforts, and we will strengthen enforcement of erosion and sediment control laws.
- We will coordinate and accelerate all of our Bay cleanup and environmental efforts, by bringing on the county's first Environmental Policy Director.

6. We will create educated communities.

- We will hire more teachers to reduce class sizes, more counselors to help struggling students, and you know what else we'll do?
- We will pay them fairly, because they earn it.
- We will support our libraries, because they educate ALL of us at ALL stages of our lives, in the communities where we live.
- We will, and we must, stand with and support our nationally-acclaimed institution that prepares our people to enter our county's workforce. That is our Anne Arundel Community College.

And last but most important, we will create a responsive government that you can hold accountable.

- This is your government, not mine.
- My job is to listen, respond, and act on what I hear.
- I need your input to be informed by the facts, the same facts that inform me. That's why I hired a highly acclaimed expert in Open and Data-Driven Government, to be our Chief Administrative Officer.
- This spring you will be invited to engage in a Participatory Budgeting Process. Together we will decide what we can afford and how we will pay for it.

This is an ambitious agenda, but it is not a divisive agenda.

This is an agenda that can and will bring us together, with your help.

We have an opportunity, and an obligation, to show that trust in government can be restored.

Trust in government and civil discourse can grow even in a county that mirrors America politically, racially, and demographically.

We will do this together and we will do this with respect for one another.

Before we end this ceremony, we have one more piece of business to take care of. We need a county slogan.

Steve did a pretty good job with that: Anne Arundel County, “*The best place to live, work, and start a business in Maryland.*”

As I looked through our list of goals I wanted to add on to the slogan.

How about the best place to ride a bike. Or the best place to go to school. Or the best place to be a tree, or maybe a fish.

But my TV ads said I was frugal, and I am. We must do more with less. Nine words less.

As long as I remain your county executive, Anne Arundel County will be simply ... The Best Place.

It's a tall order, but I can promise you that IF you connect with your communities, and IF your communities unite, there is no question that this will in fact be ... The Best Place.

Thank you.