

Thank you, Council President. And thank you to all my fellow Councilmembers for giving me the space to say a few words this morning. I just want to take a moment to talk about what this day, and this city, and being here with all of you means to me.

I am an immigrant to the US. I was born in Kerala, India, and I have lived in a number of different places since then. But it wasn't until I moved to Los Angeles that I finally felt I had come to a place that would be home for me.

This is the only city where I have ever really felt truly at home. It's the place where my husband and I chose to have a family and to raise our children, because I know they will always be welcomed here. My husband is also of South Asian origin - he is a son of Madurai and Tirunelveli, and I am a daughter of Thrissur and Thirvananthapuram - I now get to represent you. I would never have run for office in any other city. I simply would not have dreamed it was even possible anywhere else. That is the power of America - and especially of LA.

I believe so powerfully there is nowhere else on Earth like Los Angeles. A city that is so thrilling and magnificent, with so much stunning natural and human diversity, where people can come from anywhere in the world and feel welcomed and find community and build their dreams.

And yet -- just as vast as this city's capacity for joy has been -- so too has been its tolerance for suffering.

So many have not been welcomed here like I was, especially in recent years. Economic forces are pushing people out of their homes, out of the city, and onto the street. Not just newcomers -- families who have been here for many decades -- in particular working families, so many Black and brown families, families of color, who are facing pressures that amount to a form of racial banishment.

We're living the effects of climate emergency, as well -- worsening drought, fires, and air quality, which are also falling hardest on LA's low-income communities of color. And today we face a health and economic catastrophe that has brought so much pain on our community, and simultaneously crippled our city's capacity to respond - with much more pain still to come.

I feel the weight of this moment so heavily. It hangs on my heart. The suffering being felt all over this city right now is with me every day. But that's also why I'm so grateful to be in this seat, on one of the most powerful city legislative bodies in the country, right now. It is such a joy, such an overwhelming privilege, to be in a position to help people in this

moment, to create needed policies, to create networks of support, to govern in coalition with all of you.

The fifteen of us elected officials here, the Mayor, the Attorney, the Controller, and the 35,000 others who work alongside us for this city, get to wake up and do that work every single day. You -- my colleagues -- have much more experience in this position than I do and than most on my team -- you know this feeling so well. It's an honor to share this responsibility with you, and to learn from your work. I want to thank all of you for reaching out and making me feel welcome. I've spoken to each of you now, and I'm thrilled at the opportunities before us to collaborate.

The final thing I want to acknowledge is that we had more voter participation in this City Council election than any in LA history. That means more Angelenos than ever are looking to their government for solutions right now.

To all of the thousands of volunteers and the passionate team who gave their all to a city council race. To the residents of Council District 4, from Sherman Oaks to Silver Lake, Hollywood, Miracle Mile, Toluca Lake, Los Feliz, Hancock Park, and Koreatown, thank you for the opportunity to work as hard as I can for every single one of you. I'm so humbled that you've given me your trust.

And to every resident of this city: I'm here for you, and you're here with me.

Thank you for your support and your presence, and I'm so excited to get started on this journey with you. Thank you.