Thank you to Rep. Cherylin Peniston for the great introduction, can we give her a round of applause for her service to Colorado.

I am so excited for you all to be here tonight, to come together to work for a better future for Colorado. Having so many people here really is about people coming together for a better future. I know that we are much stronger together than we are separate and I want to take a moment to recognize some people here.

- Recognize the elected
- Recognize the candidates

And of course I have to recognize the people that are there for me every day. My sister who devotes her life to making the world a better place by working in a homeless shelter and my two amazing kids that remind me about all the good in the world and give me the drive to make sure that their future and the future of all of our children is bright.

Then there is my Dad, my dad is taught me to live with passion, my Dad who taught me to not accept the status quo and my Dad who helped teach me to make the world a better place. My Dad was a nurse and my mom was a teacher and they instilled in me that you live your life in a way that makes other’s lives better.

Every day as a family growing up we would say our prayers before dinner, and for most of my childhood every night with every fiber of my being I would pray to God that we could end homelessness and that he would make more waterfalls.

Fast forward to today and I still believe that Colorado would be better if every family had access to safe affordable housing. There are children who, on their way home from school, are more worried about where they will sleep than their homework. These children are not being set up for success.
I think that we can and must do better. We need to work together and think creatively. When I was elected in 2007, that was the beginning of the foreclosure crisis. I knew we had families in trouble, families that no matter how hard they worked they couldn’t get a head. But I also knew that if we got these families foreclosure counseling that they were 70% more likely to stay in their homes. But connecting these families with the services wasn’t easy. But what we figured out is when the city had to send out notices for shutting off water we knew if they weren’t paying their water bill they were probably having other bills – like their mortgage – not getting paid. The result was we turned off less water and more families accessed the help they needed. This is exactly the creative problem solving that I want to take to the state capitol.

I also think our waterfalls make Colorado a pretty great place to live, along with our rivers and land. In Colorado, tourism is a huge driver of our economy and we all live here because of our quality of life is second to none. But we have to work hard to protect our state. On city council we have done this by putting solar panels on our city buildings, reducing our energy consumption, achieving the second lowest water consumption rate in the Front Range, and launching an aggressive recycling campaign. At the capitol I will continue to roll up my sleeves and work and make sure that every Coloradan has access to clean air and clean water.

Our environment also drives our economy. While on council we have grown and expanded our business retention program where we visit local businesses asking them why they are here, find out what they need to grow, and what we could do better. Nine times out 10, large companies say they are here because of the quality of life, because of the mountains, the open spaces and trails. However, when asked about concerns for the future often they bring up education. Colorado’s education system is failing, businesses have employees concerned about where to send their kids and are worried about who they will hire – they are having to import employees. Colorado is a world-class state and we deserve nothing less than a world-class education system. As a mom of two
who spent a week visiting ten different day cares weighing tough choices between cost, quality, location and hours I know

What I promise to bring you if I am lucky enough to go the state capitol: I promise you I will work hard, I promise I will listen to you, and I promise to bring creative solutions to the table that makes Colorado better.

But I can’t do this alone, we are a team and I want to introduce you all to two of my team mates. Gary Jackson with the pipefitters who share my dream of ending homelessness and supporting working families, and Pete Maysmith with Conservation Colorado who supports my dream of protecting Colorado’s water falls.

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