Thank you. It is a great honor to welcome you all to the Invest in Texas Seminar, just as you have so warmly welcomed us to your wonderful country.

I would like to start by expressing my concern for the parts of Mexico that were affected by the incredible power of Hurricane Dean. Our relief at avoiding its path of destruction is tempered at our sadness at the loss of life and property that you, our closest neighbors, experienced. And that’s what we are: neighbors. And neighbors need to work together for the greater good of the neighborhood. Neighbors watch out for each other. They work to keep one another safe, they live life together, well aware of the interconnected nature of their destinies.

During our time here, we want to make it abundantly clear that your business is welcome in Texas. We want to provide you a roadmap toward doing business in Texas. We have brought with us people who can help you navigate our laws and our culture while helping you to see the unlimited opportunity that exists in our state. I hope you will let them know your needs and concerns as well as your vision and dreams. When each of us left our homes to come here, we may have expected to find ourselves separated as much by culture as we are by geography. But, as we break bread together, I believe we will find that we have much in common. We are united by one guiding desire: economic success for our organizations and the health that brings to our respective countries.

I am a firm believer that one does not necessarily improve a life by simply handing money to a person. Instead, lives are transformed when people experience the thrill of using the talents God gave them to earn their living. When someone feeds their family with the work of their hands, he becomes more of a man, she becomes a stronger woman. A working person is a confident person, a better husband, a better mother, a better citizen. So, when people might tell us that our focus on business is selfish or mercenary, we can answer their negativity by admitting, yes, we desire to create wealth. And that economic development creates opportunity that breeds independence.

And so, today, we will have a conversation about creating more jobs for hardworking people, how to harness new technologies, and build on our long, mutually-beneficial relationship. There is no question that Texas and Mexico are intertwined by history, by geography and by a common purpose. We are also connected by commerce. Trade is in many ways a borderless issue in this modern age. Trade strengthens relationships, be they interpersonal or international. And, I will tell you that Texas wants to do business with you. It is important for you to know that Texas is very friendly to Hispanic business efforts. Texas can lay claim to 23 of the top 100 fastest-growing Hispanic companies in the United States. That is the most of any state. Two of those companies are in the top ten.
We have taken several bold steps in Texas to create the most welcoming climate for business. Perhaps you know about our favorable tax structure and our educated workforce, and our efforts to protect businesses from ridiculous lawsuits. But you might want to know about two key initiatives that we have in place in the Lone Star State. The first is the Texas Enterprise Fund. For four years now, we have been investing state dollars in businesses that will create jobs for Texans. If a company comes to us with a plan to bring jobs to Texas, we can use the Enterprise Fund to help them relocate facilities or expand their operations. We would love for you to create jobs in Texas by building a plant or moving a manufacturing operation. International corporations who have recently increased their presence in Texas include Toyota from Japan and Samsung from Korea. They reap the benefits of proximity to their paying customers, a workforce that can handle complex processes, and a state that is willing to help with the investment.

In just two years, we have used this fund to close deals on projects that have benefited Texas with 45,000 new jobs, $15 billion in capital investment, and unprecedented opportunity for our future business partners. Of all the business sectors that combine to form our respective economies, we could all agree that technology is one of the fastest-growing. And we want it to grow even faster. To that end, we created the Emerging Technology Fund which allows us to invest in smart people, helping them turn their ideas into products. We use this fund to help people who are pursuing breakthroughs in science and medicine. And we use it to fund those brilliant ideas being hatched in our universities so they can ultimately yield ideas that might save lives or transform our world.

I hope that you take full advantage of your time at the Invest in Texas Seminar. We will work hard to answer every question, offer helpful advice and move you closer to your dream of economic success that benefits you, your country and your neighbor. Thank you and God bless you.