

SPEECH BY THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE

**TRIBUTE ON THE ELECTION OF THE SPEAKER OF THE
THIRTEETH PARLIAMENT**

Madam Speaker, on behalf of all Members of this House, I congratulate you on your re-election as Speaker of the Thirteenth Parliament.

2 Madam, your election as Speaker in 2013 endowed the office with eleven years on both the front- and back-benches. You championed passionately for the disadvantaged in Singapore. You pushed for fair treatment of workers and fought on behalf of those in need. You sought to ensure that Singapore is a country where all Singaporeans have fair access to opportunities and can enjoy the fruits of our progress. As the Minister of State for the then Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports and subsequently, the Ministry of Social and Family Development, you worked tirelessly to extend needed help to women, families and children.

3 In the last three years as Speaker, your impartiality and decisiveness have gained the respect of all Members of the House. In discharging your duties, your fairness upheld the decorum of this House, and your firmness has ensured that the proceedings are expeditious, smooth and orderly. Under your guidance, the good standing of this House will continue to be maintained.

4 The coming session of Parliament will present us with many difficult but necessary decisions. To provide Singaporeans with quality living, our infrastructure and landscape must be refreshed, our economy must continue to be dynamic, and our social safety nets must be strengthened. We must build good homes for people to live in, provide an efficient transport system for commuters, continue economic restructuring to create good jobs for our workers, and educate our students to be ready to take on those good jobs. We must also continue to maintain quality and affordable healthcare and give Singaporeans the care that they deserve. We must do all these amidst an uncertain global environment and certain internal challenges, including those of a changing demographic with a fast ageing population.

5 These concerns are complex and there is no straightforward way to address them all. Facing up to them will involve making trade-offs and there

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will be energetic debate in this House on the course of action we must take. We welcome sincere, serious debate from Members as we discuss these vital issues affecting all Singaporeans, decide on the future that we want to create and launch the next chapter of our country's story together.

6 Madam Speaker, as we consider these matters, your leadership and guidance will ensure fair debate in this House, and your even-handedness will honour and maintain the trust that Singaporeans have in this Government.

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