

# **Aiming Higher: Words that Changed a State**

Selected Speeches by Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels

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# *Editor's Preface*

*By Neil Pickett*

This book has its origins in a large green binder. The binder, neatly divided into tabbed subject sections, contains all of the existing speeches of Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels. The binder has traveled with the Governor since his days as president of the Hudson Institute, growing in size during his tenure as a senior executive at Eli Lilly and Company and as the Director of the Federal Office of Management and Budget, and then increasing exponentially during his eight years as governor.

All of the words contained in this large binder were written (most of them were spoken extemporaneously first and then captured on paper) by the Governor himself. Taken together, they reveal a mastery of language and rhetoric that is one of his great talents, as well as the coherent, compelling political philosophy that has been his foundation and compass during his tenure as one of Indiana's most important and influential chief executives.

I have known Mitch Daniels for more than 25 years, and worked for him in various capacities at Hudson Institute, Eli Lilly and in the Governor's Office. I provided some assistance to him in 2011 as he wrote his book, *Keeping the Republic*. So it was not altogether surprising when the Governor asked me this spring to go through the weighty green binder to see if some of the speeches it contained were worth publishing, and if so, to pick out the best for this volume.

Once I began reviewing the binder, I knew there was a book in it; that the quality of the speeches and the import of their messages made them worthy of publication. To me, as I'm sure will be the case for others, they serve as a record and reminder of an extraordinary eight years of leadership and change, while capturing the consistently high level of the prose and thinking of the man who drove and sometimes literally willed that change.

These speeches reveal the many sides and the unique talents of Mitch Daniels – summoning the state to meet grave fiscal and economic challenges, providing comfort and consolation to the families of soldiers killed defending America's freedoms, urging the Republican Party to meet the high standards of his "party of purpose," unapologetically arguing for the central role of God and religious conviction in public life, and, on countless occasions, revealing his deep and abiding love and ambition for our great Hoosier state and its people.

This compilation is part of Mitch Daniels' legacy as governor and change agent. They are the speeches of a unique and exceptional political leader who never planned to be one, but who seized a special opportunity to

lead his native state on a comeback that has won national attention and admiration. In style, substance and breadth they stand head-and-shoulders above the written work of virtually every political leader of this generation, most of whom – if not all – use professional writers to prepare their most important presentations.

All of the speeches in the green binder are worthy of reprinting, but decisions about which to include had to be made. So, after careful review and consideration, the contents of the binder were thinned out to produce this volume.

The speeches are grouped in chapters by theme and subject, starting with the Governor's two inaugural addresses. These are followed by all eight official State of the State speeches, six commencement addresses, and his remarks at memorials for the bravest of us all – our fallen soldiers. Next are several thoughtful speeches about the role of religion in public life; a group of speeches in political settings, including his memorable campaign kick-off in 2003 and his remarks to accept the nomination for governor in 2004 and 2008. A number of important speeches, many in national settings, that tell the story of Indiana's comeback or focus on critical issues of the day, follow, and the volume concludes with some pre-gubernatorial speeches, which demonstrate the constancy of the Governor's political vision and philosophy. Finally, there is a stand-alone chapter for the 2011 Washington Gridiron address, the one purely comedic speech the Governor composed and delivered to a standing ovation.

Each chapter includes an introduction by the Governor, who provides personal insights about the speeches and their context. In some cases, when needed, there are editor's notes on the speech venues and audiences.

The book's title merits a brief word of explanation. There was some sentiment for calling this volume *Great Things Are Wanted to be Done*, after a line from John Adams that the Governor used in several of his most important and powerful speeches, and that reflects the boldness of his ambition for Indiana and his intention to use his time in public leadership to effect big change in our state. But in the end, after considering a number of other titles, it just seemed natural and appropriate to call the book *Aiming Higher*, perhaps the Governor's best-known slogan and one that captures the essence of his candidacy and his tenure in office; his fierce belief in the ability of Hoosiers to accomplish great things, and his refusal to settle for anything less than excellence in himself, his team, or for Indiana.

Mitch Daniels will leave office in early 2013 as one of Indiana's greatest governors, a man who used the power of ideas and of words to articulate a compelling and charismatic vision of what Indiana could be, and to spell out persuasively the specific policies and initiatives required to achieve that vision. A man who spoke and wrote clearly and plainly about what he wanted to do and where he wanted to take Indiana, and thus earned the ongoing trust, confidence, and support of the Hoosier public – evidenced by his record-setting re-election vote total and high approval ratings at the

end of his term. A man who called on political beliefs shaped by years of deep thought, wide reading, and strong, conservative convictions to guide and shape the crucial decisions he made and the messages he delivered to a state hungry for positive change and eager to “aim higher” for the sake of its children. A man who made an enormous difference for the better in the history of the Hoosier state.

*Neil Pickett served as Senior Policy Director in Governor Daniels’ Office from 2005-08.*



# Foreword

*By Brian A. Howey*

By definition, the word “transformation” is a thorough or dramatic change in form or appearance.

In a political or policy context, the word is often used in association with war, revolution or economic crisis. And in the Hoosier experience, the word clashes with 196 years of stereotype: We are a conservative people, cautious, suspicious, resistant to change. Or as author Andrew Ferguson observed, “More than any other state I know of, Indiana has a crippling inferiority complex. Hoosiers struggle desperately to prove to themselves and the world that they have a higher function than simply filling up the space between Cincinnati and Chicago.”

Interrupting this history in key moments has been the transformational governor, almost always thrust into that role by the churning events of the day. As Hoosiers at the turn of this century, we have witnessed such a governor in Mitch Daniels Jr. Whether you regard him as a hero or adversary, few Hoosiers will argue the notion that his eight years at the Indiana Statehouse have been impactful and have altered the trajectory of the state at a time when just about everything is changing on a global scale.

Fewer than 10 Indiana governors merit the notation of transformation. For Governors James Whitcomb and Joseph Wright in the middle of Indiana’s first century, it resulted from the bankruptcies of public works projects gone awry, the empty coffers and loans they sought to send Hoosier soldiers into battle, and the new Constitution of 1851. For Gov. Oliver P. Morton, it was the breach of the American Civil War, a Copperhead General Assembly that was dispersed, while tens of thousands of young men streamed from the farms and small towns toward the bloody battlefields in the South.

War and innovation prompted Gov. James Putnam Goodrich to plan Indiana’s highway system in 1917. Scandal and bigotry brought along Gov. Harry G. Leslie in 1928 to clean up the Ku Klux Klan flotsam, extending into the Great Depression when he pioneered what would become FDR’s Work Progress Administration. Two governors – Thomas A. Marshall in 1909 and Paul McNutt in 1933 – tried to come to terms with the sprawl of bureaucracy over decades and challenged the status quo with a reform agenda. In Marshall’s case it was an unsuccessful attempt to write a third Constitution that was eventually thwarted by the U.S. Supreme Court, while McNutt used the thrust of the New Deal election juggernaut in 1932 that resulted in vast legislative majorities to winnow and reorganize the bureaucracy on his first day in office.

The portraits of Marshall, Goodrich and Leslie adorn the walls of the

cavernous Statehouse office occupied over the past eight years by Mitch Daniels Jr. On the western wall of the office peers Gov. Robert D. Orr, another reformer who offered Daniels a U.S. Senate seat and was surprised to have the entree rejected by a future governor unwilling to move his young family back to Washington. As he entered the office in January 2005, Daniels recalled, "I said, 'Bring Bob Orr in here.' Orr was one of those who came after me to run in the first place." The two share a parallel legacy. Both had governorships buffeted by deep economic downturns and both would use the crises to expend tremendous amounts of political capital to achieve controversial education and economic development goals. Orr would open up Asian markets to Indiana exports, a gate Daniels would repeatedly enter a generation later.

We see in this collection of speeches ranging from 1989 to 2012 what Gov. Daniels calls his "arc" of public service. We hear his distinctive voice in what becomes a kaleidoscope of ideas and action that imprint the citizen mind and the landscape freely wandered.

It's been almost a decade since Daniels took his turn at the apex of the state's political and policy tiller. He came to this station without running a negative television ad. He used an Indiana-built RV to criss-cross the state, meeting with Hoosiers in the smallest towns to the toughest neighborhoods. There was no laboratory, church or prison to avoid. This political creativity spanned all available media platforms and in some stratas, the Daniels campaign was a true pioneer. His speeches were from his own mind and pen. There were no speechwriters on the campaign or state public payroll.

By the time he addressed the 2004 Indiana Republican Convention, he would describe the gathering movement as a "freight train of change." Any doubter would be dazed by the scope of the agenda Gov. Daniels conveyed before a statewide TV audience and the Indiana General Assembly on Jan. 18, 2005, a mere eight days following his inaugural and a week after he ended collective bargaining rights for state employees by executive order. "The wolf is not at the door," Daniels said that day. "He is inside the cabin." And he resorted to a quote by legendary CBS news pioneer Edward R. Murrow to help make his case: "Difficulty is the one excuse history never accepts."

The reforms came across the board, from Daylight Saving Time, the property tax caps, to education mobility and credentialing, economic development, the Major Moves transportation plan to the addition of 50,000 acres of protected wildlife habitat and 3,000 miles of new bike lanes.

In this book are the writings and utterances, often delivered extemporaneously and, fortunately, captured via audio device, that trace the origins of this transformation. Presented here are his musings of the Hoosier character, the rebuking of dogged stereotypes, and the wonderment of a spirit Daniels observed constantly as he spent a decade traveling into the nooks and crannies of the state, sleeping in hundreds

of citizen homes along the way. Sometimes he would state the obvious, as in his 2009 Memorial Day speech when he declared, “We are a state of patriots.” Some of his most heartfelt words came as he eulogized brave Hoosiers making the ultimate sacrifice in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In a 1990 speech to Hanover College alums he observed, “We think the public education system should fund students, not buildings.” It was a precursor to the sweeping education reforms Daniels initiated 21 years later. Under his watch, Indiana became an idea exporter, to be mimicked by others.

Gov. Daniels always had a savvy grip on history, and he reached for it often, whether it was Lincoln’s “mystic cords of memory” or China’s Chou En-Lai being asked if the French Revolution was a success. “Too soon to tell,” the Communist leader said.

As the Daniels governorship comes to a close, such a sentiment could be expressed on how enduring and successful this locomotive of public policy and a new brand of politics will be. It will take at least a decade for an honest assessment to form. And it’s reasonable to expect that in that period and the decades following historians will be reach for this collection of speeches to probe the mind and soul of one Mitchell Elias Daniels Jr. and the sprawling changes that came under his charge.

*Brian Howey has published Howey Politics Indiana since 1994.*



# *Introduction*

It's odd, I know, to start a book of speeches with an apology to speechwriters, but in my case I feel I should. You see, despite my admiration for the craft of those who write speeches for a living, and my close friendship with some of the best we've ever known, I've never really utilized their talents myself. I have been giving speeches of one kind or another most of my working life, and have fallen so deeply into a rut of doing them myself that I'm not sure I'd be a good partner for Theodore Sorenson or Peggy Noonan if they showed up now and offered to help.

The vast majority of the talks I gave in jobs like President of Hudson Institute, or as a business executive at Eli Lilly and Company, or in federal service in the early years of this century, were delivered from notes I scribbled to myself. I have often joked that anyone seeking to read those notes would need the assistance of CIA cryptographers or Smithsonian scholars in primitive hieroglyphics. Countless times, I've been asked for "a copy of the text" and been forced to admit that there isn't one, that, at best, we may have a transcript available sometime later.

When, much to my own surprise, I found myself agreeing to run for elective office as governor of Indiana, I was pretty deeply set in these ways. Most of the selections that follow are "transcribed from extemporaneous remarks." Aside from the deletion of some surplusage (such as opening jokes or anecdotes), they are verbatim. I reviewed each of them myself, since even the most careful transcriber will occasionally misunderstand a word or phrase from a scratchy audio tape. As I did, I winced often at a clumsy phrase or second-best word choice, but for better or worse they record what I said as faithfully as possible.

Becoming governor ramped up both the number of speeches and their consequence. We hoped to organize and lead a movement to bring major change to a stagnant state, and I became highly conscious that the talks I gave and the words I chose mattered far beyond what a listener might decide he thought of me personally. On the negative side, as we have seen fairly often in recent years, even one poor word choice or unintentionally offensive comment can end a campaign and with it, in our case, the chances of turning our state around.

But I hoped for more than just mistake avoidance. I know that the spoken word, once the most important factor, has declined dramatically in its importance in our politics. Huge public gatherings used to be decisive in elections, and large percentages of voters would have attended at least one by Election Day. There were the years of millions sitting with the radio

to hear FDR or Churchill, and later the era of three networks where a big part of the electorate would reach a verdict about a candidate by listening to a speech.

In 21<sup>st</sup> Century Indiana, with newspapers under fierce market pressure and shrinking visibly, there are very few real political reporters left, and it's rare for any speech to receive more than a few fragments of quotation, the rest of the story being filled with "reaction" comments, mainly from partisan opponents and special interest groups.

But still I nurtured the hope that, here and there, the spoken word could move people to action, or provide them information they'd otherwise never learn, or cause them to think harder about an important issue, or care more about each other. And I thought that respect for the audience also required something more than a string of platitudes. So I've tried, even on the most routine or ceremonial occasions, to say something a little different, a little more substantive than the boring fare that too often passes for modern political discourse.

As I write this, the Republican National Convention is beginning in Tampa. Ambitious officeholders have been angling for months for the chance to mount the podium and deliver a speech.<sup>1</sup> I always wondered why; no one is paying attention in the convention hall and very few anywhere else. Network coverage, once "gavel to gavel" is now limited to an hour or two a night. The acceptance speech by each nominee may attract a reasonable audience, although it's a good guess that most who do watch already know whom they favor, so that few if any minds are changed.

I'm also asked where I come up with the quotes, humorous stories, or curious statistics with which I try to enliven my talks. That answer is that, for at least four decades, I have saved material that caught my eye and might prove useful one day. It's not a very impressive system. There are notes scribbled on napkins or event programs; there are pages xeroxed out of books I read; pages torn out of magazines, and so on.

Until around 2003, these scraps of knowledge and wisdom and humor accumulated in a sprawling compost heap in a few manila file folders. Then an enterprising White House intern, James Waters, seized the initiative and assembled them into three massive notebooks, doing the best he could to group them by category: statements by presidents, jokes and one-liners, religious commentary, etc.<sup>2</sup> Ronald Reagan and Winston Churchill have sections all to themselves.

When the idea of an anthology of speeches arose, I quickly thought of Neil Pickett as my logical partner for the project. I first met Neil in 1987

*1 I surely could have addressed some session of the 2008 Convention but actively avoided the invitation, making only a one-day cameo appearance in order to return to duty and our reelection effort in Indiana. In 2012, I received inquiries about a role but did not even attend for a day, out of respect for my upcoming, strictly non-partisan assignment at Purdue University.*

*2 James, son of a highly successful financier and a swimming star at Harvard, volunteered for military service when he finished working with me at OMB, eventually earning the Dolphin of a Navy SEAL. As long as America keeps producing young people like him, we'll always be a successful country.*

when I took up my duties at Hudson Institute. He was an extraordinarily bright and thoughtful young intellectual, who had enjoyed the fabulous opportunity to serve as the last research assistant to Hudson's legendary founder, Herman Kahn, before Herman's untimely death in 1983. I lured Neil to Lilly, and later to state government, benefitting from his great intelligence and philosophical grounding in each setting.

Neil was the sidekick who helped me prepare for many of those impromptu speeches, batting around concepts, hunting down supportive research, and serving as sounding board (and often a course corrector) when I thought I had a notion for an upcoming talk. If I had ever decided to enlist an actual speechwriter, Neil would have been first choice.

Writing one's own speeches has a couple virtues beyond meaning that the ideas they contain are really your own. Often I found my thoughts evolving, or clarifying, during the process of trying to get them on paper. And oral communication is vastly different from written; rhetoric that dazzles on the printed page can sound stilted or worse when read. I've known brilliant essayists whom you would never want writing your speeches. There are some occasions – the inaugural speeches, for instance – that seemed to call for a little more literary treatment. But in the main I always strove for plain words (one of Churchill's rules for speakers) and a natural, conversational tone. It's a lot easier to sound like yourself if you picked the words yourself.

Another Churchill maxim was “amenities are inanities,” meaning not to waste time with opening pleasantries. That great orator liked to begin with a thunderclap, a memorable phrase or perhaps a striking image.

In a job like governor, it's conventional to spend the first few minutes of a talk thanking everyone in sight, lauding the excellent qualities of the town or organization hosting the event, and naming every notable in the place from the county surveyor on up. I almost never did. Even at the State of the States, I never spent more than a couple sentences on formalities before jumping into the business at hand. I am sure that skipping these preliminaries disappointed a few folks over time, and probably was unfair to a number who deserved to be praised in public, but I was always eager to get to the heart of the topic, and to keep the speech short enough that the audience would stay with it.

The most perceptive statement I ever read about the task of writing was “Writing is easy. I just sit down and write what occurs to me. It's the *occurring* that's hard.” So true. Many of these speeches were weeks germinating, before I settled on a theme or central metaphor. But few of them took long at all to write, once the occurring had occurred. I wrote most State of the States on the Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend, with only minor touchups afterwards. The CPAC speech of 2011 took a few hours at most, because the ideas it presented had been developing in my contemplation for years.

The reader will judge for himself whether any of these selections has

merit, and history will judge whether the policies they proposed and the resulting actions they recount were in the long-run public interest of our state. But the hope of this exercise is that, whatever those verdicts, this anthology will provide a small contribution to the historical record of an era that, some of us believe, has been a bit unusual.

As these speeches contend, and as many facts support, 2005-12 may be recalled as years in which Indiana threw off its “inferiority complex” and vaulted to national leadership in a number of ways. If the determination to make positive change, to “create history, not endure it” persists into our state’s future, then these words will not sound hollow when reread in the brighter tomorrow of which we have dreamed.

## CHAPTER 1:

# *The Inaugural Addresses*

**Governor's Introduction:** *The first inaugural was a highly emotional moment, and not only for me. Some 10,000 citizens packed the State Fairgrounds coliseum seats and floor. Many were loyal Republicans who had waited 16 years for the occasion. Others were just plain folks, non-political people we had met along the campaign road. Some three hundred of them had been invited to the weekend festivities as our guests and given VIP badges featuring the iconic RV One with blinking headlights to signify their status as a road friend who probably had a good story to tell.*

*I worked hard on the speech, even while working in parallel on the first State of the State. But I don't recall it being too difficult; the themes (like "comeback"), images (like "barn-raising"), and the personal stories all flowed naturally from the campaign we had just waged.*

*The hardest part of the morning came when my old school friend of four decades, Chief Justice Randy Shepard, preceded his administration of the oath of office by telling the crowd, and the thousands of schoolchildren watching in their classrooms, about our youth together as political rookies, "bag-toters" as he put it. As Randy recalled our awe of leaders like Dick Lugar, and Bob Orr, and Ed Whitcomb, he remembered our dreaming, as young people do, of what our own careers might hold.*

*He said that nothing in our imaginations could have allowed us to foresee a moment when we would stand together on that stage for that purpose. He closed by saying to the young people watching that they should never doubt "that the dreams of youth can come true." Then he turned without a further word and said, "Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr., please come forward to accept your oath of office." It's a wonder I could get out a single word.*

*I was pleased with the ending of that speech: "Now if you'll excuse me, I have to go to work." It was my firm intent to salute the crowd, and proceed immediately to the State House, where we had laid on a series of substantive and symbolic actions – signing of executive orders on ethics reforms and economic development, delivery of our massive legislative proposals to both legislative chamber leaders, and so on. But I hadn't reckoned on my friends from the Jasper-Newton Community Band.*

*This outfit, which figured in one of the hundreds of fabulous stories from our months on the road, was seated right in front of the stage. As they swung into the Sousa march which they had persuaded me to "direct" when I first met them at their band practice at South Newton High School, they began waving and hollering and calling me down to the floor. I knew a command performance when I saw one. I shed my coat and jogged to the bandstand, and led the band through the rest of the number.*

*For the Second Inaugural, I took the self-assignment to imitate Lincoln. Many historians believe, and I agree, that at Gettysburg Lincoln gave his second-best speech, that the best of all was his second inaugural. At 703 words, it is a marvel of economy and perfect word choice. I did my best to match his conciseness. I failed, coming in after all the editing I could do at 714 words. But, on reflection, I decided that this was as it should be. I could never hope to match President Lincoln's wisdom or eloquence, so why match his brevity, either?*

***Inaugural Remarks***  
***January 10, 2005***

Mr. Chief Justice, Senator Lugar, friends and neighbors:

How simple those words. How familiar these rituals. How natural we find the transfer of authority over the affairs of our state.

How routine, how undramatic the process has been. No shots were fired, no barricades were stormed, no blood was spilled. While in one country a half a world away, people must refight the contest for office after a subverted election, and, in another, people die daily at the hands of those who would kill to prevent a free election from ever being held in the first place.

It is not just the young people of Indiana, watching this ceremony in thousands of classrooms, who take all this for granted, as the natural state of human affairs. All of us in this most blessed of nations have long been bound by, in Lincoln's words, the mystic chords of memory, to the notion that power derives solely from the will of free and equal people, and that power passes peacefully and only by the consent of the governed.

We Hoosiers have marked this passage now forty-eight times before. No wonder we view it so matter-of-factly. But I venture to say that no one receiving the temporary tenancy of the people's leadership ever inherited it from a predecessor of greater good humor or warmth of spirit than the man who tenders it to me today. Governor Joe Kernan, thanks to you and Maggie on behalf of the grateful state you have served so long and so devotedly.

And now, we citizens of the nineteenth state commence our forty-ninth chapter together. For the governed to give their consent fully, they must know full well what they are agreeing to. I hope it is fair to say that the people of Indiana knew what they were choosing, and knew whom, as I have always seen it, they were hiring, when they met in council on November 2nd.

We offered ourselves as people of change. We urged our fellow citizens to aim higher, to expect more from our state government, but also from our schools, our businesses and, ultimately, from ourselves. We tried to hold up the prospect of an era in which we would leave behind old arguments

for new solutions, provincialism for unified purpose, timidity and caution for boldness and even risk-taking, all with the goal of restoring our state as a place of prosperity and promise.

We said plainly what kind of change we would bring. The policies we will pursue have been in full view for months. When I leave here today I will sign executive orders making the first of those changes, effective immediately. On arrival at the people's house, I will personally deliver those of our proposals that require legislative approval to our new partners in the Indiana General Assembly.

And, eight days from tonight, I will propose, as a part of my State of the State presentation, approaches to the fiscal emergency in which we enter Chapter 49. We will waste no energy assigning blame for this crisis, and we must waste no time in addressing it. Our actions must be bold, because the problem is huge. They must touch every individual and interest, because they must be fair, and adequate to the challenge at hand.

If we overestimate the task, it means we have underestimated ourselves. When we think of the crises that free peoples before us have rallied to meet, we should gather confidence, and a sense of proportion, about the smaller assignment history has given us in our day. The job ahead may loom large to us, fortunate as we are to live in an age of unprecedented affluence and safety.

But this isn't Britain at Dunkirk. This isn't a newborn nation at Valley Forge. I do not face what Oliver Morton did when he stood on the Capitol steps and summoned a divided state to stand strongly for union and against slavery. When we note what our predecessors overcame in their day, we should be ashamed if we hesitate, sheepish if we pull up short.

When asked to explain America's victory over the dictators in World War II, General George Marshall said, "We had a secret weapon. The best damned kids in the world." Against the relatively manageable obstacles we face, we have a weapon, and it's no secret. We have the quiet resilience of spirit the world has always associated with the term "Hoosier."

In the seats of honor at this ceremony are the VIPs of this weekend, people I met and came to know during my 16-month interview for the job I undertake today. They come from the largest of our cities, from the tiniest of our towns, and from the rural spaces in between. I love them as individuals, but I love equally the way in which they personify the qualities which, if called forth now, will surely carry us over our current difficulties and back to greatness as a state.

Kathy Bond's over there. Eking out a living carving lawn statues out in Modoc, she somehow found a way to take in a friend, stricken with fatal cancer, who had nowhere to go. Dr. Mark Graves is here from Evansville, where at his own expense he and his son devised a computer program that is enabling low-income patients to cut their drug costs from hundreds to a few dollars a month. And Rich Neuberg, who, when he's not organizing charity walks for breast cancer research, is giving discounts in his diner

up in Knox for every dollar a customer spends at a local store. And Tom Anton, the longtime Purdue professor from Schererville, whom I tripped over enjoying his retirement by teaching a seventeen-year-old inner-city kid to read for the first time. Our greatest strengths reside where they always have.

I have often observed that, among our many special assets, Hoosiers are really good at rebuilding things. Engines, transmissions, airplanes, and buildings as large as the Pentagon – when something needs fixing, we just get about the chore.

And we are wired to help each other. We've been doing it for 188 years now. When trouble came, and it came often, our forefathers didn't use words like "sacrifice." And they certainly didn't divide into little groups and demand to be excused from taking part.

When there was storm damage to repair or a new barn to raise, everybody found a way to pitch in. Those who could handle a hammer or an axe, did; those who could afford to contribute a little extra for the materials, chipped in; those who could only bring a dish, brought it. Kids carried nails, old folks dispensed lemonade and sage advice, and nobody, nobody stayed home.

It's time to raise a new barn in Indiana, a new, stronger structure to house new tools and to make possible far richer future harvests. We will need the whole community to show up. As a government, we will do all that is possible to clear the path for new jobs and investment, but our businesses must take the risks from which alone new wealth comes.

We will spend the tax dollars of Hoosiers whenever possible inside our state, but our corporations must do likewise, and our universities must also use every opportunity to help the neighbors whose tax dollars support them.

Our utilities, granted special privileges by the nature of their product, must commit themselves to helping us attract new business. Those to whom life in Indiana has been the most kind must be willing to give back in accordance with their good fortune. And every interest group, of every kind and cause, must resolve to demand a little less, relent a little more often, if we are going to get the new barn up with the limited resources on hand.

Let's nobody sit home. Every parent who checks homework or reads to a child is lifting a bigger hammer than they may realize. Every person who volunteers at a free clinic, a food bank, a nursing home is putting a plank in place. Every young person who studies a little harder or signs up for a tougher course is driving a nail. Every citizen who stops smoking, or loses a few pounds, or starts managing his chronic disease with real diligence, is caulking a crack for the benefit of us all.

The young people of Indiana are watching us today, whether their classroom is tuned in or not. I know, from having met thousands of them, in their schools, at their games, and on the streets of their towns, that

they love this state, and overwhelmingly they hope to make it their home as adults. Over and over, they have told me in identical words: "I want to stay, but..."

They are watching now to see whether we who are already adults will behave like it. Whether we have a fraction the fortitude our ancestors had in such abundance. Whether we will rebuild the barn, pay our debts, and leave the family business strong, so that they can carry it on and pay the bills when their turn comes.

When we meet again in eight days, I will lay out a design for our new community rebuilding project. I will suggest the roles each of us can undertake. I will urge that our purpose be bold, that if we err, we err on the side of action, of movement, of experiment. And that our aim be high. It's been said that every great achievement was first a dream; cathedrals are not brought into being by skeptics.

Neither are great barns.

En route to Philadelphia in 1776, to put his life, his fortune and his sacred honor all at risk, John Adams wrote in his diary that it was all well worth it because, he said "Great things are wanted to be done." And so with us. Our lives are not at risk. We face much toil and sweat, but no blood and, one hopes, no tears. But, in our day, Adams' excitement, and Churchill's iron resolve, should be our own: Great things are there to be done.

This is our moment. Our children are watching, and so too are those who came before us. They would not recognize our problems as daunting. They'd say "Wipe your nose. Let's get to work."

Good advice. I thank you for your presence today. For the love of our state that it demonstrates. For the confidence and the opportunity you have invested in me and in those who have stepped forward to join our reconstruction crew.

We know our assignment; we will spare no effort; we ask only that you join us, each in your own best way, in rebuilding an edifice of excellence in which a great Hoosier future can be housed.

And now if you will excuse me, I have to get to work.

*Inaugural Remarks*  
*January 12, 2009*

**A Springtime We Can Summon**

As a matter of both good manners and necessity, second helpings should be smaller than first portions. Likewise with second pronouncements on accepting duty in the public's employ.

A moment of worldwide economic anxiety may seem an odd time for words of hope and visions of greatness. All are aware that the days immediately before us will not be traversed without much difficulty.

But we must believe, and resolve to see, that these present troubles are but a frost in April, a brief chill before the full flowering of the greener Indiana to come.

Not even the cold realities of a wintry world economy can obscure the signs of spring in our state. Out of economic erosion and indistinction, Indiana now excels in every assessment of appeal to new plantings of future jobs and prosperity. A blossoming culture of enterprise foretells the coming vigor of a youthful economy that regenerates new sprouts faster than its trusted old branches decay and fall away.

Best of all, a new mentality has taken root, a new boldness born of risks successfully run and change successfully delivered. In overwhelming numbers, Hoosiers have declared that we are unafraid to lead, to try the new before others do, and that we like the results of doing so.

No more will historians write that we are backward and out of step. That we are, at best, "gradualists" who prefer to keep to "the more secure edge of the river." The Indiana they depicted would never have led the nation in capturing international investment, cutting and reforming property taxes, or bringing peace of mind to those without health insurance. That Indiana would never have devised a way to build public infrastructure in record amounts without a penny of taxes or borrowing, or to liberate the new infrastructure of fiber and frequency in a nationally innovative way.

In dramatic contradiction of old stereotypes, Hoosiers have announced emphatically to a world that belongs to the creative and nimble, where fortune truly favors the bold, that we not only accept change but are prepared to lead it, and invite the rest of America to follow us.

Early spring is a tentative and unpredictable time. Winter never looses its grip without a struggle. Indiana's new garden will need constant tending, and continual nurture, if it is to remain fertile and hospitable to more growth and opportunity. One of America's great innovators taught "When you're green, you grow. When you're ripe, you rot." Indiana in our day, with deep and lasting reverence for our ripe traditions, has chosen the green path of change, with all its newness and uncertainty, with the awkwardness and discomfort that comes with youth. A commitment to rejuvenate our state, and ourselves, through the inevitable setbacks and mistakes, must be the enduring memory and legacy of these years of ours.

Spring's first flowers are always at risk. The frosts of fear can nip the most promising and beautiful of buds. If Hoosiers emerge from our winter's sleep only to see the shadows of our doubts and retreat from them, then winter will return, all the more frigid for the fragile hopes it cuts short. But, unlike the groundhog of fable, we have the outcome in our power. If we choose to face forward, into the sun, casting our shadows behind us, we can summon the springtime, and command it to come.

Today's world deals harshly with the slow, the timid, with those who retreat to the familiar but bleak confines of their hibernation caves. Whatever the perils of action and change, in our time there is far greater danger in hesitation, delay, and fearfulness. Like some recent movie protagonists, it is in swiftness we will find safety; disaster will strike only if we let the bus slow down.

A philosopher of our time observed, "It's not easy being green," and most surely it is not. But it becomes easier with practice. Each new creative action adds spring to one's step and confidence to move even more boldly to the next challenge. "With firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in." And that is to leave a brighter, greener Indiana to the young people so soon to follow us.



## CHAPTER 2

# *State of the State Addresses*

## *2005-2012*

**Governor's Introduction:** *Each of these was, of course, written. The occasion demands it, in part because the press needs a copy at least a couple hours in advance to do their job properly. Plus, I was always determined to fit the talk inside the 30-minute window that the state's television stations made available, and never to run over into someone's favorite 7:30 PM sitcom.<sup>1</sup>*

*I should be more precise. I aimed to finish very close to the end of the half hour. That would leave very little time for instant commentary, either by pundits or our political opponents. The hope was to let the audience decide for themselves what I had said and whether it made sense or not.*

*I was always stunned by how large an audience these speeches attracted. The "overnight" ratings routinely showed a surprisingly high percentage of all households tuned in, and that was buttressed by innumerable conversations with Hoosiers in the week or two afterwards. With each passing year, therefore, I became increasingly intent on saying something meaningful, and hopefully saying it in a slightly memorable or interesting way.*

*I honestly don't recall when I wrote the first SOS. I was working on the first inaugural speech at the same time, and deeply involved in planning a transition to the first Republican state administration in sixteen years. But from 2006 on, I fell into the pattern of sitting down on the Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend and emerging no later than Sunday afternoon with a solid first draft. Now, the "occurring" was probably well along before that time; throughout the previous months, I would have been making notes to myself on a pad in my left-hand desk drawer. I always felt more comfortable once I had a central theme, a good metaphor or two, and an apt quote or story tucked away there.*

*These speeches, along with the inaugurals, were the only ones in nine and a half years delivered from a teleprompter. In 2010, the state's creaky old machine broke down about a minute into the talk. I switched to the backup paper copy I had, thank goodness, always brought along, and soldiered on. I looked at the prompter every minute or two, but it stayed blank almost the entire half hour, with a sheepish technician crawling out from the side to check it once in a while.*

<sup>1</sup> *In writing these speeches over the years, I discovered the magic number 150. That is the number of words that a speaker, at least this one, delivers on average in a minute. As I wrote the SOSs, for instance, I aimed at around 3600 words as a maximum. That would mean 24 minutes of talking, leaving about 4-5 minutes to reach the podium, and for the expected interruptions for applause. It was uncanny how accurate the 150 words/minute rule of thumb proved to be.*

*Finally, literally as I reached the peroration, maybe the last two minutes, the screen came back on. Afterwards, I was dejected, assuming that the delivery had been severely affected. I was amazed to find that no one I talked to had seemed to notice. Again, writing for one's self probably helps in such a fix, as the words you have personally labored over are easier to recall with only limited reference to a page on a podium.*

*I altered one standard practice at these speeches. I never allowed the text to be given in advance to anyone but the press, and they were sworn to keep it "embargoed" until immediately after the event. I had seen too many such occasions, including State of the Union speeches, diminished by hundreds of legislators turning pages instead of listening.*

*I adopted the custom of carrying a text to each of the four legislative leaders, plus Lt. Governor Becky Skillman, on my way to the podium. Otherwise, the legislative audience heard the talk just when their fellow citizens did – and had to formulate their responses on their own, without benefit of talking points pre-prepared by their caucus staff or political headquarters.*

*I don't know the practice in other states, but in Indiana the Capitol is open on SOS evenings. People are free to come and hang out in the hallways, or even to exercise their First Amendment rights. I emerged from the 2008 speech into a shouting, sign-carrying crowd of citizens demanding the total abolition of property taxes. My eighth and final SOS "featured" a still larger crowd organized by labor unions to oppose our Right to Work legislation. The closed doors of the House chamber limited but hardly eliminated the noise of their chants and profanities. Like the teleprompter failure, delivering that speech required a little extra focus and discipline on my part.*

*That 2012 SOS drew one of our largest TV audiences, but by far the smallest in-person audience. At least a third of the Democratic legislators refused to attend. That decision was entirely up to them, of course, but it was a precedent I hope will not be repeated by members of either party, regardless the disagreements that may come in future years.*

*(Editor's Note: In addition to the Governor's eight State of the State addresses, this chapter contains two other significant, televised speeches that he made to statewide audiences during his tenure. In the first, delivered in October of 2007, the Governor proposed his dramatic plan to "cut and cap" local property taxes to protect Hoosier homeowners from skyrocketing property tax increases that had created a crisis around the state. The second, from June of 2009, came after the General Assembly had failed to reach agreement on a biennial state budget by the end of its regular session. The national economic crisis caused state revenues to decline significantly, and Democrats, who held a majority in the House, could not agree with the Governor or the Republican-controlled Senate on the cuts that needed to be made to maintain the state's hard-earned fiscal stability. The governor called a special session of the*