



Jan Brewer Inaugural Address January 21, 2009

Honorable Governor Castro, Governor Mofford, Governor Symington, Governor Hull.

Mr. Speaker and Mr. President, Madame Chief Justice and associate justices, Incoming Secretary Bennett, General Goddard, Superintendent Horne, Treasurer Martin, Mine Inspector Hart, Commissioner Pierce, Commissioner Stump, and Commissioner Kennedy, members of the Legislature, and honored guests . . .

I'm grateful for your presence and your lasting support over so many years. Among your faces I see not only the colleagues of countless political seasons, but the friendships of a lifetime.

Let me also thank Pastor Spicer for your uplifting words and for being a constant source of inspiration for me and my family.

And of course, let me thank my wonderful supportive family... Dr. John Brewer – a true pillar of strength – he continues to stand side-by-side with me as we walk down life's path together. My children, John (may God bless his soul), Ron, and Michael – your love and constant support help sustain me through everything we confront in life.

And to my brother...and rest of my family,...it means a great deal to me that you traveled here for this event, thank you for being here as well.

I also must extend a sincere thanks to Secretary Napolitano -- see, we've traded titles -- for her service to the state; and offer prayers and good will in her vitally important position with our new president.

One reason life is such a delightful adventure is that we never know exactly what it will bring. No one ever knew it would bring me here. But one thing is certain: there's no place I would rather be.

Of course this turn of events has not been cause for universal celebration. In some quarters this inauguration feels a good deal more like an interruption. And in a few ways -- good ways, we can hope -- it will be. But I pledge today to be a governor for all of Arizona, and to lead our state to better times. Together, we will do what we have to do, without pettiness or melodrama or misplaced regard to party, and we will succeed.

At a government's new hour we normally find ourselves uplifted by possibility. But today, we find ourselves weighed down with obligation -- overdue obligation. We are gathered amid uncertain times, with a difficult work before us. In some ways this feels like you've just shown up for a party -- but the guests have all gone, only the caterer is left and she immediately hands you the bill. But let's be clear about one thing.

Authentic public service -- rendered so faithfully by so many here today -- does not return barren. Even in hard times, we must do good work, in honest trust with those we serve, and the people will thank us for it.

For decades, the abundance generated by free, hard-working Americans has allowed government to remain in the habit of growing, and in recent years to grow even more rapidly. But today, neither prudence nor our Constitution will allow this to continue in our state. We have all been seated to preside over that rarest of political happenings: our government is going to get smaller.

We know this, and so do the people we serve.

Here is the situation. Essentially, for this and the next fiscal year, the people who do the work, provide the tax dollars and count on our performance were told we would have about \$21 billion dollars to spend on their government.

In reality, we aren't going to have that at all. We are going to be a little short -- somewhere on the order of \$4 billion short.

That's a lot of money, but there will be no time for gloom or further denial. We know the necessary reductions in state spending will not occur without impact to people's lives and livelihoods. Our task is to minimize that impact as much as we can, even as we keep our state moving toward a brighter future.

I'm a gardener at heart, and over the years I've noticed a few things that gardening and governing share in common. To grow beautiful things, you must have good seeds and provide water and sunshine; and then you have to control the weeds, spray the pests and run off the rabbits. Having served there, doesn't that sound a bit like the legislature to you?

But every gardener also knows that some pruning from time to time leads to greater fruit.

Building a budget is a zero-sum game. We must make an honest accounting of the expected revenues, set priorities for expenditures and retain a prudent ending balance and cash reserve.

But building an economy that supports that spending is absolutely not a zero-sum game. Even while we focus on the process of two budgets, we must act with bold determination to put Arizona's economy back on its feet, increase opportunity, and secure the futures of our people.

My fellow Arizonans, it is important to remember that we cannot budget our way to prosperity, and still less, we will not attain prosperity by taxing our way there either. Our first calling at this capitol is to generate capital -- to call forth the creativity, determination and entrepreneurial spirit that made these United States the most prosperous great power in the history of the world.

I'm therefore pleased to report that the legislative leadership, my transition team and I are not sitting idle while the new government in Washington plans another trillion dollars in deficit spending.

No, we are planning a massive stimulus package of our own, to make Arizona the most economically vibrant place in the world. And just like the clever folks in Washington, we have a catchy name for it: It's called "freedom."

Yes, we must keep our tax and regulatory burdens low, something I have stood for throughout my 26 years in public life.

We must make sure that beleaguered businesses in California and other such overtaxed places hear the music of our commerce and our culture and see brighter prospects in the cities and towns across Arizona.

But that is not nearly enough. In every way we can, we must make our people free.

Free to work and earn a living, to build a business, to build a life. Free to find and speak the truth about their government, and those who would lead it. Free from crime and violence and lawlessness of all kinds.

Free to move from place to place, across town or across the world, without gridlock and endless frustration. Free to choose the schools their children will attend, and to find a safe and sound learning environment in every public institution.

Free to breathe clean air and drink clean water, and to contemplate the hand of God in the forms and colors of our breathtakingly beautiful state, and upon the hearts of its diverse people.

Free to pursue an authentic higher education in our great research universities and our community colleges, at a cost that will not leave them under a crushing debt.

These freedoms, no less than others enumerated in our nation's founding documents, are what made this land great across nearly two-and-a-half centuries. Freedom is not a mere word, but the purpose and calling of mankind. It ennobles us. It has been the inspiration of a nation, the animation of a great and distinguished people called Americans, and the hope of cherished youth who have fought and died in distant places, so that we might keep it and know its blessings.

And so surely we who labor at this capitol can do our part to protect freedom, too.

Like so many Americans I am a sports fan. I long for the thrill of the game, and I love the courage and competitive intelligence of great athletes. What a wonderful example our very own Super Bowl bound Arizona Cardinals have been, in that regard.

One thing many great athletes can tell you is this: When you are struggling, return to the fundamentals. Get the fundamentals right, and the strong performance follows.

In America our fundamental value, our lodestar and our true north,... is freedom. Our greatest struggles, and gravest sins, have come when we have valued freedom too little, or coldly denied its promise to others. Consider the symmetry in the present crisis -- a struggling nation, with a haunting chapter in its past, has just proudly inaugurated its first African-American President. To better times, we will find no surer path than freedom.

My path to this platform today has not been paved with privilege. When I was a little girl, my widowed mother supported my brother and I with a small dress shop. From the time I was 10 years old, I helped my mother, always learning along the way.

Later in life I worked in a number of jobs, none of which were necessarily glamorous. I have come to know want, and worry, and the anxiety that touches so many people around our state today.

But I know with all certainty that we will make our stand, and soon we will be living out our finest days. We will get there by the light of Lady Margaret Thatcher, who helped Ronald Reagan to save freedom in the 20th Century. "Our

policy,” she said, “is not built on envy or hatred, but on liberty for the individual man or woman. It is not our policy to suppress success; our policy is to encourage it, and encourage energy and initiative.”

It’s a widely and sometimes bitterly held view that Arizona has been living high off it’s growth for the past 25 years, and there is some truth in that. But it’s also true that going forward, we will still be living off our growth -- but less the growth of our suburbs, and more the growth of our people.

In 20th Century Arizona, land was king, as we planted and mined and built our way through adolescence as a state. Those things will continue to be critical pillars of our economy. But in 21st Century Arizona talent will be king -- or queen, if you’d rather -- and we will both cultivate and attract it through freedom. This is the ancient cause and the common cry that can unite us for our present works.

Together we will succeed in this cause, and I look forward to serving you and our great state. Thank you, and may God continue to bless each of you and every Arizonan across our land.