



Governor C. L. "Butch" Otter

Third Inaugural Address
Friday, January 9, 2015

Mr. Chief Justice, Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Pro Tem, fellow Constitutional Officers, Members of our Congressional Delegation, honored legislators, judges, county and city officials, friends, my family and our First Lady ...fellow Idahoans.

Congratulations to our **returning legislators** whose work earned the continuing support of voters. And my sincere thanks to our **newly elected legislators** entering the arena of public service at a very challenging and exciting time in Idaho's history.

I also want to extend my compliments and best wishes to my **fellow constitutional officers and the many other individuals at every level of government** who worked hard to earn the people's confidence.

I want to thank my family – and especially your First Lady, Miss Lori – for their patience, understanding and unwavering support during a long campaign.

And certainly, allow me to thank our **State employees**, whose hard work and dedication to public service make up such an important part of our social fabric, and make this job so fulfilling.

This is the third time I have been blessed to stand here on the steps of the People's House to take this oath as your Governor and to thank you for trusting me to lead State government in a way that is consistent with the principles and values we share.

I strongly believe that the people of Idaho understand and embrace the role not just of voters or taxpayers but of individual citizens.

In my experience, there is no such thing as a "silent majority" in Idaho. Rather, there is a very clear realization that we are all in this together, and an equally clear commitment to going our own way, in our own time, and within our own means.

Idahoans remain deeply concerned with decisions that affect the liberties and opportunities available for future generations.

We take seriously our responsibility to ensure State government is focused on safeguarding those freedoms while enabling citizens to live up to their own best potential.

I am encouraged by the strength and resilience of our system, and I am energized by the opportunity to lead a rebirth of public trust and confidence in this Republic—a form of representative democracy that – despite its challenges and imperfections – still remains the envy of the world.

The past four years have provided us with equally great lessons about the importance of public process, the power of individuals, and our responsibilities as citizens.

When I last took the oath of office, Idaho was only beginning to see signs of the economic resurgence we needed to effectively address our biggest challenges.

Now Idaho is among the best managed, fastest-growing and most economically promising states in America.

That is due in no small part to the fact that here in Idaho, we don't just talk about our principles and values. ... We LIVE them. ... And the independence, self-reliance and civic virtue that have brought us back economically also are the foundation of how we will address the challenges ahead.

Here in Idaho, I believe we share a common determination to fully exercise our freedoms; to turn first to family, friends and community when need be; and to only cautiously and judiciously ask the collective authority of government to do for us what we alone cannot.

I also believe we share a deep and abiding love for this place we call home. We care more about sustaining and improving Idaho for our children and grandchildren than anyone who's not connected by blood, soil and tears ever could.

We want more than any national government or collection of outside experts possibly could for Idaho to succeed, for Idaho to prosper, and for Idaho to be a place where hope is inspired, faith is embraced, and charity is a way of life.

We are not a people easily swayed from our true course or commitment to our values by contrived comparisons or glib cynicism. We know who we are. We are proud of who we are.

We are not blown off course by the shifting winds of change or someone else's idea of what's right for Idaho.

That's why I'm here today. It's why I ran for Governor in 2006 after six years in Congress: I wanted to come home to a place where good ideas in the morning can become good public policy in the afternoon; where individuals have a voice and can make a difference; and where we are unafraid to STAND up for what we believe.

Does that mean all Idahoans agree on every issue? Of course not. We are individuals first and foremost, and our differences are what make us special and irreplaceable.

It's a matter of PROTECTING our values by PRACTICING them.

Our shared determination to listen to other points of view and work through our differences constructively is what makes us Idahoans. Where we draw the line is having others' views imposed on us as mandates out of misguided political correctness or a lack of respect for our history, traditions, and values.

For anyone who believes my commitment to liberty has been eroded by age or sullied by expedience ... For anyone who doubts my commitment to resisting with all that I am those federal policies that undermine the tenets of federalism or state sovereignty, watch closely over the next four years.

You will see that the fiery idealism of my youth has only been supplanted by a strong and tempered confidence born of time and experience.

But you also should know that we don't insist on prudent, responsible management of taxpayer dollars and limiting government's role in our lives because we're stingy, cruel or hard-hearted.

We do it because it is a tried-and-true way to ensure that the PEOPLE remain the masters and the government their servant.

We don't revel in the fact that Idaho still has a citizen legislature and balances our budget every year rather than a big, expanding and deficit-spending government like so many other states out of some animus toward government itself.

We do it because we trust the PEOPLE of Idaho to know best what's right for Idaho.

Our path forward to the Idaho we envision might be long and circuitous. But our direction is clear because our purpose is true to our values and the way of life we cherish. We STAND for what's right here in Idaho, and we are determined to be the architects of our own destiny.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to serve. God bless Idaho, and God bless America.