



*Inaugural Address
The Honorable Brad Little
Governor of Idaho*

January 4, 2019

Thank you. Teresa and our family, my fellow constitutional officers, Mr. Speaker, Pro Tem., honored legislators, Mr. Chief Justice, and members of the judiciary.

Our National Guard—men and women who have served and sacrificed for Idaho and our country. Thank you and your families.

My fellow Idahoans.

It is an honor to join my friends, all of Idaho's living former chief executives.

Governor Batt, your decency and fiscal conservatism changed our state forever.

Governor Kempthorne, who laid the foundation for our state's efforts for our children and improving our state transportation system.

Governor Risch, who in seven months completed a full term's worth of work, creating Idaho's own roadless rule, a model for our efforts on public lands management today.

And my immediate predecessor, Governor Otter, who has served Idaho for more than 40 years with distinction. I will always view him as a great judge of talent. And history will record my friend as a steadfast leader, who led us through momentous economic challenges to become the fastest growing state in the nation, with historic rates of employment.

Today, on behalf of all Idahoans, we say, thank you, Governor Otter, and well done.

Each Idaho governor and legislator has had a hand in putting us where we are today.

They are why Idaho is a leader in fiscal responsibility, and the preferred home for Idahoans and many new residents from other states. They are why we've continued to grow our investments in quality education. And they are why our personal income growth is the fastest in the country.

As leaders, we know the most important ingredient in Idaho's success has always been our people— from our pioneers to the present.

Idaho was built on our shared values of hard work, independence, persistence, and commitment to family.

For generations, Idahoans have faced the challenges of living in the western frontier and forged a better future for the next generation.

Our ancestors struggled against innumerable challenges— and overcame them.

Where there were no roads or schools, they built them. Where Idaho's natural wonders were threatened, they protected our precious public lands. Where they lacked energy, they built hydroelectric dams. Where the land was dry, they built the most sophisticated irrigation systems in the world.

Idaho pioneers did the hard work and made the hard decisions to create opportunities for their families and those who followed.

Growing up, Teresa and I were taught the importance of participating and serving in our communities.

Mom was on the hospital board for years. Dad served in the State Senate. And both my parents served on our local school board. They always stressed the importance of education.

In a fast-moving world, a robust education is imperative to compete.

We must keep cultivating the skills of our citizens, as we progress from a historically agrarian society to a modern information-driven economy.

Our state's commitment to education goes back to our constitution.

Since statehood, every Idaho child has been promised a uniform, thorough, and free public education.

And each generation has worked to better fulfill this constitutional responsibility— but more importantly— the moral obligation we have to our children.

Our family has lived this. Our parents, Teresa and I, and our kids were all educated in Idaho public schools and universities. Our grandchildren love their schools and teachers.

As Governor, I will work to live up to the promise we made at statehood.

It's what generations of Idahoans have done for us. Our children and grandchildren deserve no less.

I will work to reflect our shared Idaho values and aspirations. This means making all decisions through one lens— the lens of ensuring the best possible opportunities for us, our children, and grandchildren to remain in Idaho, to thrive and enjoy our unparalleled quality of life.

It means good-paying jobs and higher incomes— with the lightest possible hand of government.

It means each Idahoan can achieve the American Dream of homeownership.

It means providing world class schools.

It means accessible and affordable healthcare, where we address the challenges of mental health and substance abuse.

It means protecting and enhancing outdoor recreation.

It means a transportation system that saves time and lives.

It means protecting our precious natural resource— especially, our water.

It means ensuring that our state government is more agile, transparent, and responsive.

It means investing taxpayer dollars wisely, in the most careful and sustainable manner, with the best return for our future.

It means ensuring state government is fiscally sound, not deferring maintenance today that our children will pay for tomorrow.

It means pushing back against federal overreach and delivering Idaho solutions— where Idahoans enjoy the liberty of being the masters of our destiny.

It means protecting the Idaho values that define us.

And, finally, it means all our decisions and actions will be based on assuring you— the citizens— have the utmost faith and confidence in our government.

At a commencement address, Teresa and I heard Louse McClure, the wife of the late Senator Jim McClure, one of our mentors, state “above all ... be ethical in all things.”

The most sacred duty of elected officials is to uphold the trust citizens have granted us. As your Governor, I will work to champion confidence in our government.

When I took the oath of office, I swore to faithfully discharge my duties, to work for all Idahoans, and with God’s help, I will.

Even more than our majestic landscapes and abundant resources, Idaho’s greatest asset is our children.

And like generations of Idahoans before me, I pledge, with your help, to fulfill our promises to them.

God bless Idaho, God bless America, and God bless our children, and our grandchildren— they are Idaho’s future.

Thank You.