



*Inaugural Address*  
GOVERNOR ANDY BESHEAR  
December 12, 2023

Good afternoon to everyone gathered here in Frankfort and to all of our Kentucky families watching at home.

I am honored to have just taken the oath of office to continue to serve as your Governor. Serving in this role is a special duty, a solemn commitment. It is an obligation I accept with great reverence and humility, but also with great excitement and anticipation. I stand here today enthusiastic and hopeful for all we will accomplish for this commonwealth.

Over the next four years, we will continue our record-breaking economic win-streak, and create the good-paying jobs that will provide bright and promising futures for every single Kentucky child. We will invest in our educators, continue building what were thought to be impossible infrastructure projects, and run high-speed internet to every home. We will keep our promise to counties and communities devastated by natural disasters by not just rebuilding, but revitalizing. Your Lieutenant Governor and I will be there personally, every step of the way. We love you and we will get the job done.

I want to thank my Lieutenant Governor for her leadership. I want to thank my parents, my brother, and my favorite three people in the world – Britainy, Will and Lila. When you are Governor, you don't leave your job at the office, it follows you home. My family has helped bear the weight of our most difficult days. I love each of you so much.

A special thank you to everyone who worked on my campaign or in state government these last four years. And I want to thank everyone who put their faith in my leadership through their vote.

I recognize that today we are missing Tommy Elliott, Virginia Moore and many other loved ones, and that this year, we have lost three former governors in Governors Brown, Jones and Carroll. But I know they are celebrating with us, and we will see them again.

Today's ceremony is at what we call our "new" state Capitol Building, which is just old enough to need massive renovation. Still, this awesome structure is much younger than our 231-year-old commonwealth.

It was in December of our first year – 1792 – that "United We Stand, Divided We Fall" became our state motto. It's been with us every step of the way.

Our people, like the motto, have been tested over two centuries by wars, depressions and recessions, and the noble fight for civil rights for all of our people. In the last four years, we have faced our own tests. Each we have met with love, compassion, and empathy.

When we faced a pandemic, we sacrificed for each other, came together every day at 4 or 5 p.m., and shined green lights all over the commonwealth as the color of compassion. Thank you to all of our health care heroes who helped us through that deadly time.

When tornadoes leveled towns and flooding carried away homes and even loved ones, we came together – neighbors pulling neighbors from their basements or carrying fellow Kentuckians through the current. Thank you to our National Guard and first responders for their amazing response, and to the Kentuckians that still today are feeding and helping those in need.

I made a promise to be there to rebuild every home and every life, and we are going to see it through, with now 7 high ground communities rising in the East and over 150 fully constructed new homes for our families in the West.

We truly get through the hard times, and we get through them together. But we also get to the good times and get to them together as well.

In our first four years, we secured the best years of economic development in our history. We are building the Brent Spence companion bridge with no tolls, four-laning the entire Mountain parkway, and pushing I-69 forward.

We've secured federal funding to run high-speed internet to every community; building the two biggest electric battery plants on planet earth; and we've opened the cleanest, greenest recycled paper mill in the country.

We had the best years on record for our Bourbon and Tourism industries. We have record high budget surpluses and record low unemployment. We've created more than 50,500 new jobs and generated a record 28.5 billion dollars in new private sector investment.

We passed sports betting and medical marijuana, capped the cost of insulin, and health care is expanding all over the commonwealth, including the construction of the first hospital in West Louisville in 150 years.

Put simply, we are at a moment in time with the true potential to achieve our collective dream: the dream of a better Kentucky. And we can and should realize that dream if we don't stand in our own way.

See, one of the most difficult challenges before us is that politics – and sometimes even our governance – has become poisonous and toxic. What is supposed to be an exchange of ideas has devolved into grievances and attacks. Some appear to think it's just a game, that no target is off limits, no lie is too hurtful.

We see strategies and commercials meant to make one American – one Kentuckian – an enemy of another, trying to accuse them of horrible things in order to dehumanize them, so as to somehow justify anger, even hate, turning people against their neighbors just to have one more elected official with a certain letter behind their name.

I ran for office to leave a better world for my children, for all of our children. And this is our chance – Kentucky’s chance – to be the difference, to be both an economic and moral leader of this country.

So, we must face this challenge the way we always do – together.

Together, we will not meet hate with hate, or anger with anger, or even frustration with frustration. Instead, we will continue with the same love, empathy, and compassion that has guided us through so much. For me, these values are grounded in my faith. It teaches me to love my neighbor as myself. To not judge, lest I be judged. That what I do to the least of thee, I do to He.

My faith teaches me that all human beings deserve true dignity and opportunity and that we can come together simply by acknowledging that our faith and values call us to be better; and for me, remembering that my savior could have been the Prince of Power, but chose to be the Prince of Peace.

I pledge today to continue to be a Governor who serves all our people regardless of your party or who you voted for. I will do my best every day, to stop the fighting, to push away the division, to remind us that we have more that unites us than can ever pull us apart. And most importantly, I pledge to work to create a better life and more opportunity for every generation that comes after us.

The eyes of the country are on Kentucky. And the next four years are our chance to lead – to move forward, together.

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