

2015 INAUGURAL ADDRESS

MR. CHIEF JUSTICE, DISTINGUISHED STATE AND FEDERAL OFFICIALS, FRIENDS, FAMILY, MY FELLOW NEVADANS:

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS AGO, THE FIRST ELECTED GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, HENRY GOODE BLASDEL, STOOD BEFORE HIS FELLOW NEVADANS AND TOOK THE OATH OF OFFICE, AS I HAVE TODAY.

IN THOSE DAYS, NEVADA HAD JUST BEEN ACCEPTED INTO A UNION STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE.

THE FLEDGLING STATE WAS SPARSELY POPULATED, ALMOST ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON A SINGLE INDUSTRY, AND WAS PREOCCUPIED WITH THE HORRORS OF A LONG, PAINFUL CIVIL WAR.

WE SAY THE SILVER STATE WAS BATTLE BORN, BECAUSE, SHE TRULY WAS.

**A SENSE OF DESTINY AND PROMISE RUNS DEEP IN THIS LAND;
– FROM OUR NATIVE AMERICAN FOREBEARS, TO THE
INDOMITABLE PIONEERS WHO SETTLED THE GREAT AMERICAN
WEST.**

**THERE ARE COUNTLESS BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN, WHO –
PASSING THROUGH OR PUTTING DOWN ROOTS – DUG DEEPER
WITHIN THEMSELVES THAN THEY COULD EVER HAVE IMAGINED,
AND PERSEVERED, REFUSING TO BACK DOWN WHEN THE
MOUNTAIN SEEMED TOO STEEP, THE HEAT UNBEARABLE, THE
FOOD AND WATER ALMOST GONE.**

**IN THE SUMMER OF 1849, YOUNG SARAH ROYCE SET OUT
WITH HER FAMILY FOR THE WEST FROM COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA.**

**WHEN SARAH AND HER FAMILY FOUND THEMSELVES IN THE
NEVADA DESERT, SHE PENNED THESE WORDS IN HER DIARY:**

**“ON MONDAY MORNING WE LOADED UP...ANOTHER DAY
WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER; BUT WE DARED NOT LINGER.”**

**SO...WE ONCE MORE SET FORWARD TOWARD THE
FORMIDABLE DESERT, AND...THE SCARCELY LESS FORMIDABLE
SIERRAS.**

**THE FEELING THAT WE WERE ONCE MORE GOING FORWARD,
INSTEAD OF BACKWARD, GAVE AN ANIMATION TO EVERY STEP,
WHICH WE COULD NEVER HAVE FELT BUT BY CONTRAST.**

**BY NIGHT WE WERE AGAIN AT THE SINK WHERE WE ONCE
MORE CAMPED; BUT WE DURST NOT, THE FOLLOWING MORNING,
LAUNCH OUT UPON THE DESERT WITH THE WHOLE DAY BEFORE
US; FOR...THE SUN WAS STILL POWERFUL...AND THE ARID SAND
DOUBLED ITS HEAT.**

**NOT MUCH AFTER NOON, HOWEVER, WE VENTURED OUT UPON
THE SEA OF SAND; THIS TIME TO CROSS OR DIE.”**

**ON THIS BRISK DAY, WE CAN HARDLY IMAGINE THE FEAR,
UNCERTAINTY AND COURAGE OF SARAH, HER FAMILY, AND HER
PIONEER BRETHERN.**

BUT NEVADANS CAN NONETHELESS PAUSE AND REFLECT – WITH THE FEELING THAT WE, TOO, ARE ONCE AGAIN MOVING FORWARD, INSTEAD OF BACKWARD.

IT WAS AN AMAZING JOURNEY SHARED BY ALL OF US.

CONSIDER THIS: IN 1864, THERE WERE LESS THAN 40,000 PEOPLE IN NEVADA AND OUR EARLIEST LEGISLATIVE MEETINGS TOOK PLACE IN SMALL HOTELS BECAUSE THERE WERE NO PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

TODAY, NEVADA IS HOME TO ALMOST THREE MILLION PEOPLE AND THE WORLD’S LARGEST RESORTS GRACE OUR SKYLINES.

WE ARE GROWING AGAIN – DRAWING NEW GENERATIONS OF MODERN DAY PIONEERS EAGER TO BEGIN A NEW LIFE.

AND IN 1864, WHEN GOVERNOR BLASDEL TOOK HIS OATH, THE NAME “TESLA” BELONGED TO A YOUNG SERBIAN WHO WOULD ONE DAY BE KNOWN FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO ALTERNATING CURRENT ELECTRICITY.

TODAY, THE NAME TESLA HAS INVOKED THE PROMISE OF A NEW NEVADA ECONOMY ROOTED IN SCIENCE AND INNOVATION.

AFTER THE LONG CROSSING OF AN ECONOMIC DESERT, NEVADA LAST YEAR MARKED ITS 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF STATEHOOD WITH A RENEWED SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT AND HOPE.

FROM THE STRIKING OF COMMEMORATIVE SILVER MEDALLIONS IN CARSON CITY, TO THE STEADY CHUGGING OF THE UNION PACIFIC TRAIN DEPARTING THE DEPOT AT WENDOVER, TO THE MONUMENTAL PERFORMANCES AT AN UNPRECEDENTED GALA AT THE SMITH CENTER IN LAS VEGAS, TO THE SINGING OF OUT STATE SONG, "HOME MEANS NEVADA" BY A RECORD 50,000 NEVADANS, AT SCHOOLS, CHURCHES AND OFFICES, OUR ANTHEM OF PRIDE RANG LOUD AND CLEAR ACROSS THE SILVER STATE.

THE NV150 CELEBRATION AFFORDED US A CHANCE TO REFLECT ON NEVADA'S HISTORY.

I AM NO EXCEPTION.

LIKE MANY FAMILIES, KATHLEEN AND I ENJOYED SHARING THE RICH HISTORY, COMMUNITY EVENTS, AND PANORAMIC VISTAS OF THE SILVER STATE WITH OUR CHILDREN.

THE SANDOVAL FAMILY CONTINUES TO BE BLESSED BY THE WELCOME SO MANY OF YOU HAVE GIVEN US – AND I KNOW I COULD NOT STAND HERE BEFORE YOU WITHOUT THE SUPPORT AND LOVE OF KATHLEEN, JAMES – WHO IS AWAY AT COLLEGE – MADDY, AND MARISA.

AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, I AM HONORED TO COUNT PAUL LAXALT AS MY MENTOR.

HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEVADA ARE STILL FELT TODAY.

HIS NEVADA ROOTS RUN DEEP.

HISTORY TELLS US THAT IN 1967, THEN-GOVERNOR LAXALT BECAME THE FIRST NEVADA GOVERNOR TO HOLD HIS INAUGURAL CEREMONY OUTSIDE, ON THESE CAPITOL STEPS.

**HE SAID HE WANTED TO GIVE US A NEW TRADITION,
TO GATHER NEVADANS IN THE TOWN SQUARE OF OUR
STATEHOOD.**

**PAUL LAXALT UNDERSTOOD THAT ON DAYS LIKE TODAY, THE
PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE MEET ON THIS STAGE.**

IN 1967, HE PUT IT LIKE THIS:

**“AS A STATE AND AS A NATION, WE ARE STILL VERY YOUNG.
MOST OF OUR HISTORY LIES BEFORE US.**

**WHAT WE DO NOW WILL SERVE NOT ONLY THE PRESENT, BUT
OUR CHILDREN AND THEIR CHILDREN IN GENERATIONS TO COME.”**

THOSE WORDS STILL RING TRUE TODAY.

**AND SO, IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR CONSTITUTION, AND OUR
TRADITION, WE GATHER AGAIN AS THE NEVADA FAMILY ON THIS
COLD WINTER’S DAY TO WRITE ANOTHER CHAPTER IN THE STORY
OF OUR STATE. THE INAUGURAL PROGRAM TODAY IS
PRESENTED ENTIRELY BY THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF NEVADA.**

**IN SPEECH, SONG, AND PRAYER, THESE STUDENTS
HAVE NOW WRITTEN THE FINAL LINES OF THE SESQUICENTENNIAL
STORY.**

**THEY HAVE BROUGHT JOY AND PRIDE TO OUR HEARTS AS WE
CATCH OUR BREATH IN THE PRESENT MOMENT.**

**MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT IS THEY WHO WILL WRITE THE
NEVADA STORY OF TOMORROW.**

**AND THEY BRAVELY BEGIN THE NARRATIVE FOR
A FUTURE NEVADA WE CAN ONLY BEGIN TO IMAGINE.**

**THEY ARE NEVADA'S GENERATIONS TO COME, AND
I HEREBY DEDICATE ALL THE WORK OF MY REMAINING YEARS AS
YOUR GOVERNOR TO THEIR ULTIMATE SUCCESS.**

**FOUR YEARS AGO, WE GATHERED HERE ON THESE STEPS AT
A TIME OF UNPRECEDENTED ECONOMIC HARDSHIP AND FISCAL
PERIL.**

**UNDAUNTED, WE COMMITTED OURSELVES TO THE PROMISE
OF OPPORTUNITY.**

WE ROLLED UP OUR SLEEVES.

WE WENT TO WORK.

WE MADE THE DIFFICULT DECISIONS THAT HAD TO BE MADE.

AND WE BUILT A FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE.

**TOGETHER, WE ACCOMPLISHED MORE THAN MANY THOUGHT
POSSIBLE.**

**WE HAVE RESTORED NEVADA AS THE HOME OF NEW
OPPORTUNITIES, AND RECLAIMED OUR TITLE AS A NATIONAL
LEADER IN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOB CREATION.**

**WE'VE CUT THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN HALF, FROM A
RECORD PEAK OF 13.9% FOUR YEARS AGO, TO THE MOST
RECENT 6.9%.**

**ALMOST 100,000 MORE NEVADANS ARE WORKING THAN FOUR
YEARS AGO.**

**BUT WE HAVE DONE FAR MORE THAN SIMPLY RETRIEVE WHAT
WE LOST DURING THE ECONOMIC COLLAPSE.**

WE REKINDLED STATE PRIDE, CREATED A NEW SENSE OF OPTIMISM AND ESTABLISHED A FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE SUCCESS.

WE DIVERSIFIED OUR ECONOMY TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE;

WE STRENGTHENED EDUCATION;

WE IMPROVED HEALTHCARE;

WE MADE STATE GOVERNMENT MORE EFFICIENT AND RESPONSIVE;

AND WE ENDURED UNIMAGINABLE HUMAN TRAGEDY AND NATURAL DISASTERS.

WE DARED TO DREAM OF A BETTER NEVADA; A NEVADA THAT CAN AND WILL COMPETE IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY AND TAKE ITS PROPER PLACE AMONG THE GREAT STATES IN THE UNION.

AND, IN SO DOING, WE HAVE SET THE STAGE FOR A FUTURE THAT MAY SURPASS EVEN OUR OWN PIONEERING PAST.

WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY IN A SHORT TIME, BUT IT IS NOT FAR ENOUGH.

WE MUST CONTINUE TO PUSH FORWARD, TO BUILD THAT STRONGER NEVADA AND MAKE IT THE PLACE WHERE THE GENERATIONS TO COME WILL CALL HOME.

THAT NEVADA NEEDS BETTER SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES, AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE HEALTH CARE AND A BROADER, STRONGER, AND MORE DIVERSE ECONOMIC BASE.

IN JUST FOUR WEEKS, THE LEGISLATURE WILL RETURN TO CARSON CITY.

PRIOR TO THAT TIME I WILL DELIVER MY BUDGET AND A PLAN FOR LEADING NEVADA INTO THE FUTURE.

I THANK THE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE WHO COULD BE HERE TODAY, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO SERVING WITH ALL OF YOU.

I KNOW THAT WE WILL TRAVEL THE ROAD AHEAD TOGETHER, IN A SPIRIT OF COLLABORATION.

FOR WE ALL UNDERSTAND THAT JUST OVER THAT NEXT RIDGE, JUST AROUND THE NEXT BEND, DIFFICULT DECISIONS AWAIT US.

BUT WE ALSO KNOW THAT FUTURE GENERATIONS OF NEVADANS ARE COUNTING ON US – AND IF WE LOOK TO THEIR TALENTS AND EMBRACE THEIR ENTHUSIASM, WE CANNOT HELP BUT BE INSPIRED TO DO RIGHT BY THEM.

WE ARE BATTLE BORN AND NEVADA PROUD: OPTIMISM IS OUR HERITAGE; OPPORTUNITY IS OUR WATCHWORD; AND COURAGE IS IN OUR BLOOD.

WE RECOGNIZE THE DEEP AND ABIDING RESPONSIBILITY ENTRUSTED TO US AS STEWARDS OF THE PUBLIC GOOD.

WE MUST THEREFORE BE BOLD, WITHOUT BEING BRASH.

WE CAN BE IDEALISTS, BUT NEVER IDEOLOGUES.

WE SHOULD SPEAK OUR MINDS, BUT ALWAYS BE WILLING TO LISTEN.

MOST OF ALL, WE MUST DO OUR WORK IN WAYS THAT PRESERVE AND JUSTIFY THE FAITH AND COURAGE OF ALL WHO CAME BEFORE US.

IN THE SPIRIT SO ELOQUENTLY CAPTURED BY THE YOUNG PIONEER SARAH ROYCE IN HER DIARY, WE MUST “VENTURE OUT” AND EMBRACE THE SENSE OF GOING FORWARD INSTEAD OF BACKWARD, OR THE TEMPTATION TO SIMPLY STAND STILL.

WE MUST EACH FIND IN OURSELVES THE GRIT AND DETERMINATION REQUIRED TO CROSS THE DESERTS OF OUR TIME.

WE MUST SECURE THE PROMISE OF OPPORTUNITY AS THE HERITAGE WE LEAVE FOR THE YOUNG NEVADANS WHO GRACED THIS CEREMONY TODAY; AND THOUSANDS MORE LIKE THEM ACROSS OUR STATE, FROM VIRGINIA CITY, LAS VEGAS, LOVELOCK, SPARKS, ELY, LAUGHLIN, PYRAMID LAKE, HAWTHORNE AND EVERY COMMUNITY IN BETWEEN.

**TO ALL THOSE GATHERED ON THIS STAGE – THE JUSTICES,
LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP HERE REPRESENTED, AND TO MY
FELLOW CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS WHO ARE EACH EMBARKING
ON THEIR OWN NEW JOURNEY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, I ASK FOR
YOUR HELP.**

I OFFER MY HAND IN THE SPIRIT OF SHARED STEWARDSHIP.

**AND I CALL UPON YOUR LOVE FOR THE SILVER STATE TO
ENSURE THAT NEVADA’S BEST DAYS ARE TRULY YET TO COME.**

**LET US GO FORTH FROM THIS PLACE WITH THE GREATEST
MANDATE OF ALL:**

**TO ENSURE THAT FUTURE GENERATIONS OF THE NEVADA
FAMILY INHERIT FROM US A PROUD LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP,
VISION AND COURAGE.**

**THANK YOU, GOD BLESS YOU, AND GOD BLESS THE GREAT
STATE OF NEVADA...**