

Steve Sisolak sworn in as governor of Nevada

Today, at approximately 11:50 am, Steve Sisolak was sworn in as governor of Nevada. The oath of office was administered by Associate Justice James W. Hardesty. Governor Sisolak, who is the first Democratic governor of the state in two decades, succeeds Governor Sandoval who has served since 2011.

In his inaugural address, Governor Sisolak laid out his vision of what it means to be Nevada Proud and the bright future our state has before it.

“For more than 150 years, Nevadans have been masters of defying expectations,” said Governor Sisolak. “We are dogged innovators, restless entrepreneurs, roll-up-our-sleeves pioneers. We turned desert into farmland, a sleepy settler town into a worldwide destination. We’ve never been daunted by hard work or hard times.”

The outdoors ceremony held on the steps of the Nevada State Capitol included the inauguration of Nevada’s constitutional officers and Nevada Supreme Court justices. The ceremony was attended by over 500 guests including former governors, distinguished guests, and members of the public. The ceremony was emceed by Mayor of Reno Hillary Schieve.

The Inaugural Program and Governor Sisolak’s remarks, as prepared for delivery, are below.

Inaugural Program

Master of Ceremonies: The Honorable Hillary Schieve, Mayor of Reno

Musical Selections: Midnight Blues Jazz Ensemble under the direction of Bill Zabelsky

Presentation of Colors: Nevada National Guard

National Anthem: Major Melissa Beauchamp, (Ret.) Nevada Air National Guard

Pledge of Allegiance: Sydney Larson, 4th Grader at Seeliger Elementary, Carson City & Cooper

Sandoval, 4th Grader at Mount Rose Elementary, Reno

Invocation: Reverend Deacon Reynelda James, Elder from Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe

Supreme Court Oath of Office: Oath administered by Associate Justice James W. Hardesty

Constitutional Officers’ Oath of Office: Oath administered by Associate Justice James W. Hardesty

Poem: Lindsay Wilson, Reno Poet Laureate

Introduction: Francisco Morales, Sisolak Administration Director of Public Relations and Community Affairs

Governor’s Oath of Office: Oath administered by Associate Justice James W. Hardesty

Inaugural Address: Governor Steve Sisolak

Home Means Nevada: Major Melissa Beauchamp, (Ret.) Nevada Air National Guard

Benediction: Very Reverend Robert Stoeckig, Vicar General Diocese of Las Vegas

Governor Sisolak Inaugural Address (as prepared for delivery)

Good afternoon!

Justices of the Supreme Court, members of our congressional delegation, former governors, first ladies, and members of the 80th Legislature, reverend clergy, honored guests, family and friends, and those who could not make it up here with us today, including Senator Reid: With all my heart, thank you.

To Governor Sandoval, I want to extend my gratitude for your extraordinary service. Thank you for prioritizing our kids' education and our families' health, and for always putting people over partisanship.

As Governor, I pledge to follow the example you've set — to find common ground, reach consensus, make a difference in people's lives, and keep moving the state forward.

To all Nevadans — no matter who you voted for or where in Nevada you call home — it's the honor of a lifetime to serve as your next governor.

Like so many of you, I first set foot on these desert lands as a young man. Holes in my pockets, hungry for opportunity and adventure. I got that and so much more.

I found community, wisdom, and all of the support a single dad raising two daughters could ask for.

Ashley and Carley, what a privilege it is to be your father. You are kind, compassionate hellraisers of the highest order. May have earned me a few gray hairs but I wouldn't have it any other way.

Thankfully, powerful women are something of a fixture in my life.

I'm joined today by my soulmate and beautiful wife, Kathy! And I'm starting this new chapter as your governor in good company — alongside the first female-majority state legislature in American history.

I'd be remiss to not acknowledge the other historic milestones we've reached recently in Nevada. Today. Aaron Ford became the first African American constitutional officer in Nevada's history and Kate Marshall became the first Latina Lieutenant Governor.

The truth is the people of the Silver State have always blazed new trails, seeing potential where others saw a great big basin of rock, mountains, and tumbleweeds.

It's that spirit that drew me here 40 years ago. And let's be honest: I also wanted out of Wisconsin winters.

So I paid my way through business school at UNLV by weighing quarters at a casino. The job worked with my school schedule — the pay was enough to get by — and the free buffet didn't hurt.

After graduation, I started my first business. I was lucky — I had a world-class education, people who believed in me, and the chance to make mistakes and try again.

Every Nevadan willing to work hard deserves that same chance. That's why I'm here—to bring opportunity back within reach and do what I can to repay the state that has given me so much.

Over the past year, I've gotten to know just about every corner of Nevada. And my time on the road deepened my love for our state — even if I did sweat through about half a dozen suits.

I've talked with miners, business owners, caretakers, bartenders, and everyone in between. In each of their stories, I saw a different way to be Nevada Proud. And I was reminded of something Abraham Lincoln once said: To paraphrase, "I like to see a person proud of the place he lives. I like to see a person live so that his place will be proud of him."

A lot of Nevadans are living like that.

There's the woman I met at Costco, who was hauling around a shopping cart full of breakfast bars. She told me they were for her students. In case any of them came to school hungry, she'd have something for them at the start of the day.

That's what Nevadans do. We show up for one another. We pitch in wherever—and whenever—we're needed. But no teacher should have to spend their salary like that, and no kid should have to sit in class hungry.

I take my responsibility seriously—to fight for kids, educators—for every Nevadan. Not just rural or urban. Not just Democrat or Republican. All of us.

First things first: we've got to get our education system back on track — because we know that's the bedrock of a thriving economy... and the pathway to a better life for our families.

We have so much to offer out-of-state businesses. But we can't expect talented workers to stay here if we can't guarantee their kids a quality education.

So we've got to do better by our students. And that means doing better by our educators. The future of Nevada is in their hands—and they should have the resources and respect they deserve. And we need to make sure there are jobs waiting for everyone who wants one.

This is deeply personal to me.

When I was growing up, my dad worked at a GM factory, my mom at the Piggly Wiggly grocery store in town. One day, he came home from the plant with a look of absolute anguish on his face. Turned out he was working up the nerve to tell us he'd been laid off.

He lost more than his paycheck that day. He lost his dignity. Our family lost too — our livelihood, our sense of security, our faith in the system. I don't think my dad ever fully recovered.

No one deserves to go through that.

A few months ago, I was touring the Raiders-UNLV stadium site. A water truck pulled up beside me and this worker jumped out, with a smile splashed across his face. He walked over to shake my hand, thanking me for supporting the project. It was the first job he'd had in 18 months. My administration will continue that work — prioritizing jobs. Not just any jobs either — good-paying jobs. Jobs that can support a family.

But if we're serious about improving our economy, we must address one of our biggest financial burdens: health care.

It's one of the most personal issues a family deals with.

My mother is 92-years old. She lives with my sister, Sue, in Las Vegas. I call her every day after church. I am so grateful that she has access to the care she needs. I love you, mom. I love you, Sue.

But not everyone is so fortunate.

Last year, I met an elderly couple at a retirement home. They were both on blood pressure medication but couldn't afford two copays. So they split their pills in half every day, to make sure each of them got something.

It's a loving gesture. But it's also a travesty. No one should have to ration off their medicine or skip doctor visits. Or be forced into bankruptcy because of an unexpected illness. But today, too many people are doing just that.

I'm committed to cracking down on the rising cost of prescription drugs...blocking any effort to roll back protections for pre-existing conditions...protecting access to women's health care...and defending a woman's right to make her own medical decisions.

Health care isn't political. It's personal. We have to do better. And I know that we can.

For more than 150 years, Nevadans have been masters of defying expectations. We are dogged innovators, restless entrepreneurs, roll-up-our-sleeves pioneers. We turned desert into farmland, a sleepy settler town into a worldwide destination.

We've never been daunted by hard work or hard times.

Just look at how we bounced back from the Great Recession.

Nevada was one of the hardest hit states in the nation. Our foreclosure rate topped the country for over five years. And our unemployment rate reached nearly 14 percent.

Today, unemployment is under 5 percent — and we've added more jobs than we lost in the recession.

We're looking to the future, too — investing in renewable energy, healthcare, electric vehicles, high tech, and other promising new industries.

But being Nevada Proud is about more than resilience and ingenuity. It's about our compassion and common decency.

It's hard to believe it's been over a year since we endured one of the worst mass shootings in recent history.

I'll never forget getting the call from Sheriff Lombardo — I immediately drove down to the site.

Across the field, you could hear dozens of cell phones ringing. Calls from loved ones, hoping, praying, someone would pick up.

Around 3:00 am, I set up a GoFundMe, with the goal of raising a few thousand dollars for victims and their families. Within hours, kind-hearted people from all over the world were donating whatever they could—with the hope of easing a stranger's financial burden ... and showing support amid the heartbreak.

But it's not the cash I remember the most. It's the woman who showed up at a first responders tent with

cookies in hand because that was all she had to give.

It's the thousands of Nevadans, who showed up at 6:00 am the next day to donate blood — lines down the block. And when some kind soul informed them it'd take about eight hours to reach the front, they looked around and said, "So what? I'll wait."

We were broken on 1 October, but I've never been more proud to be a Nevadan than as I was that day.

This state, battle-born in the fires of the Civil War, has always been a model of a fierce belief in the power of unity.

That's what I mean when I say we're One Nevada. We hail from all walks of life, but we come together, over and over again, to make one another better. And we have each other's backs.

When Abraham Lincoln envisioned men and women living to make their place proud, he couldn't have described Nevada any better.

I am so proud of who we are.

Of that dedicated teacher I met in Costco.

Of the man driving that water truck, eager to get to work.

Of the elderly couple, whose love of one another is keeping them alive, even as our healthcare system lets them down.

Of the first responders and those who donated whatever they could in the aftermath of tragedy. Of each and every person in the Silver State — including Sydney Larson and Cooper Sandoval (no relation!), two 4th graders who won our "Nevada Means Home" drawing contest. Thank you, both!

Together, we will keep living up to Lincoln's vision. No matter where you come from, how much money you make, your gender, race, religion, or who you love—we are One Nevada, with a common purpose and shared vision.

It's not a mirage. It's our reality.

So let's get to work, and keep making this place proud of all us.

Thank you. God bless Nevada, and God bless the United States of America.

####

Governor Steve Sisolak inauguration ceremony:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehg4oc-mGuw>