



State of Louisiana
Office of the Governor
GOVERNOR BOBBY JINDAL

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Governor Jindal's 2012 Inauguration Address

NOTE: Governor Bobby Jindal's 2012 Inauguration Address. Below are remarks as prepared for delivery.

President Alario, Speaker Kleckley, Statewide elected officials, Chief Justice Kimball and Justices of the Supreme Court, members of the Legislature; Governor Foster, Governor Blanco.

Senator Landrieu, Congressman Cassidy and Congressman Boustany;

My beautiful wife Supriya, my mom and dad, my in-laws, and my kids;

Honored guests, friends, and my fellow Louisianians...it is with gratitude in my heart and determination in my spirit that I stand before you.

As I reflect on the events in my life that have led me to this podium today, I must begin by singling out Governor Mike Foster for special recognition...or blame... depending on one's perspective.

Governor Foster had the chutzpah to appoint me as his secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals 16 years ago...when I was the ripe old age of 24 years old.

Thank you Governor for taking a chance on me, for your friendship, your wise counsel, and your steadfast leadership of our state.

I also want to thank Governor Blanco for being here today.

If any of you are ever worried about me staying humble...Governor Blanco will always hold a memorable place in my heart, as she is the only person I have ever lost an election to. Thank you Governor for your many years of service to our state.

Now let me start by acknowledging the elephant in the room – I am fully aware...as my kids have reminded me...that my inauguration as Governor is not the most important thing that will happen in the great state of Louisiana today.

There is an athletic contest down the road a bit later today...

I am so grateful that the inauguration is happening this morning...I'm afraid if we waited til tomorrow... National Champion football Coach Les Miles would be sworn in as Governor.

Four years ago, standing on the Capitol steps, I proclaimed that “Our New Louisiana will be a magnet for the dreamers...the risk-takers...the adventurers...and the leaders of America’s new economy.”

I also said that “the New Louisiana will give our citizens the opportunities they deserve.”

I realize that while I was saying that “our new Louisiana will be a magnet for the dreamers”...I know what you all were thinking – “oh boy...he’s a dreamer all right.”

Well...guilty as charged.

And it turns out...we are all dreamers...and our dreams for a dynamic and vibrant and growing Louisiana are coming true.

Four years ago...there may have been as many cynics as dreamers...but here we are today...and by working together...all of us working together...Louisiana dreams are turning into reality.

They said Louisiana could not possibly shake our reputation for corruption and reform our ethics laws...but we did

They said Louisiana could not create jobs in the midst of the worst national recession in generations...but we did

They said Louisiana could not cut taxes...but we did

They said Louisiana could not reverse the out-migration of our people...but we did

They said Louisiana could not cut the size of government while improving government services...but we did

They said we could not attract new businesses to the State of Louisiana...but we did

I could go on of course...and you all know I am prone to do so on occasion...I could go on boasting about all the progress the people of Louisiana have made over these past four years...

But I won't...and here's why...All of that was yesterday

We will not stand still or rest on our laurels. We can either go forward or backward...those are the only two options. Standing still IS going backwards.

Well...together...all of us...Republicans, Independents, and Democrats have indeed accomplished a great deal, and we should be proud of the fact that Louisiana has come a long way in a short while, and we

should boast that Louisiana is on the move.

But we must also admit that our mission is far from accomplished.

As long as there are hard working Louisianians who don't have jobs...our mission is not accomplished.

As long as there are small business people struggling to pay the rent...our mission is not accomplished.

As long as there are native sons and daughters of Louisiana in other states who want to come home but can't find work here...our mission is not accomplished...

As long as there is waste and inefficiency in government services....our mission is not accomplished...

And as long as there are children who are not receiving a quality education here in Louisiana...our mission is not accomplished...

And let me stop on that point and say this – In America, we believe that every child deserves an equal opportunity to a quality education.

Regardless of income or status...male or female, black or white, all are precious in His sight.

Equal opportunity in education is a core underlying value we all share.

But that is not the reality today in America.

Every child does not receive an equal opportunity to a quality education today. That is a matter of fact, not a matter of opinion.

For our country to continue to lead the world...we can and must right this wrong.

There is not much that you and I can do about the educational opportunities afforded to children in 49 other states...but we can do something about it right here at home.

And when we do make changes here in Louisiana, we will greatly improve our ability to compete and win the jobs of the future.

There are of course many competing philosophies and agendas when it comes to education.

I believe we all need to check our party affiliations, our ideologies, and our political agendas at the door when it comes to improving our schools.

Reforming and improving education should not be a partisan issue. Getting our kids ready to face the challenges this world has to offer, getting them prepared to succeed and triumph should not be a political matter.

Allow me to be blunt here for a moment on the subject of equal opportunity in education.

For most, if not all, of the families represented here today...our kids will be fine.

We will make sure that we either live in an area with good public schools, or, we will send our kids to highly functioning non public schools that better meet their needs.

We will make sure our kids get a good education.

But the simple truth is...there are many children...very many...who do not have the same opportunity.

They may live in an area with public schools that are failing, and they cannot afford to move to an area with better public schools and they cannot afford private school.

This is an untenable situation.

Let me make an important distinction here. While I believe we must provide every child with an equal opportunity to receive a quality education, I do not believe we can or should guarantee everyone an equal result.

America is all about opportunity. That's why my parents came to America more than 40 years ago...and that's why most of your parents came here generations ago...in search of an opportunity...a chance...a fair shake.

America promises equal opportunity to have success, but America does not promise equal success. That part is up to you, the student, the worker, the individual.

It's called freedom, and includes the freedom to succeed...as well as the freedom to fail.

Adults make choices. Good choices and bad choices.

And they have to live with the consequences of those choices. If we work hard in America, the chances are very good that we will have some measure of success.

Again, the promise of America realized.

Children on the other hand...they don't choose what family to be born into.

They have no control whether they are born into a wealthy family, a middle class family, or a poor family.

My parents are hard working middle class folks, and they made sure I attended schools where I could succeed.

I got a good education from a public school right here in Baton Rouge.

In America, you do not have a right to have everything your neighbor has, you do not have a right to a big house or a fancy car, and you do not have a right to redistribute your neighbor's wealth.

But I would suggest that we long ago decided that every kid does have a right to a quality education from an excellent teacher. And by getting a good education, kids then do have the opportunity to pursue their dreams.

And here is the good news...we can fix this...all we need is the willpower to get it done, and the courage to stop doing things that have proven not to work.

Even better news, the key to reforming education here in Louisiana is not massive spending and tax increases.

Throwing more money at the problem has proven to be a failure. That experiment has been tried for decades, and it has failed.

All we need to do is muster the courage to change our ways and to abandon old tired methods that have failed generations of our children.

We are all familiar with Einstein's axiom – the definition of insanity is to keep trying the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.

The way forward is very simple – it is to provide more choices and more opportunities for parents, for families, for children.

In some places the traditional public schools are functioning well. But in others, the traditional public schools are failing our kids.

Anyone who stands in the way of providing real opportunities to all our kids must now stand down.

Anyone who stands in the way of giving all our parents and all our children more choices when it comes to education must stand down.

Real reform lies in providing more choices and more opportunities for parents, for families, and for children.

Kids only grow up once; waiting for the system to reform itself is not an option; it is time to act.

I'm confident that when we reform our education system, Louisiana will become an even better place to start or move a business, and our economic outlook will improve even more.

I want to conclude today by reflecting on the people of Louisiana...and the journey we have all been on.

It was just over six years ago that Hurricane Katrina hit...followed shortly by Hurricane Rita. Since that time we have had Hurricanes Gustav and Ike...and the biggest oil spill in American history.

No state has faced what we have faced or overcome what we have overcome. The biggest natural and man-made disasters of our lifetimes happened right here in Louisiana over the past six years.

The generosity of our fellow Americans was both humbling and impressive.

And through it all...somehow...by the Grace of the Almighty God...the people of Louisiana have managed not simply to survive...but to actually thrive.

You couldn't make this story up; if it were a movie script it would be too farfetched.

And make no mistake about it, we do in fact look to God and thank Him for bringing us through; that's not just a throwaway line in a speech, it is part of our daily life here in the Sportsman's Paradise.

To say that Louisianians are a resilient lot is an inexcusable understatement. And make no mistake, survival is not our goal.

We plan to do much more than survive. We will run out of time before we run out of aspirations and ideas.

In our darkest hours...we all still believed in each other, we believed in Louisiana. Now, everyone has seen our true grit, now, everyone believes in Louisiana.

Our plan for the next four years is very simple. We plan to compete with every state and every country to make Louisiana the best place in the world to raise a family and find a good-paying job.

And we plan to not simply compete, but we plan to win.

Speaking of competing and winning...Who Dat! Who Dat say they gonna beat them Saints?

Also...set your watches....it's game time in 7 hours...Geaux Tigers!

Thank you and God Bless You.

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