

The Future is Now

2021 Inaugural Address Eric Holcomb Governor of Indiana

Thank you, Julia. I understand that Julia built the Shelbyville Central FFA Chapter from the ground up.

A couple of years ago, Julia wrote an article in *Ag Daily*, where she described how she overcame a speech impediment. In the article, she wrote this: “I will use the voice that I never knew I had and hopefully share the message that no matter your circumstances, you can accomplish anything if you put your heart to it.”

In fact, the year after writing that, Julia won the state FFA public speaking contest and represented Indiana at the National contest.

Julia, you embody the Hoosier spirit, and I am honored to have your voice as part of this ceremony.

Mrs. Chief Justice, Speaker Huston, Senator Bray, Janet, family, friends, fellow citizens:

I’m honored to stand before you once again and to accept the privilege and duty to serve you and the state we all love.

Upon taking his oath of office for the second time, my favorite president – Abraham Lincoln – said that, “there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first.”

It’s hard to argue with Abe.

In his Second Inaugural, even as he focused on the great issues of the moment – slavery and the Civil War – Lincoln rightly looked to the future.

At this moment, our moment, even knowing full well the awful toll of COVID-19 and acknowledging that we are still in its deadly grip, it’s important to look to the future – a future for our state and our citizens that I believe is full of opportunity and promise.

We will remain laser-focused on managing our way through this pandemic and rolling out vaccines with all the energy and resources of our administration, and I will further update you on what we're doing in my State of the State Address next week.

But I am reminded that, in midst of the Civil War, the United States was also constructing the first Transcontinental Railroad. Even as the country was tearing itself apart, we were binding ourselves together in ways that would prove far more meaningful and durable.

In the 1960s – even as our society was in turmoil over Vietnam, the assassinations of John and Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King, and protests and riots in the street – Americans developed the first tools of the Information Age, made breakthroughs in treating heart disease, explored the moon, and expanded rights for women and people of color.

Theologian and author J. Sidlow Baxter once said that the difference between an obstacle and an opportunity is “our attitude toward it.” He said, “Every opportunity has a difficulty, and every difficulty has an opportunity.”

So the pandemic has pulled forward many trends that were already underway.

Even before COVID-19 hit, people were going online to shop, to connect and to learn. They were streaming, some “binging” on tv shows and “still in the theater movies” in the privacy of their own homes. More doctors and therapists were beginning to explore telemedicine, and more consumers were ordering and having delivered fast food and coffee – and paying for them – through apps on their phones, because I guess drive-thrus might take too long!

Fellow Hoosiers, this future that is arriving faster than we anticipated plays to Indiana's strengths. The business climate we have nurtured, the seeds we have sown are not just for today, but also for tomorrow. For Indiana, the future is now, and this is The Indiana Advantage.

Indiana today ranks third in the nation in the concentration of the industries of the future – including life sciences, aerospace, healthcare, defense, AgBioScience, cyber, and advanced manufacturing, according to a study by the Brookings Institute.

Our fiscal discipline, our prudent reserves, low taxes and a common-sense regulatory climate give us something increasingly rare among states – something that businesses and investors prize above just about anything else: that's stability.

Throw in our central location and expanding infrastructure connectivity – not only roads and bridges and rails and trails but also new flights to the West Coast and Europe and new cyber connections for more Hoosiers – and Indiana today is one of the undisputed best places in the country for business.

The facts speak for themselves. Over these past four years, we've set all-time records in job commitments coming to Indiana in the quality of those jobs as measured by salary and in capital investment. Even this past year, during the pandemic, we added a record 31,000 new job commitments.

One year ago, our unemployment rate stood at 3.1 percent – among the lowest in the country. In April, as the pandemic bared its teeth, unemployment ballooned to 17.5 percent. Today, it has fallen to 5 percent.

We are not where we need to be. But we are steadily clawing our way back.

And there's so much more to our story than being a great place for business. Over the past four years, as citizens have been fleeing states like Illinois, New York and California, they've been flocking to Indiana. Since 2017, more than 125,000 new residents have come to call Indiana home.

There's another reason I believe that for Indiana, the future is now. It's the most important reason of all.

That's Hoosiers themselves, so many of whom I've been privileged to meet over these past four years.

And not just the heroes on the front lines – the doctors and nurses and health care workers who put their own lives on the line every day to care for and save others.

Not just the police officers and firefighters and teachers, farmers and food producers and supermarket cashiers, long-haul truckers and delivery drivers and trash collectors, who do what has to be done so we can get on with our lives during a crisis.

But also the scientists producing treatments for COVID in record time. The students and graduates at our world-class colleges and universities who are pulling the future forward. The entrepreneurs and business leaders sparking a growing economy. The philanthropies and agencies and churches and mosques and synagogues that devote themselves to making our lives and our state better one Hoosier in need at a time.

When I stood here for the first time, four years ago, I described how we are the descendants of pioneers – people who didn't just settle this territory but who were trailblazers, inventors, innovators, visionaries – always with an eye on finding new and better ways to do things – always with an eye to the future.

My fellow Hoosiers, I will not minimize the challenges we still face emerging from this pandemic: sustaining our recovery, continuing to strengthen our state and extending opportunity to all Hoosiers.

That is the work before us.

But I remain convinced that, for Indiana, the future is now.

And I'll work every day to make that future a reality for all of us.

And for the faith you've shown in me, and the privilege to continue to serve you, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Now, let's go determine our destiny!

###