

**Governor John R. Kasich
Inaugural Speech
Ohio Theatre, Columbus, Ohio
January 10, 2011**

TIME: 12:20 p.m.

Well, I have to start by thanking my great family, my little daughters, Emma and Reese, coming up on their 16th birthday.

[LAUGHTER]

Almost. They act like it. They'll be 11 here on the 16th of January and it's very exciting for them.

Whenever I leave the room at night, often Emma says, "Daddy, I love you." Sweeter words were never heard, Sweetheart. And my little daughter Reese, the other jewel that's in my sky, she gives me those little hugs. And when I get ready to make a big speech, she says, "Daddy, keep it short."

[LAUGHTER]

You know, my wife Karen is -- as we all know, she's just a beautiful woman. But that's not really what drives her or drives me in my relationship with her. See, we're great friends and great buddies, and we share so many experiences; from hiking up in the state parks to trying to take care of our daughters, to exercising, to praying, and just trying to connect with our friends and our family all over the country.

Sweetheart, I love you. You're the most important thing in my life. Thank you, babe.

[APPLAUSE]

You know, it's sort of faith, family and then friends, and I have a number of friends here. And I have been a very blessed man to have as many good friends as I have. You see, what it is with my friends and with me, is that we love one another. We're there for one another. You know, it's loyalty towards me and support towards me, but you know what? It's my loyalty to them. I have never been so blessed as to have the collection of people who tell me the truth and tell me like it is. But they are there to support me and to strengthen me and to support my family. So many of them are sitting here in the three or four rows. You know I love you, right? You know that I love you.

To my supporters, you know, from 1977 on, you've put me on your shoulders. There's no way that Johnny Kasich could have come here from McKees Rocks and gotten anywhere near where I've been in my political life without these supporters. I'm proud of the fact that we've worked together, and some people call me independent, and in the political world, they call me brash. You want to know why? Because in my mind's eye are the supporters, not the ones with the big money, although we do like them.

[LAUGHTER]

No, it's the -- it's the housewives back in 1977 and 1978 who made the phone calls and put up the signs and licked the envelopes and showed up day and night, bringing their husbands with them, and the young people that I met who've now become protégés of mine and walked door-to-door with me and reached for the sky. We've reached for the sky and we've hit the stars, I have no doubt. To my supporters, I love you, too. Thank you for what you've done to give me a chance.

I want to thank Ohioans, all Ohioans, for giving me the chance to form a team. To form a team. And to transform our great state. You know, years ago, I used to use the word "I" an awful lot. I don't know whether it's age or whether it's prayer or it's the constant beating that my friends give me, but it's not "I" any longer. It's "we." I learned long ago working with my great pal, John Boehner, only teams, only teams can accomplish

great things. And you know, 'ole Woody was right, there is no "I" in team. And together, we, as Ohioans, can get this job done.

You know, my inauguration, the conductor of a great orchestra, with all of you playing an instrument in that orchestra, my inauguration is your inauguration. I want everyone to understand that I hope you can realize we accept this responsibility together. I have a sense that across Ohio, people know we have a challenge. So today, we're all inaugurated into a better day. You know, I'm only a servant. I am only a servant, a public servant. I report to the people. I report to you, the people.

[APPLAUSE]

And I do not report to special interests under any circumstances. And I want you all to understand something: I can never work to advance myself. I will not work to advance myself. My future or my self-interest is not acceptable.

And as long as I stay on that track, as long as I stay on that path, I will remain a good public servant. My only purpose, my only passion in all of this has been to lift Ohio, to make us competitive again, and to create jobs for our families. Because when our families have jobs, they have hope. They have dreams. And they have strength. It is my only purpose and my only passion. And when I wake up every morning, I'll say my prayers, I'll hug my family, and I will focus on Ohio's economy. Nothing, nothing can stand in our way.

[APPLAUSE]

I am a servant of the Lord. I am a servant of the Lord.

[APPLAUSE]

He has opened doors all of my life. The Lord has. He has pushed me over the mountain this time. I don't know why, but I have no doubt that he has. I've spent a large amount of my life trying to figure out how he works.

I got a message one day driving up—over by the Hoover Reservoir. It wasn't a telegram. It wasn't a phone call. It wasn't a voice. But it was clear. "Stop trying to figure it out, I'm not going to tell you."

[LAUGHTER]

But here's what I do know: He expects his servants to use their talents. He expects all of us, because all of us have been created with a special talent. The key to life is to use those talents, even when at times it seems daunting and it seems impossible. But boy, I'll tell you what, no pounding on the chest. No pointing in the sky. He wants us always to remember where these talents came from. He reminds us that no one person is superior to any other person because in his eyes, all are equal.

You know, sometimes I see the scrub lady, and I realize that in the next life, she's likely to have a bigger crown than I could ever dream of. Don't go past them quickly; you could be passing an angel. Quiet reflection is necessary every day so as not to get lost.

D. L. Moody wrote about a Civil War general who was facing a huge battle. He prayed for two hours. His subordinates said to him, "How could you spend two hours praying before this big battle?" He said, "How could I not." Prayer is necessary.

You know, I so loved the memories of my family visiting Ohio. My uncle Harry, cousin Harry's father, used to tell me when we went to Vermilion and we passed that Pennsylvania line into Ohio, "Johnny, we've reached the Promise Land."

[LAUGHTER]

Even as a young boy, I knew that Uncle Harry was right. You see, Ohio has wide horizons, we have unlimited

opportunity. Ohio is an exciting place. And I have come to understand as a grown man what Ohio is all about. We are about common sense. We are about common sense.

And we can drive our country.

Oh, yes, we're about helping our neighbors and loving God and building a better future for our children. You know what, Ohio has been the promise land for me because of my family. Because of my friends. And because of this work. I have never ever considered leaving Ohio, no matter how great the opportunities in the far away place may have seemed. I love Ohio. Ohio has given me all that I am today. And now I can pay back Ohio and help lead us forward into realizing Ohio's promise and our destiny. Get ready for an exciting time.

[APPLAUSE]

Put on the seat belt because we're going.

[APPLAUSE]

The weeds have grown up. The obstacles at times seemed great. The light is dimmed in our great state. But I believe we have not yet begun to fight for our families, for our children and for a legacy.

You know, I've slowed down in my life. And I thank God because it gives me time to look deep into the eyes of our neighbors across this state. Oh, yes, I've seen determination. I've seen resolution. And I've seen strength.

I have seen strength in the eyes of a young woman in Ashtabula who is committed to growing her small business. And she said, "Mr. Kasich, please don't wreck my business." She pleaded with me in Ashtabula.

I've seen resolution in the eyes of the people in Scioto County. We have pledged to win the fight against drug addiction and drug abuse and save their community and save their families. They were here a couple days ago, about a dozen women wearing lime green T-shirts, all bore the mark of somebody who died from that devilish addiction. We are all going to fight to help them, won't we? All of us will fight to help them.

[APPLAUSE]

I have seen determination in the eyes of a mom and a dad at Bob Evans. Right, Bob Evans. Chicken and noodles.

[LAUGHTER]

You know, that mom and dad were eating to stretch their income to provide a better life to their children. And she said, "We're counting on you, John." I said, "I'm counting on you to be part of the team."

I've seen strength in the eyes of the people standing in line at a food pantry in Wilmington. They will not let tough economic times defeat them. Mary and I were so moved in Wilmington. People, who have played by the rules, people who have worked hard with common sense and God-fearing, and one day, nothing. Not—I can't say nothing—because that hope springs eternal. We're going to help those people in Wilmington, aren't we all? We are all going to pitch in and help them.

[APPLAUSE]

I've seen resolution in the eyes of the people of Walbridge who are determined rebuild their community after the devastating tornado. And to drive by past that devastated school house, and to sit with the people and realize how they all huddle together, business leaders, community leaders, clergy, they're a role model for all of us, because, you know, when one part of Ohio hurts, we all hurt. And when one part of Ohio succeeds, we all succeed. We all admire and are inspired by our fellow Ohioans who work to overcome difficult circumstances.

Our enemy. Our enemy is not our people or our assets or our great cities. We must rebuild our great cities in Ohio.

[APPLAUSE]

They have a great legacy. Our enemy is not our fertile farmlands or our vibrant family-oriented suburbs. Our enemy, our enemy is the status quo. The status quo, the dark side of human nature that shuts down dreams and basks in fear. The status quo, the dark side of human nature that shuts down dreams. Our enemies are those who selfishly look out only for themselves. The last gasp of air in the coal mine, I want mine. And they forget that we are all in this together. Don't be selfish.

Our enemies are those who refuse to recognize the power of teamwork. They refuse to help raise the bar. And as our mother used to tell us, Donna, raise the bar. Make the world better for the fact that we came this way. The people who refuse the power of team and refuse to raise the bar are weak. We will defeat them. We will defeat them together.

[APPLAUSE]

Well, as far as it relates to our enemies, we can make them allies. I've been seeing it happen in my so many meetings and so many trips. Yes, we can make them allies by our example, because it is absolutely true that courage is contagious. And we lead by doing, not by saying. And when we do it, it creates a contagion that cannot be resisted. We can show them that every person has a moment in time, a moment in time, a window of opportunity where their legacy will be honored for generations.

It's not about the big shots, ladies and gentlemen. It's not about the governor, the senator or the speaker, the justice. It's about our fathers and our mothers and our grandfathers and our grandmothers who built America's greatest generation one person at a time by recognizing their duty and doing it. They were America's greatest generation. We honor them and we have to live up to the example that they have provided.

[APPLAUSE]

It is so exciting to be part of a movement that answers the bell. I've had the great fortune in my life in being part of many movements that have answered the bell. That works to save our state and strengthens our country in the process.

As Ohio goes, so goes America. They're watching us. They're watching us. We will not let them down.

[APPLAUSE]

We are not Republicans. We are not Democrats. We are not liberals. And we are not conservatives. We are Ohioans. We are Buckeyes together.

[APPLAUSE]

It's our mountain to climb. Can you see it? Can you see that mountain? I know you can. We can climb it. One step at a time. Helping each other to be strong. Together, that mountain, we will reach the summit.

God bless America. God bless Ohio.

[APPLAUSE]

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TIME: 12:40 p.m.