

## **Governor Bruce Rauner Inaugural Speech**

*As prepared for delivery*

Good afternoon/morning, Illinois. Great day, Illinois! Thank you so much!

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I want to begin by thanking my wife, Diana. She is my partner and my best friend – and she is going to be a tremendous First Lady!

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And thank you to our six kids who have endured a lot over the past two years and will have to put up with even more over the next four.

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I want to acknowledge Governor Quinn for his years of service to the state and the people of Illinois.

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I'd like to recognize and thank our distinguished guests:

- Madam Chief Justice and distinguished members of the Court
- President Cullerton
- Speaker Madigan
- Leader Radogno
- Leader Durkin
- Attorney General Madigan
- Secretary of State White
- Comptroller-designate Munger
- Treasurer-elect Frerichs
- Members of the General Assembly
- Members of the Congressional delegation
- Governor Edgar
- Mayor Houston
- Mayor Emanuel
- Archbishop Cupich
- Major General Krumrei and all the members of our National Guard.

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Thank you, Evelyn, you're the best partner I could possibly have to transform our state government – you'll be a terrific Lieutenant Governor.

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And I liked to express my very deepest gratitude to our veterans and our service men and women here today and around the world. God bless you. Thank you for your service to our country. As governor, I will do everything in my power to support you.

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I also want to say a very special thank you to our police officers, our corrections officers, our firefighters and all those who risk their lives to protect all the families of Illinois. Thank you. I look forward to being an ally and advocate for you.

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It is an honor to stand before you, before ALL the people of Illinois, today.

I am humbled. I am honored. I am privileged. I am excited.

I LOVE Illinois, and I want OURS to be a GREAT state, a great HOME for EVERY family here. I am ready to go to work for you.

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As I've traveled our state over the last few years, I've met with tens of thousands of people; teachers and farmers, factory workers and coal miners, college students and retirees - the people who are the heart and soul of Illinois.

In that process, I've met thousands of small business owners. In our discussions, I've been stunned by how many of them are frustrated and in trying to build their businesses here and are thinking of leaving.

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I visited one company called Keats Manufacturing in Wheeling.

Back in 1958, Bert and Glenn Keats started a metal stamping company in a storefront on Cicero Avenue in Chicago. Their father had never made it past high school, but both of them made it through college and were eager to start out on their own.

They had one employee and a couple machines. They worked long hours, a second job and sacrificed much, but they made it and their company took off.

Today, Keats Manufacturing employs 110 Illinois workers and has nearly 75 machines running 24 hours a day, 5 days per week.

The story of Bert and Glenn Keats was not an uncommon path in our state. And it wasn't just Chicago, and it wasn't just manufacturing. It was Peoria, it was Rockford, it was Decatur. It was agriculture, it was transportation, it was technology. Illinois was a place where people like Bert and Glenn Keats from all over the country, indeed, from all over the world, wanted to come, because Illinois was a land of opportunity, almost without parallel in America.

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Today's Illinois is very different.

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The grandsons of Bert and Glenn Keats – tell me they couldn't have started their company in Illinois today. When their grandfathers started the company, all its customers were Illinois companies; they went door-to-door to find them. But today, none of their customers are Illinois companies – they have all left. And the grandsons told me that they, themselves, are feeling the pressure of high taxes

and high regulation.

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Today Illinois is not able to compete effectively with our neighboring states, our citizens are suffering because of it, and in many cases, they are up and leaving.

Last year, we lost more people than any other state in America, and over the last ten years, we have ranked right near the bottom of all fifty states for out-migration. People are leaving to find jobs, or because they run companies, and they are taking their jobs with them.

Our local businesses look in every direction and see states that are more appealing. Lifelong Illinoisans look at their future and think they can achieve more outside Illinois. You probably know a neighbor, a co-worker, or maybe even a son or daughter who has said, "I can do better somewhere else." It breaks your heart, but you know it's hard to argue with them.

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We need a booming economy that is pro-growth, pro-business, pro-job creation or we won't have the money to solve any of our other problems. Our state must become competitive again.

In the weeks ahead, I'll be asking the legislature to work with me to pass a comprehensive jobs and economic package that will get Illinois working again. Let's get our sons and daughters to return home!

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One of the main reasons companies have been leaving Illinois is that they don't have confidence in the financial condition of our state. We are in the midst of a government financial crisis that has been building for decades.

Its roots lie in bad decisions, bad practices, and bad management by state government. It is not a partisan creation. It is a truly bipartisan one.

Our government has spent more than we could afford; borrowed money and called it revenue. Rather than responsibly budgeting the money we had, we implemented programs we couldn't afford. In the face of a declining economy, we raised taxes. This hurt our economy even more, put more stress on our social safety net, and pushed more Illinoisans out of our state, leaving fewer taxpayers to support the government. As a result, today Illinois is not as competitive as we need to be and cannot be as compassionate as we want to be.

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Some in government will be tempted to once again take the easy road and leave the real problems for another day and the next generation.

But, we can not do that because to do so, to conduct business as usual, would be morally corrupt. Instead, we have an opportunity to accomplish something historic: to fix years of busted budgets and broken government; to forge a path toward long-term prosperity and a brighter future; to make Illinois the kind of state others aspire to become, a national leader in job growth and education quality.

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To achieve that will require sacrifice.

Sacrifice by all of us – politicians and interests groups, business and labor, those who pay for government and those who depend on government’s services. Each person here today and all those throughout the state will be called upon to share in the sacrifice so that one day we can again share in Illinois’s prosperity. We all must shake up our old ways of thinking.

I promise to you this administration will make our decisions based on the next generation; not the next election.

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I pledge to work on a bipartisan basis to drive results and get things done.

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We must be united by our willingness to sacrifice and do what is right even if it is difficult.

We must accept the challenge and the sacrifice, knowing that it will lead us to something greater.

We must forget the days of feeling good about just making it through another year – by patching over major problems with stitches that are bound to break.

Those stitches are now busting wide open and we must begin by taking immediate, decisive action.

That’s why today, my first action as governor will be to direct every state agency to freeze non-essential spending.

I’ll ask them to review and report on every contract that’s been signed since November 1.

And I will follow through on my pledge to reduce my own salary to \$1 and decline all benefits.

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Our state’s crisis is not only financial. We have a MORAL crisis, an ETHICAL crisis as well. We have a state government that too few have faith in; that lack of faith is JUSTIFIED, and undermines people’s willingness to sacrifice and help the government in its mission.

Illinoisans see insider deals and cronyism rewarded.

They see lobbyists writing bills for special interests and taxpayers being left with the tab.

They see government union bosses negotiating sweetheart deals across the table from governors they’ve spent tens of millions to help elect.

It’s a corrupt bargain and the people of Illinois are left to wonder where they fit in. Who’s looking out for them and their families?

Taxpayers’ money belongs to them; not the government. We have a moral obligation to minimize how much we take and to ensure what we do take is spent efficiently and effectively

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Every dollar we spend unnecessarily inside government is a dollar we can’t put into classrooms or social service providers, or leave in the pockets of entrepreneurs and homeowners.

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To the people of Illinois, and the people outside our state who have been reluctant to invest in Illinois because of the insider deals and cronyism, I say this:

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I'm nobody that nobody sent.

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And I've come to work for you.

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I will send a clear signal to everyone in our state, and to those watching from outside our borders, that business as usual is over. It stops now.

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Tomorrow, I will sign an executive order that will improve ethics and accountability in the executive branch of state government. These actions and others to follow will focus on regaining our state's good name and reputation. We must prove every day that we have learned our lessons and are changing our ways.

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In everything we do, we must ask ourselves, what does this mean for the next generation?

For in order to thrive, we must prepare the next generation for success. From cradle to career, the people of Illinois deserve world-class educational opportunities.

From early childhood and K through 12 schools, to vocational and technical training, to community colleges and higher ed, we need to invest adequately in every neighborhood. Next to being a mother or a father, teaching is the most important job in the world, and we must support our many good teachers. That means putting more directly into the classrooms, reforming the education bureaucracy, rolling back costly mandates and giving more students access to great schools. A high-quality education is essential for higher lifetime earnings, a competitive, world-class workforce and strong economic growth.

It is the key to bringing back the American dream for every family in Illinois; for making the American dream a REALITY for everyone here; a truly better life for the next generation.

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If we work together, Illinois can be great again.

We have everything needed to thrive – a great location, the economic and cultural center of the Midwest, fertile farms, infrastructure, and most importantly, wonderful, hard-working people – we just need the policy and leadership to make us the best we can possibly be.

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In just three short years our great state will be celebrating its 200th Birthday.

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Yes, 2018 will be our Bicentennial. What a perfect time these next few years will be to return our beloved Illinois to its rightful place as a leader among the states of America.

A state that, as we prepare for our bicentennial, is ready to seize the future.

A state where not only manufacturing companies like the Keats' want to be, but where the next big things happen.

A state where entrepreneurs want to be.

A state where technology companies want to start.

Where the next generation of manufacturing occurs.

Where family farms that have made us a breadbasket for the world can pass from one generation to the next.

Where young couples want to start their families.

And their children are inspired in their schools.

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Illinois is a state that truly embodies all that is great about America.

Since the days of Lincoln, we have stood as a beacon of freedom and justice.

Now let us embrace all that is wonderful about Illinois, the reasons we love it: our culture of hard work and responsibility, grounded, solid values, diversity, civic commitment and generosity – and harness it so that our next century is one of prosperity.

We can do that if we work together, just as a family does when it faces tough times.

Illinois is our home – and right now our home is hurting.

But home and family are worth sacrificing for...worth fighting for.

Together, let's do the hard work to rebuild our home.

I'm ready to get to work for you.

I'm ready to fight for you.

God bless you.

God bless Illinois.

And God bless America.

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