

# Inaugural Address

**Edmund G. "Pat" Brown**  
**32nd Governor, Democrat**  
(1959-1967)

**Presented:** January 7, 1963

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chief Justice, fellow constitutional officers, members of the Legislature, my fellow Californians:

Since we met here four years ago, many historic changes have taken place in this growing, golden state. First among them is California's emergence as the largest of the 50 states of the union. The western rim of a continent, which a century ago was as much legend as land to a handful of pioneers, now assumes the role of leader on that continent.

Leadership is never an unmixed blessing. I know there are those among us who yearn for things as they used to be, or at least as we see them now through the haze of memory. Who does not sometimes share a longing for the day when the only cars on the silver hills of my native San Francisco were cable cars? Who did not mourn the passing of a San Diego youngster's lizard preserve?

But nostalgia has never been a way of life for Californians. We have always been pioneers and sons of pioneers, a vigorous, dynamic people who respect tradition, but scorn the status quo.

Through the turmoil of change, and sometimes chaos, Californians have pressed on toward the good society—not for the few, not for the many, but for all. Offered chances to lie at anchor, we have chosen full sail. Offered comfort, we have chosen challenge. Offered leisure, we have chosen the extra effort that meets not only present but future needs.

In the spirit of California's history then, we are here today to bear a lantern for the future, not carry a torch for the past. We are here to prove that a civilization which can create a machine to fulfill a job can create a man to fulfill a man.

The world now looks to California as a beachhead on the future, with all the future's promises—and perils. You and I are here to help realize the promises and to diminish the perils.

The last four years have demonstrated that we have resolve and resources in abundance. Under the banner of responsible liberalism, we have moved strongly and confidently. The California Water Project, which once threatened to divide our state, now unites it.

We are on schedule with a bold program to duplicate in ten short years a tuition-free system of higher education which already is the best in the world. Our public schools have begun shoring up their curricula to meet the stern demands of an age in which the only public cost greater than education is ignorance.

Men and women of all races are guaranteed equal access to jobs under a law you and I wrote together four years ago. We have new master plans not only for education but for highways and parks, hospitals, and mental health clinics.

Our social welfare programs place new emphasis on the principle that those receiving public assistance want a chance for honest work, not government charity for life. Our social insurance programs for the unemployed, sick and injured, have been returned to their earlier proud position in the vanguard of the states. The economy which supports all these programs, and is, in turn, supported by them, leads the Nation.

In the last four years we have created more new jobs in more new enterprises than any other state. Our personal income has risen far faster than that in the rest of the Nation. And our leadership in research and the technology of the new space industry is measured by the envy of other great states which failed to make the public investments in education, water, highways, recreation and other government services which nourish and sustain our leadership.

Let me underscore that all this has been done with sound, prudent financing. Fiscal responsibility has been, and must continue to be, our first concern. My annual budget message will be delivered to you later this month, but I assure you now that once again it will be balanced; that it will call for tax reforms but no new or higher taxes; and that it will honor my pledge to see elimination of income taxes for families of four or more now earning less than \$5,700 a year.

I list these achievements not out of complacency, but as a reminder that we have reason to be confident of our ability to build and advance together.

The tasks of the last four years have not been easy, but the years ahead offer no easier problems or simpler solutions. And from this inaugural vantage point, it seems to me that the very accomplishments of the past may obscure the difficulty of the tasks ahead. In 1959, there was a great and growing consensus on our highest priority problems and their solutions.

We differed on details, but most Californians agreed then that we needed more revenues, a state water plan, a fair employment practices act—and a good many other things now achieved. With the old priorities behind us, however, I am not certain that we have reached a similar community of understanding, a comparable consensus on the new priorities before us. Progress now, more than before, calls for bold, controversial leadership.

Let me say now that I intend to offer such leadership. And I therefore will invite and expect disagreement, not for its own sake, but for the health of our commonwealth. When there is no consensus, only urgency, I will speak out. I will not seek controversy but I will not fear it.

My concern is not with personal prestige, but with public progress. My concern is not with special interests, but with the general interest. If members of this legislature or the citizens of California disagree, I will respect that disagreement, but I will continue to press the issue toward consensus and resolution. The legislative process not only achieves, it educates.

Let you and me and the people of California learn from one another by speaking out of the fullness of our experience and conviction. The greater the debates, the more thorough the education, and the more effective the workings of our democratic process.

I will now indicate, briefly, the principal areas of challenge and my proposals for resolving those challenges. The details will be spelled out in subsequent special messages and specific legislation I will submit to you in the near future.

## I.

Again, as in the past, I assign first priority to public education, with the emphasis on primary and secondary schools.

No other major state can claim a higher percentage of college graduates or a lower percentage of high school drop-outs, yet the shocking fact remains that one in four of our children does not finish high school. We clearly still have a tremendous task ahead of us. Perhaps the most crucial area of reform, and the most difficult, is in the method of financing public education.

Too many taxpayers in too many districts now bear a disproportionate burden of school costs. We must legislate further means of tax equalization. I will again recommend to you enactment of a county-wide equalization formula, and propose, further, that all new state funds for education go into equalization rather than basic assistance. The state, using its broader tax base, should help ease the property taxpayers' burden, and I pledge that we will provide substantial new state contributions in the forthcoming budget.

Next, to guarantee that we do not train our young men and women for occupations that may no longer exist after they graduate, we must overhaul our entire system of vocational training, adding a new and higher level of technological instruction.

Many vocational courses have not been changed in 20 or 30 years and are wasteful of both parents' dollars and students' time. Updating of such courses will reduce drop-outs and guarantee our youth a greater degree of job security.

For those who already have left high school without graduation, I propose a pilot youth conservation work program which will combine outdoor work with an opportunity for additional education.

We must also give special attention to children who live in an economic atmosphere hostile to learning. Too often the rate of accomplishment in low income area schools is far below what it could be. We must assume responsibility for helping local districts develop special assistance programs for the culturally disadvantaged in both urban and rural settings.

I will also ask you to approve funds to improve library services throughout the state, and I will submit legislation to create a state-wide educational television network. The latter is an urgent need, particularly in meeting the requirement that all public schools begin teaching a foreign language in the school year of 1965.

## II.

Despite our achievements of the past four years, there is another area in which action is critically need. With nearly 90 of every 100 Californians today living in a city or a suburb, it is clear that our state can only be as healthy and strong as our cities.

I therefore propose that we give a high priority for action in the next four years to those problems which state government shares with government at the local level.

Until recent years, Americans were free to push west and build new cities when the old became too crowded or too blighted. But California is the last frontier. It is here or nowhere, now or never, that men will stand up to the challenge of the city.

As we move to meet the challenge, let us remember that cities are not civic centers or planning maps, but men, women and children. It is not the city that suffers from smog but people.

It is not the city that is cheated of a full, rich life by slums, it is the people who live in the city.

Where they fail, the reason often can be summed up in three words: Too much government. Overlapping agencies of government breed waste and inefficiency as surely as slums breed crime. Yet there is no law to curb such abuses of home rule as the formation of cities solely to avoid taxes on industrial property. Therefore, I urge you to enact laws to end the hap-hazard formation of new cities and service districts.

I ask you again to approve legislation under which units of local government would join to provide various services on a regional basis.

To lead fuller lives, urban citizens need fast, safe transportation to and from work. Three San Francisco Bay area counties have approved a rapid transit system which will set the pace for the entire nation. The Metropolitan Transit Authority of Los Angeles has completed plans for a 58-mile rapid transit system to serve that area. During this session, the MTA will ask for changes in its enabling act to permit a limited taxing power to clear the way for construction. I have studied the proposal and find it sound. I urge you to approve it. The people of Los Angeles need it.

The people of our cities need sound land planning to protect neighborhoods, encourage industrial growth and preserve open space. Most local governments now have master plans but they stop at the county line. I urge you to enact laws which will encourage regional planning.

Under present laws, city governments often pay bonus prices for new schools, roads, parks and sewage systems because a minority of voters have the power to block approval of bond issues. I urge that you take steps to cut the affirmative votes needed to pass a locally-sponsored bond issue from 66 2/3 per cent to 60 per cent.

Decent housing is fundamental to decent cities. During the next 18 years, California must build more than 5,000,000 residential units to provide adequate housing for our growing population.

The Governor's Advisory Commission on Housing Problems will release a report soon which documents disturbing trends in California housing, and offers concrete proposals for reversing those trends. I urge you to study the report. I will send you a separate message asking for specific action at a later date.

### III.

We will reach the ambitious goals we have set for ourselves only if we exploit to the fullest our economic potential. In order to achieve full employment, we must accelerate our efforts to attract new industries ; to maintain a secure and skillful work force; create new foreign and domestic markets for the products of our farms and factories, and maintain our first rank in tourism.

To this end, I propose creation of the Office of California Development which will combine the present functions of the Economic Development Agency and the World Trade Authority and undertake new efforts to promote California tourism, both in this country and abroad.

Development of the European Common Market, and the opportunities and perils it poses for California Agriculture and industry, require that we extend and expand our efforts to win new markets. Tourism, already one of California's major industries, will similarly benefit from central planning and direction.

To prepare the work force for our rapidly shifting technology, I propose that our present Committee on Automation and Technological Developments be given statutory recognition as a full commission.

Its labors can, and will, insure that higher productivity does not mean a lower standard of living. It would determine the new skills we will need in the future to insure that California's work force remains equal to the demand of the space age.

I believe, too, that we must increase social insurance minimums, and move more vigorously to retrain the disabled worker as well as the work displaced by automation. To this end, I will propose a grouping and expansion of all vocational rehabilitation functions in state government in a single department in the Health and Welfare Agency.

### IV.

As in so many fields of government, California is pioneering new methods of treatment for the mentally ill, our number one health problem. I ask you today to extend the programs under which we have reduced the number of mentally ill in our hospitals and increased the number of patients who are able to live useful productive lives in their own communities.

To that end, I will submit legislation to increase the state's contribution to the new local mental health programs under the Short-Doyle Act from the present 50 per cent to 75 per cent.

California also pioneers in welfare programs. During the first term of this administration, new emphasis was placed on rehabilitation of people on government assistance and the results are gratifying.

I anticipate major recommendations for future changes in the content and administration of our welfare programs in the final report of the Governor's Commission on Social Welfare Problems. I will submit a special message dealing with those recommendations after I have analyzed the report.

#### V.

Four years ago, we created the Office of Consumer Counsel to protect the public from fraud and other abuses in the market place. It has been an effective guardian of the public interest. But important areas remain in which the legislative process can be brought to bear to give the consumer still further protections.

It is my personal conviction that present statutes governing interest rates are obsolete—that the public pays too high an interest premium. Many home owners lose, rather than gain by early repayment of loans. I believe maximum interest rates for charge accounts and other loans are also excessive and I urge that you re-examine existing law in this field.

I am equally convinced that the cost of natural gas is too high and that we have a responsibility to implement demands for lower rates. We must also address ourselves to reforms in the savings and loan industry. We must apply greater control both to the issuance of charters and to the operating practices of savings and loan associations.

#### VI.

California is the most beautiful state in this nation. Because we hold this resource in trust for the future, it is not ours to conserve or squander as we see fit. I propose several steps to make sure we are not as reckless with this asset in the future as we have been in the past.

When a man throws an empty cigarette package from an automobile in California, he is liable to a fine of \$50. When a man throws a billboard across a view, he is liable to be richly rewarded. I believe that litter and clutter can both destroy beauty. I ask you, therefore, to apply strict controls on the placement of billboards. This one step alone will produce great dividends in scenic beauty which is now hidden from the people.

Winston Churchill has said: "We shape our buildings and then our buildings shape us." If this were literally true, the people of California in this generation would be a curious collection. I do not believe good design and economy are incompatible. I do believe that the State of California must take the lead in a campaign to improve the quality of architecture in this state, both public and private.

I intend to insist on the highest quality of design for state buildings and I urge your cooperation toward that end.

One of the most important elements in the construction of our 5000-mile scenic highway system will be the preservation of natural landscape along the system's route. To aid in this venture, I ask you to amend state laws to permit the purchase of scenic easements which would serve our purpose at a considerable saving of taxpayers' money.

I urge you to place a bond issue on the 1964 ballot for the purchase of park and beach land for future development. The supply of land, especially along our coastline, once seemed endless in California. It now seems meager when measured against the growth in future years. Last year, 4,000,000 people used our state parks. In just 20 years, that figure will reach 11,000,000.

I will send detailed recommendations to you for a park and beach program and the methods of financing it in the near future.

I believe, also, that the state should actively foster interest and participation in the performing and graphic arts in California. I will support legislation for that purpose.

#### VII.

In 1962, California agriculture grossed \$3 billion for the fourth consecutive year and we must be vigilant to protect our position as the nation's leading farm state. One major aid to agriculture is the California Water Project. Not only will it make new supplies available for farming, it will furnish water for new industries and millions of new residents who will provide expanded markets for food and fiber.

I believe water development must be pursued at all levels of government, federal, state and local. For that reason, I urge you to encourage local district development by further liberalizing the Davis-Grunsky Act.

I also ask you to take new steps to broaden the guarantee of pure water in California. I propose that the State Water Pollution Control Board and the nine regional boards be consolidated under one State Water Quality Control Board.

This Administration intends to give high priority to fish and wildlife development wherever water projects are built. Further, under the Porter-Dolwig Act, we will continue to improve ground water levels in the Central Valley, the coastal area and Southern California.

#### VIII.

In the field of highway safety, my proposals are not new to you. I have made them repeatedly and earnestly. I will continue to offer them as long as I am Governor.

In the year just past, more than 4000 persons met violent death in traffic accidents in California—a senseless and shameful slaughter. Every year, the growing toll gives a new urgency to the problem.

Once again, I ask that you permit radar speed control by the California Highway Patrol; the use of a trial number of patrol cars without distinguishing markings; and chemical tests in drunk driving cases. I urge also that seat belts be made mandatory in all automobiles.

#### IX.

There has been no overall revision of our substantive criminal law during the 90 years since the California Penal Code was adopted and no overall revision of criminal procedure in 35 years.

The mass of court decisions required to interpret the code since 1872 should alone indict its contents. I urge the legislature to take the initiative in this vital work to assure California a forward, enlightened and just criminal law with fair and expeditious procedures.

Two years ago, you enacted the most advanced narcotics control laws in the Nation, which are now the model for other states. But increased penalties for narcotics sales have forced many peddlers to turn to the sale of dangerous drugs. I therefore urge you to recognize that the peddler of dangerous drugs is a threat equal to the peddler of narcotics and to make the penalties for their sale comparable to the penalties for the illegal sale of narcotics.

The program of compulsory treatment for addicts which we enacted in 1961 is proving itself a valuable weapon on the fight against narcotics. I ask you now to amend the law to permit confinement of persons under the age of 18 for treatment now available only to adults.

I am, as you know, concerned that our present legal definition of insanity is obsolete in the light of advanced scientific knowledge. A distinguished commission has recommended changes and I will present specific proposals to you at a later time.

You are all aware of my position on capital punishment. I do not believe it deters crime. I do believe it degrades man. In almost 20 years in public life—as District Attorney, as Attorney General, as Governor—I have upheld my sworn duty to enforce the death penalty. But, with the passing of time, my own conviction has grown stronger that capital punishment affronts the conscience of man. Most often we execute the felon whose skin is darker than our own—whose position in life is lower than our own. And, to our shame, we let live the felon whose crime we believe less odious because he is more like us.

I will ask this legislature to enact at least a moratorium on capital punishment, substituting for it the sentence of life imprisonment without possibility of parole and retaining the death penalty only where necessary to protect the staffs and inmates of our penal institutions.

## X.

On January 1, 1863, an order signed by President Lincoln promised all slaves in warring states that they would be “forever free.” One hundred years and one week have passed since the Emancipation Proclamation became law. In conscience, we cannot say today that we have redeemed Lincoln’s promise.

Four years ago, you and I prohibited discrimination in employment because of race, creed or national origin, but further action is now necessary.

I ask you to strengthen and extend existing law against discrimination in housing by expanding the Fair Employment Practices Commission into a Human Rights Commission with authority to move against discriminatory practices in housing. In the same spirit, we must work to eliminate de facto segregation in our public schools and I promise to give the State Board of Education my full support in its efforts in that direction.

This spring, I will issue an executive order to all state administrators in the form of a "Governor's Code of Fair Practices." Its intent will be to wipe out all vestiges of discrimination in state government. In addition, I urge you to require all persons and businesses licensed by the state to adopt strict policies against discrimination.

## XI.

I recommend most strongly that we turn our attention to the code governing political activity in California. Most of our laws are a half-century old, written in the Hiram Johnson administration to correct abuses which no longer exist. Their practical effect today is to inhibit rather than encourage broader participation in our political life.

The excessive cost of recent campaigns for both major parties is evidence that an overhaul of our political procedure is long overdue. As a further step toward election reform, I believe we must enact a purity of elections statute which would require that candidates report not only a list of contributors but the amount of each contribution.

Finally, I urge that California become one of the first states in the nation to ratify the proposed Amendment to the United States Constitution, which outlaws poll tax in all states.

## XII.

State government and the rules under which it operates need constant re-examination and revision to remain responsive to the will of the electorate. We have taken massive strides toward the streamlining of state government in the last two years, and I plan to seek your approval of another series of major reorganization steps at this session. We should also proceed with the simplification of the State Constitution through methods made available by voter approval of Proposition 7 in November.

We must act in this session to establish reasonable exceptions to sovereign immunity of the state and local governments against damage suits, but we must also establish careful limits.

The potential added cost to the taxpayers of services provided by the state will otherwise mount many millions of dollars annually.

I also ask again for an end to a special privilege written into our condemnation statutes. Under present law, utility property needed for water projects is given special status; which results in excessive costs, delays, and difficulties in obtaining such property. I ask that the present law be repealed, and that such condemnation proceedings be carried out exactly as when non-utility property is needed for water project development.

In concluding this series of recommendations, I offer one more that could easily prove to be of transcendent importance in the modern history of California. Our present structure of taxation at the city, county and state levels is based on relationships determined decades ago. This system, in my judgment, now places too great a share of the burden on local property taxpayers and often distributes that burden unevenly.

As a result, local school districts, cities and counties have turned increasingly to the state to finance or help collect the taxes for what they themselves recognize as local responsibilities and functions. In many cases, citizens can no longer identify the taxes they pay with the purpose for which they are spent, or the officials charged with their expenditure.

For these and many other equally pressing reasons, I will ask the Legislature to join with me in establishing a joint Tax Commission to undertake a comprehensive review of our entire tax structure and to recommend reforms and revisions which will adjust it to a new area of California history.

The Commission should advise us before the 1964 election of what constitutional amendments should be presented to the people at that time. By 1965 we should be ready to meet this great and overriding problem on a mutually informed basis.

You have heard my proposals for new legislation—my assignments for priority for the long session before us. The Legislature will initiate programs of its own in these and other areas.

In the system of checks and balances traditional to our government, we may often disagree. But I am confident we will agree more often than we will disagree. And I say this in the presence of legislators of the opposite political party brief weeks after one of the most vigorous political campaigns in the history of our state.

We are partisans, but we are also men of good will and common dedication. In the session before us, we may argue the best method of doing a thing that is good for California but we must never argue the necessity of doing it.

In whatever partisan disputes we may have the people of this state are a vital third party and must always have the last word.

Let me conclude by saying that the future all men want—a productive life in harmony with neighbor and nature—will not be wrought in our lifetime. The clock of man's destiny tick off centuries, not seconds.

But here and now we can put our hands to good work. What we do here may not have its full impact on our own lives. Our children and their children will be the better judges of what we do. They will measure our actions by the security of the lives they live; by the wisdom they acquire; by the way they invest their leisure; by the quality of the very air they breath.

Let us accept no limitations except those of our own imagination and enterprise. Let us say: This golden state—a symbol of man's striving toward a better life—shall not only lead our nation, but deserve to lead, in the challenging time before us. Let us determine, with God's guidance, to be equal to this splendid prospect.