



## 2013 STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

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**DENVER — Thursday, Jan. 10, 2013** — Gov. John Hickenlooper today delivered his third State of the State address. The governor's remarks focused on jobs and the economy, education reform, health care, energy and a variety of other topics. Here is the text of the speech as prepared:

Thank you Mr. President. It's good to see so many friends ... and so many new faces. Two years ago you welcomed me to this chamber; today, let me welcome all of our new lawmakers to state government.

2012 was a hard year.

During last fall's Pedal The Plains, as I pushed against a headwind on a two-lane highway between Wray and Burlington, I found myself remembering the summer.

Whether walking our new family dog or working out in the gym ... those images were never far away.

Wildfires ravaged homes; destroyed property; destroyed lives.

At one point there were 10 wildfires raging across Colorado —388,000 acres burned, 648 homes were destroyed and six people were killed.

Then ... shootings in a dark theater.

Twelve lives lost.

Days we will never forget.

Please join me in a moment of silence to honor those who died last year ... and to remember those who are still recovering.

### MOMENT OF SILENCE

During each emergency last year first responders and volunteers worked long hours to save homes ... to save lives.

Some firefighters in Rist Canyon watched their own homes burn as they fought to save a historic schoolhouse. It takes uncommon character to make that kind of sacrifice, but we saw such valor repeatedly.

We can't personally thank everyone who helped battle the blazes this year, but we've asked two people to be here today as representatives of those who worked the fires.

Specialist Duran Cornelius is a Colorado National Guard firefighter. He and the members of his unit were activated to fight the High Park Fire. Colorado Springs Fire Chief Rich Brown and the men and women in his department battled the Waldo Canyon Fire. Please help me acknowledge Specialist Cornelius and Chief Brown.

Colorado Springs Mayor Steve Bach is also here. He came of age as a new mayor, seemingly being everywhere and helping to bring his community together when it needed it most.

The police and firefighters in Aurora faced a different crisis.

Less than 90 seconds after the first dispatch, officers were on the scene. Standard response protocols gave way to gut instincts. Police cruisers became make-shift ambulances.

We met survivors who helped strangers escape the theater and teenagers who rushed their friends to emergency rooms. We mourned with family members whose loved ones died while shielding someone else.

These are stories of courage and resilience. One victim in an Aurora hospital told me: "The outpouring of light and love is so much more powerful than any darkness."

Please join me in acknowledging Police Chief Dan Oates and Fire Chief Mike Garcia – and the men and women they represent.

Please also help me acknowledge Aurora Mayor Steve Hogan for his steadfast leadership in the days, weeks and months after the shooting.

Even in the hardest of times we reach out to each other ... we look beyond sorrow, and we fix our gaze on the horizon.

Belief in a better tomorrow is the story of the West.

This is our history.

We have an obligation to prevent similar tragedies, to do good, to bring light to darkness. We have an obligation to represent the best that is Colorado.

This isn't a Democratic or Republican agenda. It's a Colorado agenda. It's our common mission. I know each of you shares this commitment. You wouldn't be here otherwise.

I want to acknowledge Senate President John Morse, House Speaker Mark Ferrandino, Minority Leader Bill Cadman and Minority Leader Mark Waller.

Let me also thank Joe Garcia, here today with his wife, Claire, who is without question the best lieutenant governor in the country.

Let me also thank members of my administration and Cabinet. It is a great joy to work with such a remarkably talented group of people.

Our thanks as well to Attorney General John Suthers, Treasurer Walker Stapleton and Secretary of State Scott Gessler ... and the distinguished members of the Colorado Supreme Court and Colorado State Board of Education here today.

We are grateful to have with us Colorado's U.S. Senators, Mark Udall and Michael Bennet. Washington would be a better place if we had more senators like them.

Denver Mayor Michael Hancock, our great partner from across the park, is here ... and so is Chairman Gary Hayes from the Ute Mountain Ute tribe. Thank you both for joining us.

On a personal level, I appreciate Helen being here today. Even with the changes in our life, she remains a beacon of light to Teddy and me for all that is good and just.

This might be the appropriate time to note that the road to the Super Bowl goes right through Denver.

We want to wish coach John Fox, everyone's favorite No. 18, and all of the Denver Broncos good luck this weekend. Beat Baltimore!

Some of you have noticed that today marks the mid-point in our first term ... though we really prefer to look at it as only a quarter of the way through our administration.

This job is a little bit like memory foam. As long as you are sitting on it, you know you are making an impression.

Two years ago, we faced a national recession and the largest drop in revenue in the state's history. We had no choice but to cut funding for schools and other essential services.

Today, with an improving economy, we have the beginnings of a reserve fund and we should protect it. We are restoring funding for education – not enough to make up for the \$1 billion shortfall we experienced in the Great Recession – but our steps are in the right direction.

When we took office we said our focus would be on jobs and we have kept that focus. Our goal then – our goal today – is to make Colorado the best state for entrepreneurship and business.

Our Economic Development Blueprint was not a top-down effort; instead, we engaged more than 8,000 Coloradans in a comprehensive approach to identify, and break down barriers to job creation.

We expanded this engagement process with TBD Colorado.

Coloradans told us that excessive red tape, including unnecessary and duplicative regulations were holding back job creation.

With your help, we have been engaged in a thorough scrub of state rules and procedures. Called "Pits and Peeves" ... we reviewed approximately 7,500 rules ... and more than half of these rules will be repealed or modified. And we're not done.

In addition to striking rules and regulations, we are making government work more efficiently. Nothing illustrates the case better than our work with the LEAN process.

A little more than a year ago, we launched LEAN projects in state agencies. By the end of March we will have more than 100 LEAN projects underway ... more than any state in the country.

One group of state employees engaged in the LEAN process came to the uncomfortable conclusion that many of the tasks they were performing were not necessary.

Putting their own livelihoods in question, they came forward and as a result a process that once took weeks will now take one day and will save nearly \$2.1 million annually.

With so many baby boomers retiring, we are working to find other state positions for these 38 outstanding employees.

Other efficiencies include CDOT changing how it budgets for multi-year transportation projects.

This is a better approach to budgeting that comes with an annual bump of \$300 million for five years. This program provides a critical boost to the construction industry by directly sustaining or creating an estimated 10,500 jobs.

In the next year, we will continue replacing the antiquated unemployment systems through the WyCAN consortium – that's Wyoming, Colorado, Arizona and North Dakota for those reading from the acronym dictionary. This is a national model for collaboration and the use of technology.

Thanks to the support of Colorado employers, this network will replace a 25-year-old system, which means unemployed Coloradans will get their benefits faster and more quickly return to work.

Two years ago, Colorado was caught in a bygone era with rules and procedures that made more sense back when we used electric typewriters.

The state personnel system operated with 19th-century rules and with none of the modern systems that business today uses to attract and promote talent.

After 11 failed attempts over 40 years – and with the help of former Govs. Bill Owens and Bill Ritter, the General Assembly and in partnership with state employees – Colorado voters passed Amendment S ... finally bringing the state's outdated personnel system into the 21st century.

Some other amendments passed in November .... one on federal campaign finance reform ..... and another, for the life of me I can't remember the third one.

Oh yeah, Amendment 64.

We now have a task force hard at work considering the legal and policy implications of Amendment 64, and we are determined to implement this new law in a way that promotes the health and safety of all Coloradans.

We need to expand our DUI law to keep our highways safe from those driving while impaired, and we must put in place consumer and regulatory safeguards and provide law enforcement with effective tools to keep marijuana out of the reach of kids.

By any objective measure, we have made significant progress in getting Colorado out of this recession. Forbes magazine recently listed Colorado among the five best states for business.

We know that to maintain a business climate that attracts entrepreneurs and world-class businesses we need to prepare world-class graduates. And we are doing this.

Colorado leads the nation in establishing a system to measure teacher effectiveness. Last year, we built on this reform by passing an early childhood literacy program that is among the most innovative

in the country. The Read Act identifies struggling readers early and provides interventions so that all children can read by the end of third grade.

Last month Colorado received a \$29.9 million “Race to the Top” grant to support early childhood education and enhance early literacy.

Early childhood education is one of the best investments we can make to ensure Colorado’s kids are competitive and prepared for the future. It was also a priority we heard about repeatedly in the TBD Colorado process.

With your support, we will serve up to 6,500 new kindergartners and pre-schoolers.

We must continue to build the best educator pipeline in the country, attracting the best and brightest people to enter teaching, and finding new ways to retain and reward the transformative teachers we have now.

It means ensuring that we have a school finance formula that offers equity to all districts and opportunity to all kids, and it means all of us committing to making Colorado the national leader, not just on reform, but on results.

Reforming the education system doesn’t end at 12th grade. It continues into higher education.

This month, we will adopt a need-based financial allocation process. Unique in the nation, it supports Coloradans with the highest need and incentivizes retention and timely completion.

Together, with performance contracts, we now have a shared commitment from our colleges and universities to focus on results and completion.

We also need a world-class health care system.

Unlike most states, where health care reform has been a politically-divisive fight, Colorado passed bipartisan health exchange legislation. Consumers and small businesses will have an efficient and cost-effective way to obtain insurance.

This is one of many steps toward making Colorado the healthiest state in the nation. Prevention will play an even more important role.

We will continue our efforts to make the state a model employer by working collaboratively with state employees to create a wellness program that lowers health care costs by improving the health of our workforce.

Prevention pays. Based on our work with state employees and best practices from the private sector, we will mobilize more private sector enterprises to incentivize their workforces toward healthier lifestyles.

In this legislative session, we look forward to working with you to expand Medicaid coverage ... but in a way that increases value, reduces expenses and doesn’t require additional General Fund dollars.

We are also implementing House Bill 09-1293 to cover 10,000 people in Colorado who are adults without children. Many of these people live on our streets.

Addressing our most serious challenges requires partnerships with our faith and non-profit communities. One Congregation–One Family is an example of a project with proven success in housing families and seniors who are homeless.

Since 2005, this mentoring collaborative has served more than 4,000 people who are homeless through the help of almost 400 congregations and involving more than 2,000 volunteer mentors.

We continue to work closely with religious and community partners in metro Denver to bring this successful program to Colorado Springs, Grand Junction, Fort Collins and other communities.

Two leaders of One Congregation–One Family are here today: Don Reeverts and the Rev. Tom Melton. Please help me acknowledge their efforts.

Speaking of faith and recovery, the inspirational renewal of the Denver Broncos parallels our state's economic rebound. After a historic recession and several challenging years, our economy is back.

Our plan is to keep improving and building on the foundation we have in place.

We are working together on a budget that funds education above inflation and enrollment, addresses key priorities in mental health and public safety, supports those with developmental disabilities, and builds the state's financial solvency.

While Washington struggles with fiscal cliffs and partisan fights, Colorado demonstrates there is still room for compromise and moderation.

Some have suggested a divided government – that is, divided chambers – has been a blessing for our administration.

They say I got lucky ... but I don't see it that way.

Our blessing was not divided government in the last two years; our blessing was in the many relationships we formed with lawmakers from both parties ... and that you have with each other.

These relationships endure. They span the geography of our state and they transcend political affiliation. And they've been nourished by our working together ... helped along every once in awhile by a cold Colorado beer.

The elections have only intensified our desire to demonstrate that Coloradans are different.

We have our disagreements but we always seek the alignment of self-interest. We look for common values and common good.

More than anything, we look to the future – our eyes on the far horizon – and we climb mountains together. There are a number of daunting mountains before us.

As the wildfires remind us, Colorado is still experiencing a difficult drought.

About 95 percent of Colorado is under severe or worse drought conditions. Our snowpack is well below average. This affects far more than the outdoor recreation industry; it impacts all of Colorado.

That's why we set a goal of crafting a state water plan by 2015 ... and much work has already been done. While expanding reservoir capacity makes sense, and rotational fallowing of agricultural land shows great promise, every discussion about water should start with conservation.

The Interbasin Compact Committee and Basin Roundtable process affords stakeholders in each basin a forum for discussion. Our water plan will stand on the shoulders of their work.

We know that a plan is not a silver bullet, but it is an essential next step if we are to shape how Colorado will look in the future.

As farmers and ranchers brace for what could be another hard year of drought, every property owner who lives in the mountains to our west will need to make their own preparations.

The dry conditions make our forests vulnerable, and the communities near or in the forests are at risk.

We need to re-examine the way homeowners are insured in the wildland urban interface, and do a better job of encouraging and supporting fire-mitigation practices.

We will be requesting funds for projects to remove trees and enhance forest health in high-risk areas.

With your support last spring, we centralized our firefighting efforts before some of the worst fires hit Colorado. It paid off as resources were quickly and strategically mobilized.

Policy changes are no guarantee that Mother Nature won't be back with a vengeance next summer, but they give us tools to mitigate risks and improve forest management.

Many scientists believe that our severe drought, the bark beetle epidemic and the terrible fire season are further evidence of climate change.

While no state can address the issue in isolation, reducing pollutants and promoting sustainable development, ought to be common ground for all of us.

We already know we can work together on energy.

With your help last year, we restored funding for a new Colorado Energy Office. This office will continue to promote energy efficiency, support renewable energy and will lead our efforts to create a national market for compressed natural gas vehicles.

Energy development is important to many Colorado counties. In fact, two-thirds of the state's economic development regions say it's a key industry for them.

Colorado's economic welfare depends on how effective we are in developing all of our resources. Our physical welfare requires we protect public health and safety as we develop these resources.

We can reduce carbon emissions, create good-paying jobs and still protect the environment.

The most efficient and effective way to do this is through uniform regulations and rule-making. We know one size doesn't fit all, which is why the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission works with communities to create agreements and oversee local inspections. What doesn't work is a patchwork of rules and regulations.

Because of innovations in drilling technology, cheaper, abundant natural gas is helping to make America energy secure for the first time in modern memory.

While there are environmental challenges with this process, there are also undeniable environmental benefits. The U.S. is half-way to achieving the reduction in carbon emissions that was contemplated by the Kyoto Protocol, due largely to the use of inexpensive natural gas. The per capita carbon emissions in this country are at the same level as when President Dwight D. Eisenhower turned over the White House to John Kennedy more than 50 years ago.

As we regulate this industry – or any industry – in Colorado, let's make sure that our focus is fair, rational and based on science.

We can work through these issues in partnership with local government, and to do that we need strong relationships with local officials.

This is why we worked so hard on Executive Order No. 5, which deals with state regulations and their impact on local government. This is why we included \$15 million in the budget to help local governments implement water quality nutrient standards ... and this is why we reinstated energy impact funds to counties and municipalities.

If you need a reminder about the power of working together, look no further than CBMS. Yes, uttering the words Colorado Benefits Management System was an invitation in years past to a fight. But that's different today. Recent improvements mean that Colorado is finally in compliance with the performance benchmarks in providing assistance.

These successes, building on the state's collaborative relationships with local governments and special districts, are yet another reason why Colorado stands above other states.

Our record of addressing difficult problems together makes it possible to discuss gun violence and mental health.

There are no easy solutions.

Some point to guns, others to a violent culture. Still others believe that the line between community security and individual freedom must be re-drawn.

We shouldn't be restrained from discussing any of these issues. Our democracy demands this type of debate.

Let me prime the pump: Why not have universal background checks for all gun sales?

After Columbine, Colorado voters insisted that gun show sales be regulated, and launched an aggressive effort to prevent school bullying.

We have shown in Colorado that we can learn from tragedy and make changes.

Surely, Second Amendment advocates and gun control supporters can find common ground in support of this proposition: Let's examine our laws and make the changes needed to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people.

It's not enough to prevent dangerous people from getting weapons.



We have to do a better job of identifying and helping people who are a threat to themselves and others. That is why we are requesting your support for a comprehensive overhaul of our state's mental health system.

We ask you to pass legislation that will update civil commitment laws, make it easier to identify people with mental illness who are a danger to themselves and others and provide safer, more humane systems for their treatment.

We need your continued support as well with sweeping changes made last year to the state's child welfare system.

Issues related to guns, mental health and child welfare have added challenges to the agenda we began two years ago. The urgency behind our original agenda, however, continues.

On jobs and economic recovery, we ask that you support the modest funding we requested in our budget so that we may continue to attract new investment.

Let's build on the successes of the last two years, in which we have seen more than 80,000 new nonfarm payroll jobs. Colorado is the nation's third most economically competitive state, according to the Beacon Hill Institute.

We will see more jobs this year with the expansion of a Kaiser Permanente IT Center of Excellence ... the opening of Hitachi Data Systems IT hub... a Coleman Outdoor Gear leadership center... and expansions from Covidien ... Bal-Seal Engineering ... and SCL Health System.

These are just a few of the companies growing throughout Colorado.

We have begun an inventory of state "assets" that the private sector can use to make location and investment decisions. With your support we hope to partner with the Secretary of State and fund a comprehensive "suite of business services" that will give entrepreneurs additional resources to grow their businesses.

I must have opened 20 businesses in my previous life. I can tell you these services are needed and will help small business.

We also ask that you pass House Bill 1 ... bipartisan legislation that will support "advanced industries" in Colorado.

And we ask that you support a reform of the enterprise zone program so that we are both fair to taxpayers and responsible in extending benefits to support development. I know from my own days of opening businesses that enterprise zones help, especially when you are trying to grow. But it is time to update the rules.

Businesses depend on the cross-currents of talent, capital and ideas. This summer Colorado will host two international events around these principles ... and we welcome you to attend both.

The first, the Biennial of the Americas, will have a unique focus on business, democracy and the arts from all across the Western Hemisphere.

The second annual COIN Summit, hosted by the Colorado Innovation Network, will take place in August . . . . We will convene national and international stakeholders to discuss technology, workforce development, higher education and our state's brand.

We do believe in branding . . . and by the way no animals were harmed in the making of this speech . . . . and we are excited about the work Aaron Kennedy is doing to market Colorado for business and tourists alike. Aaron created Noodles and Co. in his previous life and after selling the company a couple of years ago, he joined our team last fall as the state's first Chief Marketing Officer.

He is among a growing number of successful entrepreneurs we are luring into public service through a Colorado-initiated national effort called Leadocracy. These leaders make all of us in government better – they make Colorado better.

And speaking of Colorado leaders, let's not forget our veterans and those on active duty. This week, we welcomed home 208 of our National Guard men and women.

We are joined today by Staff Sgt. Joy Bryant from Colorado Springs. Her unit returned to Colorado less than 12 hours ago. Staff Sgt. Bryant, thank you for your service, and welcome home.

We have worked with business and our own employment system to make hiring veterans a priority, and we also have provided greater support for their families.

We will do all we can to end veteran homelessness.

As mentioned earlier, there are quite a few mountains we ought to climb together before this session ends in May.

Some of us tried very hard, but it didn't get done last year. This year, let's do it. Let's pass civil unions!

Let's find an equitable and fair way for undocumented kids – kids who have grown up here and done well in school – to pursue a higher education.

We are grateful to the more than 2,000 participants in TBD Colorado as well as the Board of Directors and volunteers. We have talked about a few of the findings already today.

This statewide outreach also showed that when presented with nonpartisan facts and the chance to talk about how our budget and tax rules work, Coloradans came to the conclusion that the state is on an unsustainable fiscal course.

TABOR, the Gallagher Amendment and Amendment 23 shouldn't be viewed in isolation. They create a fiscal knot that can't be untied one strand at a time. Efforts to rewrite the School Finance Act would be well-served to take this into consideration.

We want to work with you to explore creative ideas on how best to reform the way our Constitution is so easily amended. There are a number of ideas already circulating. This is another mountain we should climb together.

When I was a kid I loved adventure stories. Being dyslexic meant that reading was a challenge, but I could still get carried off by a great writer.

Robert Louis Stevenson was a favorite.

I later heard a story about Stevenson's childhood in 19th century Scotland. At night, he would peer from his window and watch lamplighters go about their job.

Climbing tall ladders, carrying torches, the lamplighters would light the street lamps one after another.

The process fascinated young Stevenson.

One night, as he watched with growing fascination, his father asked what he was doing.

Excitement in his voice, Stevenson said, "Look at that man! He's punching holes in the darkness!"

Punching holes in the darkness.

When you think about it, there is nothing more rewarding than punching holes in darkness.

The young entrepreneur punches a hole in darkness when she sells a product that creates a job.

The dry land farmer on the Eastern Plains punches holes in darkness every time he harvests a crop.

Missy Franklin punches holes in the darkness by inspiring a new generation of athletes.

Teachers punch holes in darkness every day. Whenever a child learns something new, light emerges in that child's life.

This past year we saw lamplighters all around us.

We can all be lamplighters ... working together, we can punch some pretty big holes in the darkness.

Thank you ... and thank you for making Colorado a better place.