

Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels: Republican Response to President Barack Obama's State of the Union address on Tuesday, 24 January 2012:

Below, Daniels' remarks as prepared for delivery, which were posted on House Speaker John Boehner's website ahead of the governor's speech.

1 The status of 'loyal opposition' imposes on those out of power some serious responsibilities: to show respect for the Presidency and its occupant, to express agreement where it exists. Republicans tonight salute our President, for instance, for his aggressive pursuit of the murderers of 9/11, and for bravely backing long overdue changes in public education. I personally would add to that list admiration for the strong family commitment that he and the First Lady have displayed to a nation sorely needing such examples.

2 On these evenings, Presidents naturally seek to find the sunny side of our national condition. But when President Obama claims that the state of our union is anything but grave, he must know in his heart that this is not true.

3 The President did not cause the economic and fiscal crises that continue in America tonight. But he was elected on a promise to fix them, and he cannot claim that the last three years have made things anything but worse: the percentage of Americans with a job is at the lowest in decades. One in five men of prime working age, and nearly half of all persons under 30, did not go to work today.

4 In three short years, an unprecedented explosion of spending, with borrowed money, has added trillions to an already unaffordable national debt. And yet, the President has put us on a course to make it radically worse in the years ahead. The federal government now spends one of every four dollars in the entire economy; it borrows one of every three dollars it spends. No nation, no entity, large or small, public or private, can thrive, or survive intact, with debts as huge as ours.

5 The President's grand experiment in trickle-down government has held back rather than sped economic recovery. He seems to sincerely believe we can build a middle class out of government jobs paid for with borrowed dollars. In fact, it works the other way: a government as big and bossy as this one is maintained on the backs of the middle class, and those who hope to join it.

6 Those punished most by the wrong turns of the last three years are those unemployed or underemployed tonight, and those so discouraged that they have abandoned the search for work altogether. And no one has been more tragically harmed than the young people of this country, the first generation in memory to face a future less promising than their parents did.

7 As Republicans our first concern is for those waiting tonight to begin or resume the climb up life's ladder. We do not accept that ours will ever be a nation of haves and have nots; we must always be a nation of haves and soon to haves.

8 In our economic stagnation and indebtedness, we are only a short distance behind Greece, Spain, and other European countries now facing economic catastrophe. But ours is a fortunate land. Because the world uses our dollar for trade, we have a short grace period to deal with our dangers. But time is running out, if we are to avoid the fate of Europe, and those once-great nations of history that fell from the position of world leadership.

9 So 2012 is a year of true opportunity, maybe our last, to restore an America of hope and upward mobility, and greater equality. The challenges aren't matters of ideology, or party preference; the problems are simply mathematical, and the answers are purely practical.

10 An opposition that would earn its way back to leadership must offer not just criticism of failures that anyone can see, but a positive and credible plan to make life better, particularly for those aspiring to make a better life for themselves. Republicans accept this duty, gratefully.

11 The routes back to an America of promise, and to a solvent America that can pay its bills and protect its vulnerable, start in the same place. The only way up for those suffering tonight, and the only way out of the dead end of debt into which we have driven, is a private economy that begins to grow and create jobs, real jobs, at a much faster rate than today.

12 Contrary to the President's constant disparagement of people in business, it's one of the noblest of human pursuits. The late Steve Jobs - what a fitting name he had - created more of them than all those stimulus dollars the President borrowed and blew. Out here in Indiana, when a businessperson asks me what he can do for our state, I say 'First, make money. Be successful. If you make a profit, you'll have something left to hire someone else, and some to donate to the good causes we love.'

13 The extremism that stifles the development of homegrown energy, or cancels a perfectly safe pipeline that would employ tens of thousands, or jacks up consumer utility bills for no improvement in either human health or world temperature, is a pro-poverty policy. It must be replaced by a passionate pro-growth approach that breaks all ties and calls all close ones in favor of private sector jobs that restore opportunity for all and generate the public revenues to pay our bills.

14 That means a dramatically simpler tax system of fewer loopholes and lower rates. A pause in the mindless piling on of expensive new regulations that devour dollars that otherwise could be used to hire somebody. It means maximizing on the new domestic energy technologies that are the best break our economy has gotten in years.

15 There is a second item on our national must-do list: we must unite to save the safety net. Medicare and Social Security have served us well, and that must continue. But after half and three quarters of a century respectively, it's not surprising that they need some repairs. We can preserve them unchanged and untouched for those now in or near retirement, but we must fashion a new, affordable safety net so future Americans are protected, too.

16 Decades ago, for instance, we could afford to send millionaires pension checks and pay medical bills for even the wealthiest among us. Now, we can't, so the dollars we have should be devoted to those who need them most.

17 The mortal enemies of Social Security and Medicare are those who, in contempt of the plain arithmetic, continue to mislead Americans that we should change nothing. Listening to them much longer will mean that these proud programs implode, and take the American economy with them. It will mean that coming generations are denied the jobs they need in their youth and the protection they deserve in their later years.

18 It's absolutely so that everyone should contribute to our national recovery, including of course the most affluent among us. There are smart ways and dumb ways to do this: the dumb way is to raise rates in a broken, grossly complex tax system, choking off growth without bringing in the revenues we need to meet our debts. The better course is to stop sending the wealthy benefits they do not need, and stop providing them so many tax preferences that distort our economy and do little or nothing to foster growth.

19 It's not fair and it's not true for the President to attack Republicans in Congress as obstacles on these questions. They and they alone have passed bills to reduce borrowing, reform entitlements, and encourage new job creation, only to be shot down time and time again by the President and his Democratic Senate allies.

20 This year, it falls to Republicans to level with our fellow citizens about this reality: if we fail to act to grow the private sector and save the safety net, nothing else will matter much. But to make such action happen, we also must work, in ways we Republicans have not always practiced, to bring Americans together.

21 No feature of the Obama Presidency has been sadder than its constant efforts to divide us, to curry favor with some Americans by castigating others. As in previous moments of national danger, we Americans are all in the same boat. If we drift, quarreling and paralyzed, over a Niagara of debt, we will all suffer, regardless of income, race, gender, or other category. If we fail to shift to a pro-jobs, pro-growth economic policy, there will never be enough public revenue to pay for our safety net, national security, or whatever size government we decide to have.

22 As a loyal opposition, who put patriotism and national success ahead of party or ideology or any self-interest, we say that anyone who will join us in the cause of growth and solvency is our ally, and our friend. We will speak the language of unity. Let us rebuild our finances, and the safety net, and reopen the door to the stairway upward; any other disagreements we may have can wait.

23 You know, the most troubling contention in our national life these days isn't about economics, or policy at all. It's about us, as a free people. In two alarming ways, that contention is that we Americans just can't cut it anymore.

24 In word and deed, the President and his allies tell us that we just cannot handle ourselves in this complex, perilous world without their benevolent protection. Left to ourselves, we might pick the wrong health insurance, the wrong mortgage, the wrong school for our kids; why, unless they stop us, we might pick the wrong light bulb!

25 A second view, which I admit some Republicans also seem to hold, is that we Americans are no longer up to the job of self-government. We can't do the simple math that proves the unaffordability of today's safety net programs, or all the government we now have. We will fall for the con job that says we can just plow ahead and someone else will pick up the tab. We will allow ourselves to be pitted one against the other, blaming our neighbor for troubles worldwide trends or our own government has caused.

26 2012 must be the year we prove the doubters wrong. The year we strike out boldly not merely to avert national bankruptcy but to say to a new generation that America is still the world's premier land of opportunity. Republicans will speak for those who believe in the dignity and capacity of the individual citizen; who believe that government is meant to serve the people rather than supervise them; who trust Americans enough to tell them the plain truth about the fix we are in, and to lay before them a specific, credible program of change big enough to meet the emergency we are facing.

27 We will advance our positive suggestions with confidence, because we know that Americans are still a people born to liberty. There is nothing wrong with the state of our Union that the American people, addressed as free-born, mature citizens, cannot set right. Republicans in 2012 welcome all our countrymen to a program of renewal that rebuilds the dream for all, and makes our 'city on a hill' shine once again.

URL for the text and a video of excerpts from the Republican Response to President Obama's State of the Union Address on 24 January 2012, delivered by Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels, as posted by the Huffington Post:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/24/mitch-daniels-response-_n_1228467.html

URL for a complete video of the Republican Response to President Obama's State of the Union Address on 24 January 2012, delivered by Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels, as posted on YouTube by C-Span:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iE_SJc4_A6M