



STATE OF UTAH

SPENCER J. COX
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH
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DEIDRE M. HENDERSON
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

2025 Inauguration Ceremony Speech

Lt. Gov. Deidre M. Henderson
January 8, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.
Eccles Theater,
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Governor Cox, Chief Justice Durrant, legislators, fellow Utahns, and Mom:

Four years ago, I was sworn in as Utah's ninth lieutenant governor with little understanding of this role. Today, I have a better idea of what it means to be the state's number two. To paraphrase Shakespeare, "A [lieutenant governor] shines as brightly as a [governor], until the [governor is near]. So doth the greater glory dim the less."

Governor Cox, there is no one's shadow I'd rather stand in than yours. But thank you for also allowing me opportunities to shine.

I am a seventh-generation oldest daughter. Being the descendent of a long line of strong and faithful oldest daughters who sacrificed, loved, lost, overcame, and endured has shaped who I am today.

Growing up, my home was not at all political, but it was instructive. My mother didn't speak much about politics, except occasionally to say how much she hated them. But during casual conversations she taught me the principles of freedom, liberty, and good government.

As much as my mom hated politics, my grandmas loved them. They openly spoke of current events, national political trends, and hosted cottage meetings for candidates. All three women lived lives of service to their families and communities. Their examples fostered my deep love of country, reverence for the American Experiment, and faith in God. From them I inherited the strong foundation upon which I have built my life.

During the last four years I have visited every county and corner of this glorious state many times over. I have been inspired by people who overcame personal challenges, communities that pulled together to clean up and rebuild after natural disasters, volunteers who served the hungry and elderly in their cities, and neighbors who dropped everything to comfort those who were devastated by tragic loss.

Utahns are good people who don't just understand the importance of community but live it every day. My love for you and this state knows no bounds.

This morning, I am filled with gratitude for the chance I've had to help lead this great state and humbled by the trust placed in me by Governor Cox and the people of Utah to continue serving as lieutenant governor for another term.

During my combined 12 years in elected office, I have driven up Capitol Hill thousands of times. And yet the sight of the capitol dome still fills me with awe—not only that I get to work in such a magnificent place, but that I have been entrusted as a guardian of all that building represents.

For 20 years after statehood, however, Utah didn't have a capitol building. State government was essentially homeless. But in 1912, a German immigrant and renowned architect named Richard Kletting was awarded the contract to build the capitol building we know and love today. It stands as the crowning achievement of his career.

Kletting's genius was incorporating big, bold features with small, intricate details. Impressive Corinthian columns AND arches adorned with hundreds of marble rosettes. A towering dome AND beehives woven into carpets and etched in glass. The result is an architectural masterpiece that is both simple AND spectacular. His design embodies a quality that is foundational to our state: the principle of "and."

Our administration's focus on building for the future rests on that same fundamental belief in the power of "and." We have achieved significant accomplishments by embracing big, visionary ideas AND focusing on opportunities for individuals.

We delivered water to the Great Salt Lake AND the tiny Navajo community of Westwater, whose few dozen residents will now have access to clean running drinking water for the very first time.

We fostered an economic environment that attracted large businesses like Texas Instruments AND started Return Utah—a program that deliberately seeks out those who have been on the sidelines of the workforce while raising children or following their military spouses around the world.

We began construction on the West Davis Highway AND completed road projects in rural Utah that seem small on paper but make the greatest difference to the people who need them.

As we face new challenges, we will build on the foundation we've inherited. We will continue to embrace the "and." We can experience high population growth AND a high quality of life. We can address housing demands AND allow cities and towns to maintain the autonomy that makes them special. We can maintain public safety AND demonstrate the compassion that defines our values as a state. We can welcome refugees and new Americans AND support immigration reform. Finally, following the leadership of Governor Cox, we can disagree with someone AND still show them respect.

Holding positions of public trust is an honor, but it comes with a weight that I could not bear without the support of my family. Thank you to my five children, three sons-in-law, and two grandsons for being so supportive and understanding when public responsibilities divide my attention from you. Gabe, thank you for being my strength, my champion, and my loving partner. Mom, thank you for making me who I am.

Fellow Utahns, may God bless each of you AND continue to bless the great state of Utah.