

# Full Transcript of Governor Reynolds Response to the SOTU

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Good evening. I'm Kim Reynolds, Governor of the great state of Iowa.

Like you, I just watched the President's address. I listened as the governor of our state, as a mom and grandmother of 11, who's worried our country is on the wrong track.

We're now one year into his presidency, and instead of moving America forward, it feels like President Biden and his party have sent us back in time—to the late 70s and early 80s.

When runaway inflation was hammering families, a violent crime wave was crashing on our cities, and the Soviet army was trying to redraw the world map.

Even before taking the oath of office, the President told us that he wanted to “make America respected around the world again and to unite us here at home.”

He's failed on both fronts.

The disastrous Afghanistan withdrawal did more than cost American lives; it betrayed our allies and emboldened our enemies.

North Korea is testing missiles again at an alarming rate, the Speaker of the House recently warned our Olympic athletes not to speak out against China, and now Russia has launched an unprovoked full-scale military invasion of Ukraine—an attack on democracy, freedom, and the rule of law.

Now all Americans must stand united in solidarity with the brave people of Ukraine as they courageously defend their country against Putin's tyranny. As they fight for their freedom.

But we shouldn't ignore what happened in the run-up to Putin's invasion. Waiving sanctions on Russian pipelines while limiting oil production here at home; focusing on political correctness rather than military readiness; reacting to world events instead of driving them.

Weakness on the world stage has a cost. And the President's approach to foreign policy has consistently been too little, too late.

It's time for America to once again project confidence; it's time to be decisive. It's time to lead.

But we cannot project strength abroad if we're weak at home. And that's what I want to discuss with you tonight.

The President and Democrats in Congress have spent the last year either ignoring the issues facing Americans or making them worse.

They were warned that spending trillions would lead to soaring inflation. They were told their anti-energy policies would send gas prices to new heights. But they plowed ahead anyway, raising the price at the pump by 50% and pushing inflation to a 40-year high.

Four decades ago, when our nation was last reeling from inflation, I was a young working mom, just starting out. My husband Kevin worked days while I watched our girls. Then we'd switch. We would pass in the yard as he was coming home and I was leaving to work evenings at the local grocery store.

From across the checkout counter, I saw the pain of inflation on my neighbors' faces; I saw what happens when prices rise faster than wages.

The Biden Administration believes inflation is "a high-class problem." I can tell you it's an everybody problem.

I saw moms' and dads' paychecks buy them less and less. I watched working people choosing which essentials to take home and which ones to leave behind at the register.

And now President Biden's decisions have a whole new generation feeling that same pain.

When I took the oath of office five years ago, I promised Iowans that I would never lose sight of who I was working for. That I wouldn't become detached from the problems they were facing—from the problems I had faced myself.

But you don't have to check groceries to see what high inflation does to people. You just need to step outside the D.C. Bubble. Talk to Americans about what's on their mind. Ask them: What are your concerns? What keeps you up at night?

They'll tell you, and I can tell you what's *not* on that list.

They won't tell you that spending trillions more and bankrupting their children is the answer to their problems.

They won't tell you that we should be paying people *not* to work.

And they certainly won't tell you that we should give billions in tax giveaways to millionaires and billionaires in Democrat-controlled states like California, New York, and New Jersey.

But that's what the Biden Administration has been pushing for over the last year. That's all part of Build Back Better.

Thankfully the President's agenda didn't pass, because even members of his own party said enough is enough.

Well, the American people share that view. Enough *is* enough.

And it's not just with D.C. spending.

Americans are tired of a political class trying to remake this country into a place where an elite few tell everyone else what they can and cannot say. What they can and cannot believe.

They're tired of people pretending the way to end racism is by categorizing everybody by their race.

They're tired of politicians who tell parents they should sit down, be silent, and let government control their kids' education and future.

Frankly, they're tired of the theater. Where politicians do one thing when the cameras are rolling and another when they believe you can't see them.

Where governors and mayors enforce mandates but don't follow them. Where elected leaders tell their citizens to stay home while they sneak off to Florida for sun and fun; where they demand that your child wear a mask, but they go out maskless.

You've heard the excuses. They were just holding their breath.

But it's the American people who are waiting to exhale. Waiting for the insanity to stop.

We now live in a country where violent crime is out of control, liberal prosecutors are letting criminals off easy, and many prominent Democrats still want to defund the police.

It seems like everything is backwards. The Biden Administration requires vaccines for Americans who want to go to work or protect this country but not for migrants who illegally cross the border.

The Department of Justice treats parents like domestic terrorists but looters and shoplifters roam free.

The American people are left to feel like *they're* the enemy.

This is not the same country it was a year ago. The President tried to paint a different picture tonight, but his actions over the last twelve months don't match the rhetoric. It's not what he promised when he took office.

But it doesn't have to be this way. There is an alternative.

Across the nation, Republican governors and legislators are showing Americans what conservative leadership looks like. What it means to respect the people we serve. To hear them out. To stand up for them and walk alongside them.

We know our problems require bold action, but we also know that bold action doesn't have to mean government action. It's Americans making their own decisions for their own families and future.

Republican governors faced the same Covid-19 virus head on. But we honored your freedoms and saw right away that lockdowns and school closures came with their own significant costs; that mandates weren't the answer. And we actually listened to the science, especially with kids in masks and kids in schools.

What happened—and is still happening—to our children over the last two years is unconscionable. Learning loss. Isolation. Anxiety. Depression. In so many states, our kids have been left behind and many will never catch up.

That's why Iowa was the first state in the nation to require that schools open their doors. I was attacked by the left; I was attacked by the media. But it wasn't a hard choice. It was the right choice.

And keeping schools open is only the start of the pro-parent, pro-family revolution that Republicans are leading in Iowa and states across this country.

Republicans believe that parents matter. It was true before the pandemic and has never been more important to say out loud: Parents Matter.

They have a right to know, and to have a say in, what their kids are being taught.

Families also have every right to live in a safe and secure community. And that begins with a safe and secure country.

But the Biden Administration has refused to secure our border. They've refused to provide the resources to stop human trafficking. To stop the staggering influx of deadly drugs coming into our neighborhoods. They've refused to protect you.

With Texas and Arizona leading the way, I, along with Republican governors from several states have sent resources to the border. And we've actually gone to the border—something that our President and Vice President have yet to do since taking office.

On the economy, the contrast couldn't be more stark. While Democrats in D.C. are spending trillions, sending inflation soaring, Republican leaders around the country are balancing budgets and cutting taxes. Because we know that money spent on Main Street is better than money spent on bureaucracy.

Today, I signed legislation that eliminates Iowa's tax on retirement income and sets our tax rate at 3.9%. That's less than half of what it was just four years ago.

And it shouldn't come as a surprise that out of the top 20 states with the lowest unemployment rates, 17 have Republican governors.

Republicans may not have the White House. But we're doing what we can to fill the leadership vacuum. On the issues that are affecting Americans, Republicans are leading.

We are standing up for parents and kids; we're standing up for life. We're keeping our communities safe and thanking those in uniform. We're fighting to restore America's energy independence, including biofuels. We're getting people back to work, not paying them to stay home. Most of all, we're respecting your freedom.

Behind me stands Iowa's Capitol, where we display our state motto: "Our liberties we prize and our rights we will maintain."

Those aren't just empty words. It's a belief that the greatness of this state—that the greatness of this country—lies in our people, not government.

You shouldn't have to wake up every morning and worry about the next thing the government is going to do to you, your business, or your children.

If we, as elected leaders, are doing our job, then the government is working well but operating in the background. It's supporting the ingenuity and spirit of our people, not drowning them out. It's keeping them safe, not restricting their freedom.

That's what I believe. That's what Republicans believe. And that's what Republicans are doing.

I'm blessed to be the Governor of Iowa, where people are humble, hard-working, and patriotic. We take care of each other. And yes, we are, as they say, Iowa Nice.

But you don't have to be from Iowa to see that those are the values of America at its best—all of America.

Over the last few years, I've put my faith in Iowans, and they haven't let me down.

I encourage this President to do the same. To put his faith in you, the American people, who have never wavered in your belief in this country, regardless of who leads it.

Because you know—you've shown—that the soul of America isn't about who lives in the White House; it's men and women like you, in every corner of this nation, who are willing to step up and take responsibility—for your communities, for your neighbors, and ultimately for yourselves.

By that most important measure at least, the State of our Union is indeed strong.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless the United States of America..