

**GOVERNOR MARK R. WARNER**

# **Inaugural Address**



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**The Inaugural Remarks of the Honorable Mark R. Warner**

**The State Capitol  
Richmond, Virginia**

**January 12, 2002**

**My fellow Virginians, the hour has arrived — to renew our faith — to affirm our purpose — and, to unite our people for the common good.**

**Mindful of those who have preceded me and humbled by the oath that I have taken — I make this solemn pledge: to honor your trust — to earn your respect — and to work to ensure that this Commonwealth assumes her rightful place as a leader among the states of our great nation.**

**In return, I ask but this of you: work with me to restore our economic strength — to put aside our partisan differences — to put Virginia First so that we will lead the way in education, innovation, opportunity and commerce.**

**Work with me to realize a vision of one Virginia —shared by all our citizens — and one future — filled with hope and opportunity.**

**As we gather on the steps of this historic capitol building, let us pause a moment to honor our fellow Virginians serving in our nation's armed forces.**

**Our prayers are with our military and their families — and, for the safety of our fellow Virginians serving our Commonwealth here at home, our police officers, National Guard members, firefighters, and emergency service personnel.**

**America is stronger because of you.**

**On this day, we also express our appreciation to Governor Gilmore and Mrs. Gilmore for their hard work on behalf of the people of Virginia.**

**We proudly acknowledge Lt. Governor and Mrs. John Hager — whose leadership Virginia calls upon again — and former Attorney General Mark Earley and his family — for a public career of honor, faith and purpose.**

**All have given their best to our people, and, today, we salute them.**

**I also acknowledge the promise of two others who have joined me today in taking an oath of service to the people of Virginia: Lt. Governor Tim Kaine and Attorney General Jerry Kilgore.**

**I look forward to the great things we will do together.**

**Today, I am mindful of the support and sacrifice of many people who helped make this day possible:**

**The faithful of a political party that nominated me — the friends who have supported me — the love of my wife and three daughters who have sustained me — and, the encouragement of my parents and sister — who have stood by me. I thank them all.**

**I stand before you today the product of a loving family, good public schools, student loans and an industry that did not exist twenty years ago.**

**My parents taught me the values of hard work, responsibility and perseverance — and my faith taught me compassion and tolerance.**

**Nineteen years ago everything I owned fit in the backseat of my 1965 Buick — but I was given the opportunity to succeed.**

**And I know something of the power of the American dream. I know what hard work and a dream can do.**

**I know the spirit of the American dream is still alive because I have been blessed to live it. I want the promise of this dream to burn brightly for all Virginians.**

**This will be our purpose. But there is much work to be done. Let me lay out some of guiding principles of our administration.**

**First, we must ensure the financial integrity of our state government.**

**Our constitution requires it; our people deserve it; and our success depends upon it.**

**To those who expect an easy remedy to our current financial circumstances, we will offer a long-term vision — not short-term fixes.**

**And, to those who question our resolve to meet the challenges before us, let me assure you — we come sufficient to the cause.**

**We will re—build the financial structure of state government, with openness, accountability, vision and plain old straight talk.**

**Second, we must pursue with renewed purpose economic growth for all of Virginia. We will encourage the creativity of all of Virginia's entrepreneurs.**

**We will seek to attract new companies to all parts of our Commonwealth and work to ensure the prosperity of existing Virginia businesses.**

**In the information age, Virginia will lead the nation.**

**Third, we must match our commitment to a strong economy with an equal commitment to preserve the quality of life enjoyed by all Virginians.**

**We will be vigilant in recognizing that the prosperity of our communities will be inseparably linked to the quality of our schools and transportation networks — to the**

**condition of the environment — to freedom from crime — and to the protection of our Commonwealth from threats both here and abroad.**

**Our success in the new century will depend not only upon our ability to create new jobs — but also upon our ability to ensure that our citizens have the skills to compete.**

**To this end, we will seek constantly to strengthen our schools, and to reward our teachers for a job well done. Fourth, we will honor the service of our public employees.**

**We will make Virginia's public employees full partners in our efforts to move the Commonwealth forward.**

**We will require more of our state government. Our success will not be measured by the effort expended, but by the results achieved.**

**Excellence will be our standard. Accountability will be our guide.**

**Fifth, and finally, we must have a state strengthened by the diversity of our people — not divided by it.**

**We will draw upon the uniqueness of all our citizens — their cultures, their religions, and yes, their political views.**

**Together we reaffirm the dream realized by one son of Richmond — who once stood where I now stand — and provide hope so that every child — will know they too are the sons and daughters of Virginia.**

**For today, we issue an invitation — join us. Join us.**

**But we must act now. For in five short years Virginia will enter her fifth century, and we must be prepared.**

**Fundamental economic change threatens the stability of many parts of the Commonwealth.**

**Many of our rural communities suffer the consequences of relying on single—industry economies.**

**In too many parts of Virginia, frustrated commuters endure clogged roads — and await the completion of projects promised long ago.**

**Local government leaders are often ignored while their potential goes unrealized.**

**Our technological infrastructure bypasses much of Virginia.**

**We have too often failed to recognize the contribution of those who serve — those who teach, those who protect us from harm, and those who care for the sick and elderly.**

**Our dominion is becoming a state of cul-de-sacs with ignored cities and forgotten small towns.**

**Too many of our people are unemployed — and too many of our schools, our colleges and our universities are over-crowded and under-funded.**

**We have even failed to reach consensus on the budget. And our citizens have suffered the inevitable consequences.**

**We can do better. And, my fellow Virginians, we will do better.**

**History reveals that whether by providence or necessity, when Virginians have united in common purpose — they have achieved remarkable feats.**

**We all know well the contributions during this past century of our parents and grandparents.**

**What will be said of us?**

**Let the children of our children say that we challenged ourselves to make Virginia — the state that led America's first century — the state that also led America into the 21st century.**

**For we live in a time of transformational change, as we rush at internet speed into an information age. In the 21st Century world, success depends on a community's quality of life and the quality of the workforce, where ideological and partisan differences pale.**

**I know Virginians have the capacity to meet this future. For this is our history.**

**As Virginians, we have been revolutionary when necessary; loyal when called and determined when the mission is before us.**

**My fellow Virginians, it is time — once again — for a little revolution — a revolution based not upon a desire to separate or tear apart, but upon the need to unite and come together.**

**And, because in any revolution, there must be a first shot fired — let us begin by changing the way we do business in Richmond.**

**Mr. Speaker and Mr. President Pro Temp of the Senate — on behalf of all Virginians — I extend to you the hand of friendship and cooperation.**

*[Governor Warner steps from the podium to shake hands.]*

**Consider what we can create together.**

**One Virginia — where no child faces the future unprepared — with inadequate education and unappreciated skills;**

**One Virginia — where partisanship — for the mere sake of it — is overcome by cooperation — for the public good;**

**One Virginia — where our state government is professional and accountable and where innovation and merit are rewarded.**

**One Virginia — where our colleges and universities strive for national prominence in the arts, in the sciences and in medicine — and we support them;**

**One Virginia — where we reject the false choice between a strong economy and a clean environment;**

**One Virginia — where we have a skilled workforce, an efficient transportation system, and an infrastructure designed for a new economy;**

**One Virginia — where new Americans are welcomed to call Virginia home.**

**And, ultimately, one future — where opportunity is not the precious treasure of a few, but the bounty of all Virginia.**

**We pledge this today and much more.**

**Not because this Virginia will be easy to achieve, for it will not.**

**Not because we can reach this destination in one administration, for we cannot.**

**But, because the journey must begin.**

**We know the enormity of the challenges before us — as we seek the blessings of the Almighty on this endeavor.**

**And in the end, let it be said that together we left this place filled with hope — in the confidence that together — we can one day reach our destination — a place where each Virginian is limited only by the dreams the mind can imagine.**

**For this is our Commonwealth.**

**One Virginia — confident and strong.**

**One future — safe and secure.**

**One people — united and free.**

