

# [***Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear denounces politics of division at start of 2nd term in Kentucky***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69VH-XT11-JC5B-G090-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear, whose reelection in the GOP stronghold of Kentucky boosted his standing among next-generation political leaders, railed against the ***politics*** of division as he launched his second term on Tuesday.

In his inaugural speech outside a sun-splashed Kentucky Capitol, Beshear invoked his Christian faith as a guiding principle for governing, declaring that every person deserves “true dignity and opportunity.”

“I ran for office because I believe that my kids deserve a better world, and I believe every child of the commonwealth deserves that better world,” the 46-year-old governor said at his public swearing-in ceremony. “And I'm telling you, this is our chance. This is Kentucky's chance to be the difference, to be both an economic and a moral leader of this country.”

Beshear was officially sworn in for another term shortly after midnight — a Bluegrass State ritual every four years to ensure continuity at the head of state government. It preceded a full day of inaugural events, including a worship service, a parade and the public swearing-in ceremony.

The governor scored a [*convincing reelection victory*](https://apnews.com/article/kentucky-primary-governors-race-election-2023-e8df45cd3978ce5a1691ba447c84bafc) in November over Republican Attorney General Daniel Cameron, extending Beshear's winning streak in a state that otherwise has swung decidedly toward the GOP. His victory, in one of the nation's most closely watched campaigns of 2023, could offer a roadmap for broader efforts by Democrats to make inroads in Republican territory. It also sets him up to be on the national radar in the coming years when the country looks for a new generation of leaders.

Beshear pledged to lead with the same empathy and compassion that he said guided the state through so much hardship in his first term. The state was hit by deadly tornadoes and flooding as well as the deadly pandemic.

His upbeat message for the future contrasted with his denunciation of the ***politics*** of division that he said have sown anger and hate.

“One of the most difficult challenges we have before us is that ***politics*** — and sometimes even our governance — has become poisonous and toxic,” the governor said. “What's supposed to be an exchange of ideas has devolved into grievances and attacks."

In a message meant to resonate beyond Kentucky, Beshear denounced political strategies and commercials he said were meant to divide Americans. The result, he said, has been to justify anger and hate while dehumanizing some in the U.S. The Democratic governor did not identify anyone be believes to have engaged in such tactics.

Looking ahead to his next term, Beshear pledged to do his part to help meet the everyday needs of the people of his state. That includes continuing the state's economic successes and pushing for greater investments in public education, he said. He pledged to continue delivering road and bridge projects and to bring high-speed internet to every Kentucky home.

The governor also looked to bridge the partisan divide in Kentucky's government. Republicans hold overwhelming majorities in both legislative chambers, and Beshear wrangled with GOP lawmakers over a series of policy issues during his first term — including school choice, taxes, abortion and transgender rights.

“We are at a moment in time where the true potential is there to achieve our collective dream — the dream of a better Kentucky,” the governor said. “And we can and we should realize that dream if we don't stand in our own way.”

Beshear's reelection continued a family dynasty that has defied the state's tilt toward the GOP. His father, Steve Beshear, is a former two-term governor.

In winning reelection, Andy Beshear emphasized his stewardship over the state's economy, railed against what he said was his opponent's [*extreme position on abortion*](https://apnews.com/article/kentucky-governor-race-debate-abortion-590d9b06a1ea58c1386143a27398a6be) and cultivated a reputation as an empathetic leader through natural disasters and the pandemic.

While Beshear and Democratic Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman won as a ticket, Republicans swept all other statewide constitutional offices on the November ballot.

Coleman also was sworn in for a second term Tuesday. As usual, the solemn occasion elicited giggles when Beshear and Coleman reached the part of their oaths in which they swore they’ve never fought a duel with deadly weapons or been involved in one in any way.

The public inauguration included a musical performance by country star Tyler Childers, a native of eastern Kentucky, who sang a song about faith and family called “Universal Sound.” Beshear says he got to know Childers at an Appalachian Regional Commission conference. Meanwhile, health care workers and educators served as grand marshals for the inaugural parade.

By the end of Andy Beshear’s second term, a Beshear will have presided in the Kentucky governor’s office for 16 of the last 20 years. Republican Matt Bevin succeeded term-limited Steve Beshear as governor in 2015, only to lose a close election to Andy Beshear four years later. Term limits will prevent the younger Beshear from seeking reelection when the next governor's race occurs in 2027.

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