

About the Governor



Governor Terry Branstad was born, raised and educated in Iowa. A native of Leland, Branstad was elected to the Iowa House in 1972, '74 and '76, and elected as Iowa's lieutenant governor in 1978.

Branstad was Iowa's longest-serving governor, from 1983 to 1999. As the state's chief executive, he weathered some of Iowa's worst economic turmoil, during the farm crisis of the '80s, while helping lead the state's resurgence to a booming economy in the '90s.

At the end of his tenure, Iowa enjoyed record employment, an unprecedented \$900 million budget surplus, and the enactment of historic government overhauls that led to greater efficiencies in state government. As a result of Governor Branstad's hands-on, round-the-clock approach to economic development, Iowa's unemployment rate went from 8.5 percent when he took office to a record low 2.5 percent by the time he left in 1999.

Following his four terms as governor, Branstad went on to serve as president of Des Moines University (DMU). During his 6-year tenure, he was able to grow the university into a world-class educational facility. Its graduates offer health care in all 50 states and in nearly every Iowa county. While there, he grew enrollment, increased the endowment and integrated new buildings, programs and initiatives.

In October of 2009, sensing a need for change in the way state government operates and wanting to "lead Iowa's comeback," Branstad retired from DMU to explore running for governor in 2010. He launched his campaign in January of 2010, and in June he won the Republican primary and named energetic state Senator Kim Reynolds as his running mate.

This team traveled to each of Iowa's 99 counties, sharing their commitment to the creation of 200,000 new jobs for Iowans, a 15 percent reduction in the cost of government, a 25 percent increase in family incomes, and a renewal of national excellence of Iowa's schools. As a result, they were elected as Iowa's governor and lieutenant governor on November 2, 2010 and were sworn into office on January 14, 2011.

True to his word, Gov. Branstad, along with Lt. Gov. Reynolds committed to a balanced budget in their first year in office. For the first time in decades, the Legislature passed, and Gov. Branstad signed, a two-year budget with a 5-year projection. This budget provided Iowa businesses the predictability and stability they needed to grow.

As a result, Iowa added more than 46,000 gross new jobs in 2011, Branstad's first year in office. Iowa added 13,500 net new jobs in 2011, which is 6 times more than the 2,200 average net new jobs a year during the previous 12 years.

Gov. Branstad and Lt. Gov. Reynolds are encouraged by these numbers and believe the new Iowa Partnership for Economic Progress they created will only build Iowa's economic health.

Gov. Branstad continues to push for government efficiencies and spending the hardworking taxpayers' dollars in the most effective manner possible. When running for governor, Branstad set a goal of reducing the size and cost of government by 15%.

In the 2012 legislative session, Gov. Branstad and Lt. Gov. Reynolds continued to push for commercial property tax reform, not because it costs businesses money, but because it costs Iowans jobs.

The pair also made education reform a top priority of the 2012 session. Gov. Branstad and Lt. Gov. Reynolds believe that in order to attract world-class jobs, we must have a world-class workforce. Iowa's children deserve the opportunity to compete for careers in a global environment.

On November 4, 2014, Iowans re-elected Branstad and Reynolds.

In his first session after being re-elected, Gov. Branstad signed historic investments in Iowa's infrastructure into law. The result is significant investment in Iowa's roads and bridges, as well as the innovative Connect Every Acre Plan that will work to expand high-speed broadband internet to Iowa's agriculture industry, schools, businesses and homes.

In January 2016, Iowa Workforce Development announced that the state of Iowa's unemployment had fallen to 3.4%, the 6th lowest in the nation. Iowa has now added more than 220,000 new jobs since 2011.

He and his wife Chris have three grown children: Eric (Adrienne), Allison (Jerry Costa) and Marcus (Nicole), and six grandchildren, Mackenzie, Bridget, Sofia, Alexis, Estelle and Everett.