

# Opinion: Sandoval hits some crucial points head-on

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The first is always the most difficult, but the challenge that faced Gov. Brian Sandoval as he prepared his first State of the State address was as difficult as any new governor has faced in Nevada's history.

Sandoval was governor for just a few days past three weeks when he stepped before a joint session of the Nevada Senate and Assembly – as well as several million nervous Nevadans – on Monday evening as the leader of the state with the highest unemployment rate in the nation.

Unlike most previous governors who had the good fortune to be able to use the State of the State to propose new programs, there was no hope that there would be any good news from the always optimistic Sandoval. It's been clear for months that whoever won the governor's office in November would have to cut the state budget; Sandoval only made the task harder with his promise not to raise taxes.

Perhaps that's why the budget he unveiled on Monday was laced with gimmicks – “monetizing” a part of the insurance premium tax, continuing to divert the room tax approved by voters for education to the general fund, shifting county funds to higher education, letting school districts use money from construction reserve accounts, and so on.

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