



The United States Conference of Mayors

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NATION'S MAYORS WANT POVERTY REDEFINED: MAYOR BLOOMBERG HIGHLIGHTS CONFERENCE POLICY AT NAACP

Statement of U.S. Conference of Mayors President Miami Mayor Manny Diaz

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Conference of Mayors President Miami Mayor Manny Diaz released the following statement on New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg's remarks at the NAACP Annual Convention in Cincinnati:

"On behalf of the nation's mayors, I applaud Mayor Michael Bloomberg for his local and national leadership on addressing the issues of poverty and opportunity. We support his efforts to recreate a national dialogue around redefining poverty in 2008. Mayor Bloomberg has stepped up where Washington has been silent. For forty years, we have been grappling with the complex issue of poverty. A revised definition is critical to break the cycle of endemic poverty so that all our cities' residents can thrive.

"USCM policy, as adopted last year in Los Angeles under the leadership of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, strongly supports a redefining and reframing of how poverty is calculated in this nation. Specifically, the resolution urged the federal government to:

- revise the formula for calculating the federal poverty line so that it better reflects the amount of money that families must earn to meet the basic costs of daily life, and
- include in the formula factors such as housing, transportation, health care and child care, in addition to the cost of food.

"Middle-class working families in our neighborhoods are suffering. Wages are either stagnant or down. The price of basic necessities -- food, clothing, shelter and gas --- is going up and up, causing pain and hurt for millions of our people who get up, go to work and come home to care for their children every day.

"We live in a large nation with many regional differences, but no matter what these differences may be, poverty has the same devastating effect on all people. Eighty-five percent of the nation's population lives in cities and metropolitan areas; and America's families in neighborhoods everywhere are faced with dire challenges due to the current economic conditions.

"The conditions of poverty are multifaceted with a myriad of challenges. Therefore, this fall I have called for a Mayors' Action Forum on this very issue of poverty to be held in Los Angeles to produce specific recommendations for the next president of the United States.

"Further, at The 76th Annual Meeting of The U.S. Conference of Mayors, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa made a strong recommendation to the next U.S. President to create and appoint a top White House Presidential advisor to work directly with mayors and cities so that all Americans have the opportunity to prosper.

"Poverty is a national problem that demands national investment."

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