

GOOD MORNING - IT IS TRULY AN HONOR TO BE HERE WITH YOU - THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR WORK TO EMPOWER ALL PEOPLE. THANK YOU FOR WHAT YOU REPRESENT, NEARLY A CENTURY OF SERVICE TOWARD OTHERS, THE OLDEST CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANIZATION IN AMERICA.

AT THE CONFERENCE OF MAYORS, WE ARE PROUD OF OUR SHARED HISTORY, WORKING WITH GREAT LEADERS LIKE WHITNEY YOUNG, VERNON JORDAN AND RON BROWN. WE HAVE SECURED BILLIONS FOR CITIES, PRODUCING JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR MILLIONS OF AMERICANS TO WORK THEIR WAY FROM POVERTY TO PROSPERITY AND OF COURSE TODAY, YOU HAVE ONE OF THE STRONGEST LEADERS IN AMERICA--MARC MORIAL.

MARC, ONCE A MAYOR, ALWAYS A MAYOR.

AS PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE OF MAYORS, MARC LED US THROUGH ONE OF AMERICA'S MOST DIFFICULT AND DARKEST MOMENTS—

AFTER 9/11, MARC CALLED ON AMERICA'S MAYORS TO WORK TOGETHER..... TO WIPE AWAY THE TEARS FROM THE PAIN —AND, IN SO DOING, HELPED TO LEAD AND INSPIRE OTHER MAYORS AND CITIES TO MOVE OUR COUNTRY FORWARD AT A TIME WHEN WASHINGTON SEEMED PARALYZED AND CONFUSED.

OUR COUNTRY WAS BLESSED AND CONTINUES TO BE BLESSED WITH YOUR LEADERSHIP. THANK YOU MARC.

I AM PRIVILEGED TO BE THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF MIAMI-

A CITY BUILT ON THE ASPIRATIONS AND THE DREAMS OF SO MANY WHO HAVE COME TO AMERICA SEARCHING FOR FREEDOM, SEARCHING FOR A BETTER LIFE.

IT IS WHAT THIS COUNTRY GAVE MY FAMILY, AND IT IS WHAT THIS COUNTRY GAVE ME.

I CAME TO THE UNITED STATES WHEN I WAS 6 YEARS OLD, ON A FREEDOM FLIGHT SITTING ON MY MOTHER'S LAP,

FLEEING A PLACE WHERE THE GOVERNMENT DENIES ITS PEOPLE THE VERY FREEDOMS AND OPPORTUNITIES WE SO CHERISH.

WE SAW THIS COUNTRY AS SO MANY OTHERS STILL DO, AS A BEACON FOR HOPE, AS A LAND OF BOUNDLESS OPPORTUNITY.

MY MOM AND DAD WORKED TWO TO THREE JOBS AT ANY ONE TIME-

THEY CLEANED TOILETS, PARKED CARS, WASHED DISHES - AND YET, THERE WAS NEVER DESPAIR-

THEY KNEW....THAT IF YOU WORK HARD, YOU CAN PROVIDE YOUR CHILDREN A

BETTER LIFE.

WE LIVED IN A CLEAN, SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD. I WENT TO A PUBLIC SCHOOL AND ENJOYED AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES.

I WORKED AS A SCHOOL JANITOR MAKING \$1.10 AN HOUR THROUGH THE CETA PROGRAM –

STUDENT LOANS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR ME TO ATTEND COLLEGE AND EARN A LAW DEGREE.

AT EVERY TURN OF MY LIFE, ESPECIALLY IN MY YOUTH, I BENEFITTED FROM A PARTNERSHIP –

BECAUSE GOVERNMENT INVESTED IN ME, I CAN NOW GIVE BACK, AS MAYOR OF MIAMI, AND PRESIDENT OF THE US CONFERENCE OF MAYORS.

NOT LONG AGO, I SPOKE AT A NATURALIZATION CEREMONY. I COULD NOT HELP BUT REMEMBER THE DAY THAT I RAISED MY RIGHT HAND TO SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO THIS GREAT NATION.

AS I LOOKED OUT AT THE CROWD OF OVER 3,000, FROM ALL CORNERS OF THE WORLD.....FROM EVERY WALK OF LIFE.....ALL EAGER TO JOIN THIS

GREAT AMERICAN DEMOCRACY,

I ASKED MYSELF, DO THEY SEE THE SAME THINGS IN AMERICA THAT I SAW ALL THOSE YEARS AGO?

IS THIS COUNTRY STILL WILLING TO PROVIDE THE TOOLS NECESSARY FOR ADVANCEMENT?

IS AMERICA STILL WILLING TO INVEST IN ITS PEOPLE?

DOES A SIX YEAR OLD CHILD TODAY HAVE THE SAME ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY THAT I DID, OR THAT ANY OF US DID?

THIS IS A TIME WHEN WASHINGTON HAS LOST ITS VALUES----- LOST ITS PRINCIPLES – LOST ITS SENSE OF PURPOSE –

THEY NO LONGER INVEST IN OUR CITIES, THEY NO LONGER INVEST IN OUR PEOPLE.

PLAIN AND SIMPLE, THEY HAVE ABANDONED US –

THEY ENGAGE IN ENDLESS DEBATE AND PARTISAN BICKERING - MEANWHILE PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THIS COUNTRY CONTINUE TO SUFFER.

**WE SEE WHAT HAPPENED IN NEW ORLEANS, IN MINNEAPOLIS, IN DES MOINES –
BUT LET’S LOOK DEEPER:**

**OVER 60% OF AMERICA’S CHILDREN DON’T READ OR PERFORM MATH AT GRADE
LEVEL, THE NUMBER IS HIGHER IF YOU ARE BLACK OR LATINO.**

**IN OUR LARGEST CITIES, OVER 50% OF CHILDREN DON’T MAKE IT PAST HIGH
SCHOOL.**

IS EDUCATION A LOCAL PROBLEM? OR AN AMERICAN PROBLEM?

**1 IN EVERY 6 CHILDREN LIVES IN POVERTY, WITH NEARLY HALF LIVING IN
EXTREME POVERTY – THE NUMBERS ARE HIGHER FOR MINORITIES.**

**IF YOU ARE A YOUNG BLACK MALE, YOU HAVE A 1 IN 3 CHANCE OF GOING TO
JAIL, 1 IN 4 IF YOU ARE LATINO -**

**CLOSE TO 10 MILLION CHILDREN IN THIS COUNTRY HAVE NO HEALTH
INSURANCE, PART OF THE 47 MILLION IN THIS COUNTRY WHO ARE UNINSURED.**

ARE POVERTY AND HEALTH A LOCAL PROBLEM? OR AN AMERICAN PROBLEM?

MANY MIDDLE CLASS AMERICANS ARE ONE PAYCHECK, ONE SICKNESS AWAY FROM ECONOMIC CATASTROPHE.

35 MILLION AMERICANS GO HUNGRY, INCLUDING NEARLY 13 MILLION CHILDREN.

IS HUNGER A LOCAL PROBLEM? OR IS IT AN AMERICAN PROBLEM?

AMERICANS ARE BEING PRICED OUT OF THEIR HOMES OR LOSING THEIR HOMES AT ALARMING RATES –

AND THE NUMBER OF HOMELESS IS STILL AT UNACCEPTABLE LEVELS.

IS HOUSING A LOCAL PROBLEM? OR AN AMERICAN PROBLEM?

WE SEE VIOLENCE INCREASE IN OUR CITIES. TODAY, THERE ARE MORE GANG MEMBERS IN AMERICA THAN THERE ARE POLICE OFFICERS.

YOUTH VIOLENCE ACCOUNTS FOR 20% OF ALL VIOLENCE AND IS THE SECOND LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH AMONG OUR YOUTH. YOUNG PEOPLE KILLING YOUNG PEOPLE.

AND WE CONTINUE TO HAVE THE HIGHEST INCARCERATION RATE IN THE WORLD.

IS CRIME A LOCAL PROBLEM? OR IS IT AN AMERICAN PROBLEM?

GASOLINE IS NOW OVER \$4 A GALLON - RISING FOOD PRICES, RISING MEDICAL COSTS – HITTING EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US IN THE WALLET.

IS OUR ECONOMY A LOCAL PROBLEM? OR IS IT AN AMERICAN PROBLEM?

THESE ARE NOT JUST DEMOCRAT OR REPUBLICAN PROBLEMS, THESE ARE AMERICA'S PROBLEMS.

AND YET, WHERE IS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT? CUTS TO EDUCATION, TO HOUSING, HEALTH, PUBLIC SAFETY, YOUTH PROGRAMS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, JOB TRAINING, ARTS, INFRASTRUCTURE –

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN OUR CITIES AND IN OUR PEOPLE..... ALL CUT.

WHEN WASHINGTON DOES ACT, IT IS TO CLEAN UP A MESS THAT SHOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED IN THE FIRST PLACE.

JUST LOOK AT THE RECENT HOUSING BILL SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT

YESTERDAY-

A FIX FOR A PROBLEM THAT MAYORS SAW COMING, A PROBLEM THAT WOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED HAD THOSE IN WASHINGTON HEARD OUR CRY FOR HELP.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OUR HISTORY, WE ARE IN REAL DANGER OF FAILING TO GIVE OUR CHILDREN A BETTER WORLD THAN THE ONE OUR PARENTS LEFT US. WE ARE DANGER OF RAISING A FORGOTTEN GENERATION.

SOLUTIONS ARE NOT COMING FROM WASHINGTON. SOLUTIONS ARE COMING FROM OUR CITIES - FROM OUR URBAN CORES.

WE DRIVE THE NATIONAL ECONOMY.

METRO AREAS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OVER 85% OF ALL JOBS, INCOME AND OUR GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT.

WE ADDRESS THE ISSUES THAT MATTER TO PEOPLE THE MOST.

WE PROVIDE THE FRONT LINE.....THE LAST HOPE..... THAT IN CITIES..... NOT ALL IS LOST.

CITIES ARE NOT THE PROBLEM, CITIES ARE THE SOLUTION.

WHEN FACED WITH INACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE, IT WAS SEATTLE MAYOR GREG NICKELS WHO BROUGHT OVER 870 MAYORS TOGETHER TO IMPLEMENT THE KYOTO PROTOCOL.

MAYORS LIKE RICHARD DALEY OF CHICAGO AND WILL WYNN OF AUSTIN ARE SHOWING THE NATION THAT YOU CAN HAVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND AN ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIENCE.

WHEN ILLEGAL GUNS AND ASSAULT WEAPONS FLOODED CITY STREETS, NEW YORK CITY MAYOR MIKE BLOOMBERG AND BOSTON MAYOR TOM MENINO RAISED THEIR VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE IN OUR CITIES.

FACED WITH CUTS TO FEDERAL PROGRAMS THAT HELP THE MOST VULNERABLE, MAYORS LIKE ANTONIO VILLARAIGOSA OF LOS ANGELES TOOK POVERTY REDUCTION HEAD ON.

WHILE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CLAIMS TO LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND.....WE KNOW BETTER

WHICH IS WHY MAYORS LIKE MIKE COLEMAN OF COLUMBUS AND SHIRLEY FRANKLIN OF ATLANTA DEVELOPED EDUCATION POLICIES THAT PUT CHILDREN FIRST.

WHILE CONGRESS GIVES US MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR BRIDGES TO NOWHERE, MAYORS LIKE JOHN HICKENLOOPER OF DENVER ARE DEMANDING A LONG-TERM, COMMON SENSE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT IN AMERICA.

AND, WHEN OUR CITIES BREAK BECAUSE OF FEDERAL NEGLECT, IT IS MAYORS LIKE R.T. RYBAK OF MINNEAPOLIS AND FRANK COWNIE OF DES MOINES THAT ARE LEFT TO HEAL A CITY'S GRIEVING SOUL.

AMERICA'S CITIES- WE ARE THE GOVERNMENT OF FIRST RESORT - BUT WE SHOULD NOT HAVE TO BE THE GOVERNMENT OF LAST RESORT.

SO IT IS THAT TODAY WE FACE A MOMENT OF CHOICE.

IN NOVEMBER, WE WILL GO TO THE POLLS TO ELECT THE NEXT PRESIDENT – WE DEMAND, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DEMAND AN ACCOUNTABLE FEDERAL PARTNER.

WE ARE PREPARED TO SIT DOWN AND WORK WITH SENATOR OBAMA. WE ARE PREPARED TO SIT DOWN AND WORK WITH SENATOR MCCAIN -

NEXT WEEK, WE WILL BEGIN OUR MAYOR'S MARCH ACROSS AMERICA.

FIVE FORUMS IN FIVE CITIES IN SIXTY DAYS

OUR FORUMS WILL FOCUS ON:

**CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY..... KEEPING AMERICA'S FAMILIES AND
NEIGHBORHOODS SAFE**

POVERTY, JOBS AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL AMERICANS

**PRESERVING OUR ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINING AMERICA'S ECONOMIC
INDEPENDENCE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME**

**INVESTING IN OUR AMERICA'S INFRASTRUCTURE AND BUILDING OUR
COUNTRY'S RESOURCES**

AND ECONOMIC STIMULUS THROUGH TOURISM, ARTS AND CULTURE.

**FROM THESE FORUMS WE WILL DEVELOP AND ADVOCATE FOR THE URBAN
AGENDA -**

THE AGENDA OF EMPOWERMENT-

THE AGENDA FOR THE FIRST 100 DAYS OF THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION.

AND WE DO THIS BECAUSE WE KNOW THE OPPORTUNITIES THIS COUNTRY STILL HOLDS.....THE PROMISE IT STANDS FOR.

AND WE DO THIS BECAUSE AMERICA IS THE ONLY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD THAT INSPIRES A DREAM.

IT WAS A PHRASE COINED IN THE EARLY PART OF THE LAST CENTURY DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION –

A DREAM OF A LAND IN WHICH LIFE SHOULD BE BETTER AND RICHER AND FULLER FOR EVERYONE, WITH OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL.

MAYORS HAVE NEVER LOST SIGHT OF THAT. THE NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE HAS NEVER LOST SIGHT OF THAT.

AND IT DOES NOT MATTER IF WE ARE DEMOCRATS, REPUBLICANS, OR INDEPENDENTS -

THIS IS A DEFINING MOMENT FOR OUR COUNTRY –

WE ALL HAVE A GREAT DUTY - TO MAKE OUR NEXT PRESIDENT UNDERSTAND.....

THAT AN INVESTMENT IN AMERICA'S CITIES IS AN INVESTMENT IN AMERICA'S FUTURE -

THAT OUR NEXT PRESIDENT SHOULD BE MAYOR OF THE UNITED STATES.

WORLD POWERS COMPETE FOR ECONOMIC STRENGTH, CHINA, RUSSIA, INDIA, BRAZIL, AND OTHERS WHO ARE GAINING ON US BY INVESTING IN THEIR PEOPLE....., INVESTING IN THEIR CITIES..... INVESTING IN THEIR NATIONS.

IF WE FAIL TO DO THE SAME, WE KNOW FROM HISTORY, THAT WE WILL NO LONGER BE COMPETITIVE, THAT THE WORLD WILL PASS US BY.

IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF WHETHER WE SHOULD INVEST - IT IS OUR MANDATE- IT IS WHY WE EXIST - IT IS OUR MOST SOLEMN DUTY AS A NATION -

**TO LEAVE CITIES WHERE POVERTY IS NOT A LIFELONG SENTENCE, BUT A
TEMPORARY CONDITION TO BE OVERCOME –**

**TO LEAVE CITIES THAT COMBINE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY WITH
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY –**

**TO LEAVE CITIES WHERE OUR CHILDREN CAN RECEIVE THE BEST EDUCATION,
AFFORD A HOME, HOLD A GOOD PAYING JOB, HAVE ACCESS TO THE ARTS AND
LIVE IN CLEAN AND SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS –**

**TO LEAVE CITIES WHERE EVERYONE HAS ACCESS TO THE PROMISES OF THE
DREAM -**

**I ASK YOU, I NEED YOU TO JOIN US IN THIS CHALLENGE – TO FULFILL THIS DUTY
– TO MAKE AN INVESTMENT IN OUR CITIES, AN INVESTMENT IN OUR PEOPLE,**

**SO THAT OUR CHILDREN AND THEIR CHILDREN MAY INHERIT CITIES.....MAY
INHERIT A COUNTRY BETTER THAN WAS LEFT TO US.**

THANK YOU, GOD BLESS...