



US CONFERENCE OF MAYORS  
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J. Thomas Cochran, Executive Director:

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. My name is Tom Cochran I am the Executive Director of the United States Conference of Mayors. The United States Conference of Mayors is an organization that's 68 years old, located in Washington, DC.

Each year the Mayors of America come together and elect a spokesperson that will speak to the world and to our country on urban issues. We are very fortunate to have as our president this year Mayor Wellington Webb of Denver, Colorado.

It was last year that the United States Conference of Mayors launched its Cities 2000 initiative and we have, as an organization, partnered with the mayors of Italy, the mayors of Japan, and the mayors of Germany, and other mayors around the world to discuss the importance of cities are today on the international economic stage, in addition to stressing the economic role that Mayors now play in the year 2000.

There are a number of issues in our country that Mayor Webb has been out there discussing in our society. One is the question of guns in America. The United States Conference of Mayors, since 1968, the death of Martin Luther King and Senator Robert Kennedy, has taken very strong measures on the question of gun safety in America. And today the Mayor of Denver, who is in the shadow of Columbine high school, where a massacre took place on April 20th, 1999, has been very out front in discussing common sense gun safety legislation.

It was the Mayor of Denver who dis-invited Mr. Charlton Heston, the head of the NRA, from coming to Denver. It was the Mayor of Denver who unveiled a "wall of death" showing the deaths in one hundred cities throughout America. And we will continue to discuss this until we get Congress in our country to deal with some tough questions and the President, Bill Clinton has been very much with us on a number of measures that we believe present more deaths in our country. So I me present to you now The President of The United States Conference of Mayors, Mayor Wellington Webb of Denver.

## Mayor Wellington Webb:

Tom, thank you very much. Let me say first of all it's a pleasure to be here and to be back in London. This is about my third trip to London in the last three years. The first trip was to begin negotiations with British Airways to fly non-stop, direct service to Denver. So, the first trip was the problem. The second trip was to negotiate a deal. The third trip was successful in terms of making it happen which is also some of what mayors do. Mayors are economic spokespersons for their city in terms of negotiating agreements to enhance their cities. When you look at history, the 19<sup>th</sup> century was really the century of empires, the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been the century of nation-states. We see the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the century of cities and in many cases nations will be known by the cities that inhabit them and how well those cities do, the same way that in many American cities how a downtown is perceived is by how well people think that city is doing.

I believe the same thing will hold true for nations in terms of how well many of the cities do. I am also here in London because we opened up a different trade office yesterday which is something else that cities now in the United States are doing. It is very important for us to grow our economy, to expand our economy, as it is to have a trade office here in London which is right here near Piccadilly.

And the purpose of our trade office is to enhance businesses in the United Kingdom doing business in Denver as well as in Colorado. It's also to enhance businesses that are in Denver and Colorado that want to do business in the United Kingdom. We have an office that helps facilitate that activity.

The race for mayor in London for us has also been quite interesting also my third trip I was invited by the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) along with the mayor of Philadelphia, **Edward Rendell**, and the mayor of Seattle, Washington **Norm Rice**, to participate in a forum at RSA which I believe is in Chelsea. They asked us questions about the structure of mayors and municipal governments in the United States and one, whether we thought it was a good idea having a mayor's race and mayor in London, and what we saw as downsides.

For those of us who are mayors, obviously we are advocates of local government control. There's a belief in America that the government closest to you is also the most efficient and effective. It is also more than a personality contest, a mayor's race in America. It's about individuals being elected to office who have the ability to manage. They not only manage the finances and also the economic tone and moral tone that takes place in that city; they're also the individuals who provide the vision of what you want that city to be and how you want that city to develop.

So many of us look at with great interest at the mayor's race here in London, because we also know that it's going to encompass a lot of other boroughs. That means that the mayor is going to also have to have a persuasive ability to generate a vision. That person also has to have the capacity to work with elected officials in those other boroughs around the integrated London area and sometimes that can certainly be a difficult task. And I think that whoever is

elected mayor first—someone asked me whether I would like to be elected mayor of London. I said, “Obviously, I would love to be the *second* elected mayor of London.” [laughter]

The first one is going to get hit with all the expectations of the constituent groups. They’re going to get hit with a new job with many different people perceiving it in a different way, and as I understand it the job also still being defined kinda as we go which is something that we don’t have to do in Denver.

Now, let me just take a minute and share with you that in Denver we have a strong mayor form of government, we have council members elected by district as well as at-large. And the mayor also has the responsibility of overseeing the administrative actions of the city. The appointing power of the mayor means that we also appoint the police chief, the fire chief, the [head of the] social services department. We also administer the airport, which is municipally owned, which is different than a lot of other places because, for us in our location of the country we are a western city, we are not around a great body of water. For us our airport is our port and that is why when we opened our new airport in 1995 when opened it with five runways, with the capacity to build out to twelve for the future, with the belief that many cities in America would not be able to expand their airports because of their locations in their cities. They can’t expand without taking out housing and residential areas.

We built our airport where it is, outside the city, because it will allow the city to grow out to a certain level but then it will also provide a buffer around the airport and what we’ll be able to do is expand the airport with increased air capacity.

I’m going to just stop here and say that . . . I was here earlier on in the year and initially the first round of candidates at that time were **Geoffrey Archer**, he was in the race and **Trevor Phillips** was in the race and **Ken Livingston** was in the race and I see Ken Livingston is still in the race but Trevor Phillips is not in the race and neither is Geoffrey Archer. They’ve been replaced by other individuals running. Someone asked me the other day if we were endorsing candidates and I said that I didn’t think one that was appropriate to have someone from another nation come in and endorsing someone running for office. But what we do have great experience in is that, is that we do know, I don’t know how many we’ve done, we do know something about running campaigns.

Personally, I’ve been elected state representative three times and mayor three times and elected comptroller one time, so that’s seven times. So, we do know something about running campaigns. But why don’t I stop there and if there a couple of questions I’ll try to respond to those. By the way, when we leave London we’ll probably go into Frankfurt because I’m now pursuing a direct flight from Frankfurt to Denver.

I do want to introduce the president of our city council who’s also here, **Allegra “Happy” Haynes**, is sitting in the back—she’s president of our Denver City Council. . . .Margaret McMahan, who heads up our Denver trade office, and Ron Bernstein, our development director. So, if there are any questions we’ll try to respond to those. Yes....

Question:

Our structure of the mayor doesn't really have a great deal of power in London. Do you have any advice to the future mayor of how best to exact influence?

Mayor Webb

Well let me say two things on that. There are a great deal many mayors in the United States that are elected to different structures. Let me give you an example, two examples. The Mayor of Chicago is a strong mayor form of government. The Mayor of Los Angeles has a very weak system. But I would be willing to bet that most people around the world do not know that the system is different. They think they're the same. Based upon the personality of the person that is elected I think a good person can make whatever structure they are elected in work for them. Because it is about having a vision of what you want to accomplish. Now the American standard, let me say this, contrary to press opinions and public perceptions, that think that most American races are personality contests, they are really not. Because at the end of the day the American public has been very good about selecting, at the mayoral level, and at the presidential level, individuals that have basically two capacities. One, the capacity to lead, which means people are going to follow their leadership, and number two, the ability to manage the structure in which they are going to be governed.

Question:

Right Ken Livingstone is 45% ahead in the polls—big personality, big favorite in London. What's your advice to the other candidates in order to catch up?

Mayor Webb

Well I think for the candidate that's ahead the goal is to stay ahead. And for the other candidates I think is there for them their challenge is to be noticed and to get their program out as to why they could serve in this capacity better than the front runner.

Question:

Give us an idea as to how you went about your campaign. Because you've been elected three times, I understand.

Mayor Webb

I've been elected mayor three times and I was elected to the state legislature before that.

I was behind in the polls, and I needed to stand out from other candidates, so I declared that I would walk—and keep walking—every neighborhood in the city until Election Day. No bikes, no cars, just walking the streets. I walked neighborhoods all day, talking to folks, knocking on doors, visiting parks, whatever got me to the people. And at night, I stopped wherever I was and stayed there—people were very gracious and allowed me to stay with them. The next morning I'd be up putting handbills on parked cars as well as anyone stopped at a light and carried my message to them.

I did this in Denver for 42 days, I ended up walking 330 miles, lost 22 pounds and ended up having both knees drained of fluid in the hospital and having blisters on my feet cut by physicians after the walk. But I also then went from 30 points down in the polls to winning the election with 58% of the vote.

I also called the newspapers to tell them where I was walking each day. For two reasons—one, I knew they would come to see if I would cheat and get in a car and secondly, I thought if they came and walked with me they would start writing stories about can the underdog, a person who has no money, catch the person who has the money. I would walk to the debates. So when people would go to the debate, they would get there early and I would walk in late with my tattered crew, we'd say we'd walked to the debate, the same way many in the neighborhood had walked to the debate.

I think you have to show contrast and sometimes you have to show contrast in order to have them look at your program. Still the basic

analysis is when you run for these offices you really want to accomplish. It's not just about being elected, I mean what do you want to accomplish once your there. And then, that's important because then that's the standard by which people are going to hold you accountable if they are going to vote for you a second time.

Question:

What do you think the most important aspect of your campaign was?

Mayor Webb

Well, I think one if you are if you've been elected before you run on your record of achievement and what you've been able to accomplish. If you haven't been elected before and you're trying to become elected you have to campaign on the premise of what you're going to do in this position you see, and how the people would be better off by virtue of voting for you than they would be if they vote for someone else. Because one you're electing a mayor by popular vote and which in a democracy you can never predict the outcome.

Number two is that it's a new position with new authority and new powers; some of those powers will be given statutorily, some of them will be assumed by personality and tradition. And tradition will be created by how well the first mayor serves, and how well the first mayor does not serve.