



## **THE MAYORS AND BUSINESS LEADERS CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE AND COMPASSIONATE CITIES**

### **BACKGROUND**

For decades, The United States Conference of Mayors has taken a strong position in support of civil rights and in opposition to racism and discrimination of all kinds. In the 55 years since the murder of Medgar Evers in Jackson, Mississippi, the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, which killed four young girls, and the March on Washington led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., much progress has been made in addressing past grievances and in ensuring the civil and human rights of all Americans.

Across the country, mayors have spoken out against discrimination and injustice when they have occurred and have undertaken efforts to foster equity for underrepresented groups and build tolerance and understanding within their communities. Cities have also undertaken efforts to integrate immigrants into their communities and have adopted a variety of policies to include fully and treat equitably their LGBTQ residents. They have worked to inculcate compassion in their cities' policies and activities.

However, inequities in our cities and country continue to challenge mayors. Extremism and violent bigotry are on the rise across the country. There are efforts in the states and at the highest levels of government to weaken existing civil rights policies and reduce their enforcement. There has been an increase in hate violence, xenophobic rhetoric, and discriminatory actions that target African Americans, Jews, Muslims, and other minorities. Mayors, who historically have been committed to advancing inclusiveness and equity, are addressing these challenges head on and will not permit them to succeed.

Mayors and their cities must continue to be a beacon for inclusion, tolerance, and respect for all. They recognize the need to strengthen the cultures of diversity, kindness and compassion in their communities, and expect their federal and state partners to join them in this endeavor.

To deliver on the promise of inclusiveness and equity for all, mayors must also collaborate with the business community. Mayors run their cities, but they walk every step of the way with businesses in them. Corporate leaders manage thousands of employees – employees who are citizens who reside in our cities – and are critical to ensuring inclusion not only in the workplace but insuring that the corporate culture reflects the communities they serve.

### **MAYORS' COMPACT**

To focus this effort, The United States Conference of Mayors working with the Anti-Defamation League, launched an initiative immediately following the violent demonstrations in Charlottesville in August of 2017 – The Mayors' Compact to Combat Hate, Extremism and Bigotry – to promote the fundamental principles of justice and equality that define America.

More than 325 of the nation's mayors – the most recent and largest mayoral action for diversity and inclusion – have signed the Compact to date, committing to act to fight inequities and create inclusive and compassionate cities.

The Mayors' Compact has 10 Components:

- Expressly Rejecting Extremism, White Supremacy and All Forms of Bigotry
- Denouncing All Acts of Hate Wherever They Occur
- Ensuring Public Safety While Protecting Free Speech and Other Basic Constitutional Rights
- Calling for Fully-Resourced Law Enforcement and Civil Rights Investigations of Domestic Terrorism and Hate Crimes
- Elevating and Prioritizing Anti-Bias and Anti-Hate Programs in Our Nation's Schools
- Supporting Targeted Communities and Bringing Together Business Leaders and Civic and Community Leaders to Build Trust
- Celebrating Diversity, Promoting Inclusivity and Challenging Bias
- Promoting Law Enforcement Training on Responding to and Reporting Hate Incidents, Hate Crimes and Domestic Terrorism
- Encouraging Residents in their Communities to Report Hate Incidents and Crimes, Including Using Hot Lines and Online Tools
- Maintaining Civil Rights Enforcement and Strengthening Hate Crime Laws When Necessary

## **THE MAYORS AND BUSINESS LEADERS CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE AND COMPASSIONATE CITIES**

In recognition of the strong mayoral response to the Mayors' Compact, the Conference is launching The Mayors and Business Leaders Center for Inclusive and Compassionate Cities. Its goal is to support and advance the Mayors' Compact with sustained action through collaboration, education and awareness, information sharing, technical assistance, and best practices.

An important goal of the Center is to create a strong and committed partnership between mayors and business leaders inside the Conference and to collaborate on visions of success to make our cities – and ultimately our nation – stronger, more equitable, more compassionate, and more inclusive. Inclusion is good for the economy, for business, for cities, and for the nation.

Two key members of the business community have already joined with us in building the Center and supporting its work. We cannot overstate the significance of the early support we have received from Walmart and the Coca-Cola Company. Their support sends a message to city leaders and business leaders that two of the world's most successful and influential companies recognize the importance of direct action to confront bias and hate with compassion and inclusion.

With their generous support we are beginning to work with cities to carry out the Compact's 10 components through the following activities:

**Collecting and Disseminating Best Practices:** The Conference will invite mayors to submit information on their successful efforts – and lessons learned – to promote inclusiveness and compassion in city policies and activities and combat hate, extremism, and bigotry. It will publish that information as best practices on its web site, making it widely available to mayors and their cities, to other levels of government, private non-profit organizations, businesses, and the public.

**Providing Information and Assistance:** The Conference will provide information and assistance to mayors and other city officials, including descriptions of successful efforts in cities, available training programs and curricula that may be useful, and other resources that may be available to them to support their efforts, including best practices from corporate America's diversity and inclusion programs. The Conference will connect key city staffs with each other so that they can learn from one another about what works and what doesn't.

**Facilitating Mayoral Conversations:** The Conference will bring mayors together through convenings, platforms, and conference calls to discuss the challenges in their cities, how they are preventing and responding to problems, and how they are promoting inclusiveness and compassion in their policies. This has begun in Montgomery and will continue in a plenary session at our Winter Meeting in January.

**Collaborating with Corporate Leaders to Identify Strategies to Advance Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and to Share Outstanding Best Practices and Lessons Learned in the Private and Public Sectors:** The Conference will showcase outstanding best practices in the work place, as well as lessons learned to inspire other cities and companies to work together in addressing diversity and inclusion in both the workplace and in the community.

In the future, as resources allow, further activities will be undertaken:

**Recognizing Exemplary Efforts:** The Conference will establish a recognition program to highlight particularly successful efforts by mayors and cities to promote collaborative solutions for inclusiveness and compassion and combat hate, extremism, and bigotry. Mayors will be invited to submit applications describing exemplary initiatives for consideration by an independent panel of judges. The award winners will be announced at one of the Conference's two major meetings each year.

**Supporting Targeted Communities and Bringing Together Civic, Business and Community Leaders to Build Trust:** The Conference will launch a competitive grants program that will provide funding to support local initiatives that bring together local leaders from the public and private sectors to promote inclusiveness and compassion and combat hate, extremism and bigotry.

### ***About The United States Conference of Mayors***

*The United States Conference of Mayors is the official non-partisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,408 such cities in the country today. Each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor.*

*For more than 70 years, the U.S. Conference of Mayors has taken a strong position in support of civil rights and in opposition to racism and discrimination of all kinds. It has also supported efforts to encourage compassion and kindness in city policies and promote city initiatives that respect and celebrate different cultures and religions, understand differences, and unite residents around shared values. In just the last few years, the Conference has adopted policy supporting compassion as an effective public policy, calling for adoption of a culture of kindness in cities and in America, and reviving civility and respect. Policies have also supported immigrant rights and recognized the important cultural and economic contributions that immigrants bring to cities, and decried all forms of discrimination and hate speech based on an individual's religion and country of origin.*

*In 2013, the Conference formed the U.S. Coalition of Cities Against Racism and Discrimination and secured the commitment of more than 120 mayors to implement its 10-Point Plan of Action. In 2016, following tragic shootings in Dallas, Baton Rouge, and Falcon Heights, MN, the Conference encouraged mayors to convene community conversations on race relations, justice, policing and equality, and compiled and published information on these conversations in 49 cities from 30 states.*

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