

21st Century Council Meeting
New Orleans, LA
May 14 – May 17, 2009

May 15, 2009

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM: “Securing the Homeland-In America & Abroad”

Congressman Bennie Thompson, Chair, Committee on Homeland Security

- I. Opening Remarks
 1. Part of the reason politics shifted in this country was due to the Katrina response. That hence new leadership in Washington and others.
 2. The tour this evening will enlighten us to destruction caused by Katrina and the rebuilding that needs to happen.
 3. The 21st Century Council meetings will unite Majority/Minority Businesses and other opportunities.
- II. Homeland Security
 1. One of the largest government agencies
 2. Trying to make the 23% minority business requirement – need to identify the engineers and business leaders.
 3. Chairwoman Lee wrote a letter to Napolitano about the lack of minorities at Homeland Security and how it needs to be addressed.
 - a. Responsible for managing any national emergency (wildfire, hurricane)
 - b. People were concerned about travel due to the Swine Flu.
 4. Cyber-Security
 - a. The United States has serious security threats – over 600 hacks by other countries a month. Those concerns are being addressed and a new system of cyber-security is currently being created.
 - b. He believes a new process needs to be implemented where fresh ideas do not take as long to be vetted.
 5. Chemical Security
 - a. Congress is currently working to do more to ensure the public safety and well-being especially with regard to large fuel-tanks and other highly flammable contents.
 6. Piracy
 - a. President has the right idea – we need to talk to people we disagree with us and come to a feasible conclusion.
 7. Guantanamo Bay
 1. We must find a way to lawfully try and convict those in Guantanamo Bay.
- III. Immigration
 1. A perimeter fence is not the option.
 2. He told the story of a fence built in Beaumont, Texas that is in the middle of the River Walk. They asked for \$5 million to develop an alternative to the fence – the fence costs \$13 million, here we are going to build something with no economic value
 3. Not using the fence-brings vitality and economic stability to the community and surrounding areas

Question & Answer:

1. How can we become a part of Homeland Security and wed our businesses with what needs to be done?
 - Teaming agreements
 - Forecast what business will be coming out of the department and pick the right people
 - Twice a month there is a CEO breakfast, where major corporations that do business with

Homeland Security and sit them in front of 5 Minority Corporations; it has really been a fruitful partnership

- We look forward to even more integration (over 22 agencies – US Marshals, Coast Guard, etc)
- 2. Customs and Border Protection – Equipment seized at the border is flown to CA and placed in a warehouse, and eventually disposed of. There was a deal in CA, and it must be broken up.
- 3. Under current procurement laws – only the person with the contract, and the second-tier contractor has standing in the dispute – every time there was a dispute they had no standing – so they were in only taking \$0.10 on the dollar; now everyone on the tier has standing
- 4. Now FEMA does not review its own work, and we have created an independent auditor to make a decision:
- 5. Economic-Stimulus Package
 - a. A lot of funds for work around the border (technology) and coast guard
- 6. TSA, significant opportunities for technological advancement and improvements
 - a. Until recently TSA was buying old already outdated equipment
 - b. The technology is definitely around – look at International travel

11:00 AM – 12: 00 PM: Establishing Economic Stability”

Congressman Al Green (TX) Member, Financial Services Committee

I. Opening Remarks

1. Remarks to Chairperson Benny Thompson, and his friendship and leadership. He thanked the chairperson for his commitment to getting him elected to Congress.
 - A. Financial Services
- A. The History of This Financial Crisis
 1. Spoke about how Congress is preparing to vote on the \$700B bailout package; the first – the calls were 100% against the bailout, the next day constituents called again
 2. There have always been greed – but how has greed been able to succeed for so long? We moved in ('82) from long-term mortgage's to ARM (Adjustable-Rate-Mortgages): exotic products – became a detriment to a lot of people – Yield/Spread Premium – If I am an originator of mortgages, I can qualify you for a 5% loan, get a kickback for an 8% loan. 327 rates: 3 years fixed 27 variables? When these products were offered they had a pre-payment penalty: Coincided with the teaser rate – (pre '80, there was not a teaser rate) If you chose to get out of the loan before the arm adjusts, you had to pay severe penalties (\$10k) was not uncommon.
 3. Loans were put into bundles – investors would buy into them – collateral debt obligations – they wanted a HIGH INTEREST RATE: the sub-prime rates were very appealing – Originators of the sub-prime loans: The originator got paid when he gave up the loan.
 4. This housing market is like a large condominium – one unit is on fire – if his fire is not put out, the value of your house is impacted. That is why the bailouts are necessary.
 5. Passed the \$700B TARP (Troubled Assets Relief Program – a reverse auction
 6. Credit-cards: 5% as part of the original agreement, and there must be notice if the interest rate is to increase.
 7. Congress is currently working hard to freely allow the market-to flow.

Q&A

1. What would you do if you could go back in time, knowing what you know now?
2. \$2.4 trillion, on healthcare alone that we spend on healthcare – By 2017 it will be \$4.2 trillion
 - Every 30 seconds someone files bankruptcy over a healthcare related issue
 - Moved from a healthcare to a sickness society – We do not do enough preventive care: It costs so much more in the emergency room, but it costs a great deal more; a quasi-government sponsored healthcare system – many jobs
- Looking ahead what do you predict? That we will have to spend more on unemployment benefits,

restructure securities/defaults... In the final analysis, the stewardship of President Obama
- You can save four of your five homes if you go to bankruptcy – you can get a restructuring; you cannot protect it in bankruptcy: CLAW back – of all the things that will help with housing: People who bought into securities have greater opportunities at foreclosure than others; if we had this system in foreclosure, there could be a judge to force the services to readjust the terms; no incentive for financial services to restructure,

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM: “Education Equity”

Steve Suits, Vice President, Southern Education Foundation

I. Opening Remarks

1. American Recovery & Reinvestment Acts – More federal money coming into education than EVER in the history of Education; almost twice as much – a \$17B infusion of funds for the South alone, about half of it is to stabilize education budgets – the money goes to Governor's and is to be used for the FY '09, 10, & 11 budgets – the other monies goes to the State Education Departments, and Pell-Grant college students
2. Florida, South Carolina, and Georgia:
 - a. In Florida, there is a provision in the bill that requires the State to match the FY'07 budget for Education – FL has made a request for waivers
 - b. Governor Mark Sanford (R-SC) has taken the position to use the education funds to pay down debt. He wants to take that money and put it down to paying down debts. It makes no sense, his approval ratings went from 75% to 27%. Most school costs are construction, but there are teachers to pay and kids to be educated. The layoff of 10-15k teachers. The best way for a state to increase its revenue is to increase educational achievement. If SC would increase HS graduation rates by (2%) and (1.5% for college), in 5 years, the state would have additional monies (6-12%) more than now.
 - c. \$1.5B in K-12 budgets: left \$178M unspent. The law says to use the money to plug the deficits. He thinks the \$178B should have been used to reduce FY09/10 budget. In 2010, it is an election year, and the Republican legislature produced cutbacks in education and the capital gains tax. Tuition is going to go up. Teachers are going to be laid off, after-school services will be reduced.

II. Education Now

1. Educate the children most affected. Forty-five percent of America students are Latino, Asian, or Black, and it's increasing every year. It is 48% in the South, along with New York, Chicago, and California. There are 46% of students in America, eligible for free/reduced lunch. 54% in the South. America will not achieve its future prosperity, become high achievers, it's that simple. The politics of education unfortunately are not that simple.

III. Education in NOLA- Post Katrina

1. When kids began coming back to NOLA schools,
2. www.southerneducation.org
3. Charter schools walk the fine line of private schools

Q&A Period:

1. There would be a time when you put the number of Southern Black Congressman in a reception hall not a phone-booth
2. The high drop-out rates: Very low achievement is typically found at schools like this.
3. Federal scheme of accountability our only criterion is test scores: hopefully we will do more with drop-outs.
4. High drop-out rates and many corporations are forced to outsource their workforce because the workforce near the corporation is not educated enough for the high-skilled jobs.
5. How can the public get more involved in NOLA public education, when so many people educate

their children in parochial/private school?

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM:

Paul Harrison, Senior Director for Mississippi River and East Coast, Environmental Defense Fund

- I. Crisis brings opportunity
 - A. Hotspot for innovation and technology
 - B. Active part of the Mississippi River that is very dynamic (fluid)
 - C. New Orleans is a lot closer to the water (4 major Hurricanes) that have almost destroyed the city, and wreaked havoc on the city (especially working class and poor).
 - D. We must deal with climate change
 - E. More than ½ of America lives in coastal regions
 - F. Wonderful beginnings with the White House in terms of partnering to ensure rebuilding communities (organizers, engineers)
 - G. Army Corps of Engineers – poisons Cypress trees, and also allowed a passageway for the water that hit the 9th Ward. Currently, in the process of plugging that hole
 - H. Water (over 150M gallons) is treated. Cypress trees – restore water, providing hunting area,
 - I. Put together green jobs – projects to rebuild communities – a self-sustaining set of activities and the quality of life for all is increased
 1. Much different situation when levy's are built among Cypress and other facilities to combat the wind and water of strong storms
 2. \$15B just to bring NOLA levy's to standard
 3. Before Katrina it was difficult to advocate for environmental integration
 4. In 3-5 years, see huge amounts of work to restore: The most threatened ecosystem is NOLA
 5. A project to rebuild inner-harbor line. (\$1B)
 6. In a world where the Army Corps is behind schedule and that they would redistribute some of the projects to the most time-sensitive projects. Almost 20 sq. miles – for the protective buffer of the city is loss each year
 7. The State of Louisiana has reorganized and plans to attend the other federal family members to get this work done
 8. Everyone has to be at the table – dealing with communities, fisheries, coastal regions, etc...

Q&A:

1. Along the entire Gulf and Atlantic Coast, land-loss is an increasing problem. Many problems with mitigation – partnership with community groups where they are able to directly utilize the funds. Technical support smarted most dedicated – resources are not there, and we have a role in bringing funds so those can help most.
2. 32,000 wood-screws in one man's house and how we want FEMA/Homeland Security to help with grants that people are better equipped to withstand these storms
3. Relocating all sorts of infrastructure – gas, pipelines, broadband/fiber-optics:

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM: “Rebuilding New Orleans”

Marcia St. Martin, Marcia St. Martin, Executive Director Sewage & Water Board, New Orleans Mayor's office

- I. Rebuilding activities
 1. Secured the \$10M to build the central wetlands
 - a. Expand treated waste water
 - b. Accidental spill of water: its lush green, beautiful and wildlife

- c. Pre-Katrina: wanted to redirect waste water into the wetland
 - d. Post-Katrina: developed partnerships with environmental groups: Secured \$150M to study the impacts of personal care and pharmaceutical & \$400K to demonstrate that it waters, and another \$10M === will break ground in August/September of this year --- project is \$65M and UP
 - e. OMB/Member of the Army Corps/White House – as new permanent pump stations are built, that these projects are sustainable
 - f. A threat of 61 inches a year of rainfall and/or storm-surge.
 - g. New pump-stations at the 17th Canal Street, Industrial Canal, and London Ave walls
 - h. 80% of city was inundated with water
 - i. Impacted weak points of the levy have been patched, not replaced
 - j. Do not just protect us from a storm-surge and leave us with ineffective levies, remove the levies, and eliminate perilous water levels
2. The Mayor's office will continue to talk with Congress; so far \$850M is allocated. They need over \$3.5B to continue the recovery process.
 3. Wastewater, clean water infrastructure: 2 waste-water treatment plants: Plant was hit by over 18FT of water.
 4. Day 2, power generation system was lost at the water-treatment plants, and was completed October 5th, 2005: About the flow of the OH river per second..

Julie Harris, Interim Director of Intergovernmental Relations, Office of the Mayor

- A. Very indebted to the CBC. Without your assistance (CBC) this would not be possible. Four long years, since the storm to help us out.
- B. A lot of fine things going on in the city, better and bigger than ever. NOLA is a mighty transportation hub.
- C. The energy coasts – pipelines for oil, gas, energy
- D. Emergency Supplemental Bills have been fiercely advocated by House Majority Whip Clyburn.
- E. There is a \$1B deficit of eligible (city infrastructure/roads) for rebuilding
- F. Sewer, water, and drainage – without support. Running a scary with no money, very scary thought.
- G. Catastrophic damage that was suffered – those systems were used to get NOLA through troubled times. Several LOANS taken out by the city.
- H. GOZONE Tax Incentives – After the first year and a half, picking up debris. We need tax incentives extended.
- I. FEMA trailers – Less than 900 trailers are still in use, down from the high of 6000. No place to come back to, it took forever to get trailers here. Trailers were poisoning our people. Formaldehyde – in hot circumstances is especially troublesome. They are still not sure what the long term effects of the trailers are on its citizens.
- J. 3 Most Important Priorities:
 1. Federal: FEMA is a reimbursement program; there are provisions for dollars up front and you get reimbursed. So you invest in the beginning and they match. Over three hundred projects going right now and there is a serious cash-flow problem in the works. That \$1B deficit is important!
 2. Sewage and Water Board: Finding the dollars that are non-FEMA eligible, what was functioning at one point is not functioning anymore. We are not at the point that our entire infrastructure will be rebuilt. 80% of people in the City, who worked, lost their homes.
 3. Just keeping focus on the city. That this realization that this country is not ready for a natural/man-made national disaster. Preparedness is more than what we have traditionally thought about. In a catastrophic situation having resources available to mobilize people, have safe places, etc.

William “Bill” Chrisman, Director of Capitol Projects

- A. Recovery started when President Obama was elected
- B. The city received no money until Obama Administration
- C. General-delay/deny and stall from FEMA: FEMA assessed up to 30% lower than the damage the building actually sustained.
- D. Consequential damages (damages not seen in the first several years) some buildings now have to be reassessed, and/or buildings five years ago are now falling down. Over 300 projects – over 250 projects are currently waiting for the green light. The flood destroyed everything except the library downtown. In the contract to have ground broken by November 15, 2009 for five new libraries.

May 16, 2009

12:00 PM – 1:30 PM: “Rebuilding New Orleans”

Rick Wade, Senior Advisor and Acting Chief of Staff, U.S. Department of Commerce

- A. Wade thinks the Boot camp instated by the institute should be replicated to help educate those looking to work in all agencies.
- B. The Administration is looking to expand the Pell Grant and extend Harlem Children’s Zones.
- C. Working to expand the Second Chance Act to help ex offenders reintegrate into society.
- D. The Department is looking into the possibility of creating a center for women entrepreneurs.
- E. The Department is working to extend Broadband:
 - 1. The Department of Commerce is working with the Department of Agriculture and the FCC to design and implement a \$44B national broadband.
 - 2. Looking to get the broadband maps out before the end of the fiscal year and the plan by the end of the calendar year.
- F. Trade with regard to locations: make what is regarded as lower level jobs as relevant.
- G. Green economy is something we need to pay a lot of attention. He said it is the new economy. Weatherization and solar panels and fuels.
 - 1. More education and delineation as to what a green job is and how it applies to citizens in their daily lives.
 - 2. The connection to what we used to do and the relevance it has today.
- H. The country needs to find a way to make education is cool. Speaking to them in a way that education is their idea and not that of the parent. It will be important to use BET and MTV to reach youth.

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM: “Examining Obama’s Healthcare Agenda”

Congresswoman Donna Christian-Christensen, Member, Committee on Energy & Resources (Subcommittee on Health)

- I. Opening Remarks
 - 1. The congresswoman took what was discussed during the February meeting in South Carolina directly to the President.
 - 2. The house currently does not have a unified healthcare plan, but the senate has some ideas. They are challenged by the Administration to have a healthcare plan by the end of the year.
- II. Healthcare Priorities
 - 1. Provide full funding of Title VII and Title VIII - physician and nursing education and training programs.
 - 2. Protect the interests of African American health care providers and their practices.
 - 3. Strengthen public hospitals, health profession schools, CHC’s and other facilities.
 - 4. Expanding the health workforce.
 - 5. Provide full funding of a national plan with a domestic PEPFAR
 - 6. Strengthening the office of minority health.
 - 7. More service for those who don’t speak English
 - 8. Develop a national strategic plan for HIV/AIDS

9. Health Empowerment zones
10. Not just talk about disease and to education and preventative measures.
11. Strong recommendation to all agencies that every policy program be judged as to how it affects healthcare.

III. CBC Benchmarks

1. Apply equitably to American Indian tribes and the Territories
2. Make elimination of health disparities a central goal
3. Extend to all legal residents
4. Engage communities in planning and implementation of reform
5. Equally include mental and dental health services
6. Create and expand diversity in the health care workforce
7. Protect the interests of African American health care providers and their practices
8. Increase primary care providers, improve reimbursement and foster concept of medical homes
9. Ensure that Health Information Technology (HIT) is universally accessible
10. Increase research that is community based, looks at the causes of disparities and includes minorities in clinical trials.
11. Elevate NCNHDR to an Institute
12. Address the social, ambient and built environmental issues affecting health.

IV. President Obama's Plan

1. Lower costs to make our health care system work for people and businesses – not just insurance companies
 - a. Affordable, accessible coverage options for all:
 - b. Guaranteed Eligibility
 - c. New affordable, accessible health insurance options
 - d. Tax credits for families and small businesses
 - e. Employer contribution
 - f. Require coverage of children
 - g. Expansion of Medicaid and SCHIP
 - h. Flexibility for state plans
2. Promoting prevention & strengthening public health

V. Healthy Americans Act

1. Medicare will go away. All poverty-stricken citizens would be included under this act.
2. Discard the current system. Why do you have two different public plans (one for poor and one for others)?