



The United States Conference of Mayors

Cities Unite America

A Ten-Point Plan for Homeland Economic Security

America's new life with terrorism demands the creation of a new homeland defense system—one that simultaneously ensures public safety, emergency response and economic security. The experts tell us that terrorists will strike again and when they do our nation must be ready. Investments in homeland defense should optimize public safety (terrorism prevention), prepare us to respond to future attacks, and place us in a position to minimize the economic fallout should they occur.

Many American cities are also suffering from the recession, which has caused numerous business closures and left hundreds of thousands of people unemployed. To address these concerns, immediate action must be taken to assist unemployed workers, to spur investment in small businesses and to encourage travel and tourism. Also, tax incentives must be provided to help create jobs and improve critical public facilities.

As we conclude our 70th Winter meeting of the United States Conference of Mayors in New York City we call for bold national leadership. Many of our speakers have referenced the visionary, domestic actions taken by such war time Presidents as Lincoln, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Truman and Eisenhower. We believe once again it is time for our nation to step to the challenge of strengthening our homeland through investment in its people.

The United States Conference of Mayors is therefore announcing today a Cities Unite America tour to galvanize the American people in building grass roots support for a new and comprehensive homeland security defense system to prepare us economically for the 21st century.

As the federal government increases its commitment to homeland security, it must not do so at the expense of key programs that support America's communities and neighborhoods, such as public safety, community development and job training.

To improve public safety and better provide economic security in local communities throughout our nation, the Mayors of America call for the following.

Homeland Security Block Grant

To protect against the threat of future terrorist attacks, we are asking the Administration and Congress for a new flexible homeland security block grant, directly to cities, to fund additional police, fire and emergency response personnel and to pay for training, equipment, and overtime.

Comprehensive Infrastructure Investment Program

Ambassador Rohatyn also called for a comprehensive 10-year \$500 billion infrastructure program, aimed at improving safety, the nation's economic productivity, and education.

We will also call on this task force to consider our national infrastructure investment needs and the financing mechanisms to achieve them.

Transportation Security Investment

The United States Conference of Mayors was the first organization to call for a federalized workforce to screen passengers, luggage and cargo in our airports. Mayors were instrumental in passage of the Transportation Security Act with strong and rigorous security deadlines and requirements to ensure passenger safety, and they must be met. We call on the Administration to:

- Provide full funding to implement the Transportation Security Act
- Give priority to laid-off airline workers in hiring a federalized work force
- Support immediate technological development and placement of bomb detection equipment nationwide, including airport infrastructure cost.
- Support for immediate resources to secure and enhance the passenger and freight rail infrastructure
- Provide immediate resources needed to secure ports and other maritime infrastructure, including harbors, bays, rivers and seaports.

National Rail Defense System

Congress and the Administration should provide immediate and long-term federal funding and policy direction to build a transcontinental, inter-city high-speed rail network throughout the United States. The September 11 terrorist attacks made clear to citizens and policy makers the wisdom of a transportation system that provides travelers alternative choices, including inter-city passenger trains.

Benefit Relief for Unemployed Workers

We call on Congress and the Administration to:

- support immediate extension of federal unemployment benefits and an expansion of eligibility to cover short term, part-time and temporary workers
- support federal funding of health care assistance for unemployed workers, including those who do not have access to COBRA.

- Increase job training funds for laid-off workers, low-skilled workers and youth.

Anti-Recession Tax Incentives

The nation's Mayors call on the Administration and Congress to provide economic stimulus that results in long-term productivity improvements and educational benefits to the American public. We urge that the following actions be taken:

- Authorize Amtrak to issue tax credit bonds to raise capital to develop a high-speed rail system.
- Provide school construction tax credit bonds to help local communities raise the capital needed to repair, expand and modernize public schools.
- Double the amount of tax credits available for investment in low-income housing tax credits.
- Remove limits on private activity bonds used to finance water and wastewater systems.
- Provide tax credits to low and moderate income families to purchase computers to increase technology literacy.

Travel and Tourism

No business sector has been harder hit by the September 11 terrorist attacks than travel and tourism. Many cities rely on revenues derived from conventions and tourism, and thousands of middle income and minimum wage workers have been thrown out of work. The nation must recommit itself to promoting travel and tourism to spur economic growth. To accomplish this:

- Establish a President's Advisory Council on Travel and Tourism with strong local government representation.
- Develop a federally funded travel and tourism initiative at the Commerce Department to promote international travel to the United States.

Small Business

To assist our small businesses, Mayor's call for:

- expansion of federal loans to small businesses that have suffered or are likely to suffer from the September 11 terrorists attacks.
- Allow small businesses to write-off more for their investment in capital improvements.

Counter-Cyclical General Fiscal Assistance

To address the fiscal crisis that many cities are facing in their budgets during this recession and wartime effort, today we are announcing creation of a special task force to develop a federal general fiscal assistance block grant proposal for consideration by the nation's mayors. Ambassador Felix Rohatyn addressed the mayors during this conference and recommended consideration of such an approach.

Investment in New York City

We strongly support Mayor Michael Bloomberg's request for federal assistance to rebuild the City of New York in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks.