



# NEWS The United States Conference of Mayors

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## **Following the State of the Union Address Mayors Unveil a Presidential Agenda for America's Future**

### ***U.S. Mayors '04 Metro Agenda – Keeping America Strong***

**Washington, D.C.** – Today, as nearly 300 of the nation's mayors gather in Washington for the 72<sup>nd</sup> Winter Meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Conference President and Hempstead, NY Mayor James A. Garner, unveiled the ***“U.S. Mayors '04 Presidential Agenda for America's Future”***.

With the Presidential primaries underway and following the State of the Union Address, mayors are introducing a five-point plan outlining key priorities for America's cities. Mayors are calling on all presidential candidates to seriously consider and respond to this Mayors '04 Metro Agenda.

Conference President and Hempstead Mayor James A. Garner said, “Presidential elections are the single greatest opportunity for America to direct its future. We entrust to presidential leadership the health of our democracy and the long-term growth of our economy. This means ***Keeping America Strong***.”

*Keeping America Strong* means keeping America's metro economies strong. Doing so affects every American family's prospects for success, helps to ensure individual opportunity, and enables this country to be a world leader.

America's metro areas, its cities and suburbs, are the engines of our nation's great economy. In the last ten years, U.S. metros have generated 87% of our economic growth, which translates to more than \$3.8 trillion. Our cities generate over 85% of the nation's economic output, labor income and jobs. In the global marketplace, U.S. metros represent 48 of the world's largest 100 economies.

“The sustainable growth of our metro economies is dependent on a President who will work closely with mayors to develop the most innovative and creative policies for the country. America's strength has always been locally driven, in its communities. We do not need a federal government that delivers unfunded mandates. Instead we need true partnership and real results for the American people,” Garner said.

The nation's mayors invite the American public to consider the following agenda as we select our next president. We hope voters will ask tough questions about the future of our country.

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“U.S. Mayors ’04 Presidential Agenda for America’s Future” makes recommendations in five (5) key areas:

· **Homeland Security: Keeping America Safe:**

As a nation, our future requires a strong, comprehensive homeland security system to protect every American community from terrorism.

- Create a new, more productive partnership between the Federal government and cities that cuts through needless bureaucratic delay and funds cities directly based on threat vulnerability assessments.
- Create a new communication and coordination system that links Federal officials with local officials and effectively uses the 600,000 local law enforcement officers already protecting our communities;
- Establish an independent, national commission to evaluate American readiness to prevent and respond to terrorism.

To keep Americans safe, the federal government must renew its commitment to fight both terrorism *and* traditional crime.

- Fight terrorism without abandoning the fight against crime by putting more police officers on the streets.
- Support the local law enforcement grant.
- Completely reform the juvenile justice system.
- Provide drug treatment to every American who needs it.

· **Smart Investment: New Infrastructure for a New Economy:**

Our metro economies need modern infrastructure to secure the nation’s future economic growth, yet the American Society of Civil Engineers gives the vast majority of U.S. infrastructure a failing grade (D or F).

- Build a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Transportation system with ultra-modern high speed rail, transit, bus system with new technology which will link major metro areas, cut the time people spend in traffic, create more jobs, and move goods and services more productively.
- Develop a new, modern infrastructure investment plan, creatively using pension funds, insurance guarantees, infrastructure bonds, and creative public/private partnerships to help finance major projects in U.S. metros.
- Develop a new, innovative energy plan that frees us and our allies from dependence on oil, undercuts the financing of terrorists, and secures our economic future.

· **Jobs for our Future: Keeping America at Work in a Global Economy:**

The federal government must be responsive to the new realities that current and future workers face with shrinking manufacturing jobs, the anemic job recovery, and global competition.

- Develop small business tax incentives that will encourage innovation, create new jobs, and train workers.
- Dramatically improve public schools by forming smaller public high schools, fully funding Head Start, and keeping federal government’s commitment to fund 100% of special education costs, freeing up local resources for public schools.

· **Tax Incentives to Foster Public/Private Partnerships:**

Keeping Metro economies growing also depends on the creation of innovative public/private partnerships to invest wisely in infrastructure and sustainable development projects.

- Provide targeted tax incentives to attract investments in the nation's 600,000 brownfields, to help build low- and moderate-income single and multifamily housing, and to foster private investment in modern infrastructure development including transportation and water projects.

· **Caring for the Health of People: At Home and Abroad:**

America's medical research is the best in the world. Yet disparity of health care among our citizens is dramatic and access to quality health care remains out of reach for many.

- Require universal health care for all children by helping families secure medial coverage through refundable tax credits, the CHIPS program or other means; and guarantee every American family, individual, or small business owner should be guaranteed affordable health care through access to the medical coverage enjoyed by representatives in Congress.
- Spend tax dollars wisely by allowing federal, state and local government authorities to negotiate cheaper drug prices from the pharmaceutical industry.
- Participate or develop a global system of distributing drugs cost-effectively for the millions of lives threatened by global pandemics such as HIV/AIDS.

As we move through the process of selecting our next President, mayors look forward to going back to their cities and engaging with the presidential candidates on these five key issues throughout the upcoming primaries and into the general election.

The entire 5-point plan, "***U.S. Mayors '04 Presidential Agenda for America's Future***", can be found on the U.S. Conference of Mayors website at [usmayors.org](http://usmayors.org).

*The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today, each represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the Mayor.*

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