NEW ZOGBY POLL SHOWS MOST AMERICANS BELIEVE CITIES ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK; ECONOMIC FORECAST CONFIRMS

USCM President Kevin Johnson Releases Poll Results During First-Ever State of the Cities Speech at 83rd Winter Meeting of Nation’s Mayors

Washington, DC—Most Americans believe their city is on the right track and give high marks to local governments for fostering economic growth, creating jobs and providing basic public services, the inaugural edition of a U.S. Conference of Mayors/Zogby poll has found. USCM President and Sacramento (CA) Mayor Kevin Johnson released the poll today during his State of the Cities speech, delivered for the first time in USCM history before nearly 300 of the nation’s mayors at the 83rd annual winter meeting.

Confirming Americans’ views on the state of their cities was an economic forecast, also released today by USCM. The forecast, prepared by IHS Global Insight, projects that all of the nation’s 363 metro areas will see job growth in 2015, the first year this milestone has been reached since the recovery. Forecast data also show that at the start of 2015, 164 metros (45%) had returned to their previous, pre-recession, peak levels of employment. By year-end 2015, 199 metros (55%) will have regained their peak number of jobs. For a listing of all 363 metro areas and their job growth projections, see here: http://usmayors.org/83rdWinterMeeting/media/012115-report-ZogbyReport.pdf

In his State of the Cities speech, Mayor Johnson noted that mayors have been on the “front lines of every challenge,” including pulling cities out of the Great Recession with little help from Washington. On the heels of President Obama’s State of the Union, Mayor Johnson called for a new “federalist compact” to tackle “powerful forces transforming” our country.

“The polling numbers released today clearly show Americans trust their cities and trust their mayors …. (but) powerful forces are transforming (us) …. Globalization is pitting American workers against the world …. Income inequality is eroding the middle class …. Major demographic changes are bringing very different cultures into closer contact, while Baby Boomers are entering retirement age.

“Being a mayor is no longer just about making sure the trash is picked up …. Cities simply cannot be expected to be passive players …. These dynamics need to be turned on their head. We need a new federalist compact that recognizes the areas that require federal and state attention while leveraging what truly drives the prosperity in the nation—our cities and metropolitan areas.”

For a copy of Mayor Johnson’s speech, please visit www.usmayors.org.

John Zogby, founder of the Zogby poll, commented on his polling about government: “We are seeing a shift in trust away from Washington D.C. and toward local leaders, local talent and local businesses. Americans are well into the process of reassessing their relationship with government at all levels, but clearly they place more trust in city and local governments.”

The U.S. Conference of Mayors commissioned Zogby Analytics to conduct a survey of 2,425 voters nationwide (December 19th-22nd) to examine perceptions of their governments on the federal, state and local levels and to offer an evaluation of performance and insights on policy. The poll has a 2% margin of error.

Overall, nearly half of the Americans polled (47%) agreed that their city is on the right track while 32% said their city is on the wrong track. Residents of cities and suburbs of all sizes, as well as across all age groups polled, expressed positive sentiments about their
The poll also measured the priorities voters want mayors to tackle. Improving public safety, fixing local infrastructure, and improving schools ranked as the top three. Not surprisingly, these areas track the priorities of President Obama’s State of the Union and Mayor Johnson’s State of the Cities.

Other key findings include:

- City mayors scored highest among all government officials as who the public trusts to solve their problems and provide new ideas at 37% high trust versus 25% low trust. Governors were next with 33% high trust, but 33% gave scores of low trust.

- Americans polled said they trust the following groups for solutions, new ideas, innovation and economic growth. They gave small business owners a 58% rating of high trust; “young people fresh out of graduate school,” 38%, and mayors, 37%. Those least trusted were your Congressman (26%), White House economists (22%) and Wall Street advisors (17%).

- As for the economy, 41% of respondents believe that their city is creating opportunities for economic growth by building relationships with local businesses and citizens.

- Those Americans surveyed also weighed in on their priorities for the new Congress. Passing the transportation infrastructure bill topped the list at 55%, closely followed by passing the immigration bill at 53%

- Forty six percent of those polled gave a favorable response to their city’s ability to provide basic services like safe and well-maintained roads; adequate transportation and leveraging the latest technologies to improve public services.

- A majority of Americans gave high scores to cities for specific categories relating to an overall quality of life. Fifty-seven percent thought local government was keeping the community clean; 60% liked the way that cities provided parks and recreation; 50% gave high grades for the handling of weather crises; and by a two to one—42% to 23%--margin, voters agreed that cities offered a wide variety of culture and entertainment.

- Local governments were deemed the most trustworthy when respondents were asked for their level of trust for the federal, state and local governments. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being no trust and 5 being the highest trust, local governments did best with a 25% low score and 38% high score. Comparatively, 54% gave the federal government low scores of 1 or 2.

The report can be found here: (insert link) Featured speakers at the annual conference include:

Wednesday, Jan 21: Labor Secretary Tom Perez; Education Secretary Arne Duncan, Housing Secretary Julian Castro; Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz; U.S. Trade Ambassador Michael Froman

Thursday, Jan 22: Vice President Joe Biden; House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi; Homeland Secretary Jeh Johnson; Export-Import Bank Chairman and President Fred Hochberg; House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster; Uber Sr. VP for Policy and Strategy David Plouffe

Friday, January 23: Housing Secretary Julián Castro, Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack, Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, White House Intergovernmental Affairs Dir. Jerry Abramson

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are nearly 1400 such cities in the country today, and each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. Like us on Facebook at facebook.com/usmayors, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/usmayors.

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