



NEWS The United States Conference of Mayors

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U.S. MAYORS STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH FLINT MAYOR KAREN WEAVER AT WINTER LEADERSHIP MEETING

PUSH METRO-FOCUSED AGENDA FOR CITIES

Washington, D.C. – The nation's mayors expressed their solidarity with Flint (MI) Mayor Karen Weaver and the residents of Flint this past weekend pledging to "help Mayor Weaver and the residents Flint get what they need to make them whole again and ensure that the water coming out of their tap is safe."

More than forty mayors gathered in Miami Beach on Friday, February 19th and Saturday, February 20th for The United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) Winter Leadership Meeting, where city leaders, led by Conference President Baltimore (MD) Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, discussed issues critical to the future of America's cities.

At a [press conference](#) during the meeting, the mayors also supported Mayor Weaver's call for state and federal assistance for the residents of Flint.

"We stand in solidarity with our fellow mayor – Flint Mayor Karen Weaver -- in her time of crisis," said Rawlings-Blake. "We know when things happen in any American city, we must support one another because the next crisis could be ours."

She added, "The right to clean water is a basic human right ... a basic service that cities should be able to provide every resident. There is no such thing as 'Republican water' or 'Democratic water' ... this it is not a partisan issue."

During the weekend session, Mayor Weaver updated the mayors on the latest details of the situation in her city. The mayors also received a report from USCM CEO & Executive Director Tom Cochran and Former Atlanta (GA) Mayor Shirley Franklin, who led a USCM fact-finding mission to the city of Flint at the direction of Rawlings-Blake.

Weaver described the support from the Conference of Mayors as immeasurable. "USCM has brought strength to the voices of the residents in Flint. We know that the mayors across the country are with us and that does so much. ... Everyone should have clean, affordable water. ... This is why the infrastructure issue is so important; water and water infrastructure is so often taken for granted in this country because it is not something you see directly. ... What happened in Flint should not happen in any other community. In fact, if you don't learn from us, you have failed."

The mayors also stressed their 'metro' agenda – [The 2016 Mayors' Compact for a Better America: A Call to Action](#) -- which urges the Presidential candidates and Congress to prioritize city-focused issues based on the idea of INVEST and PROTECT. **Developing healthy, safe, affordable and modern water and wastewater systems** is one of the key items on the Mayors' agenda.

With more than 80% of people in the United States living in the nation's cities and metropolitan areas, the mayors believe the Presidential debates should be driven by issues that matter most to people living in cities – real issues like affordable housing, transportation, job creation, education, health care, child-care and the state of our water systems and pipes. “We want those who wish to lead our nation to understand the importance of cities and their metropolitan areas. And we believe the Presidential Campaign is an ideal time to change the discussion from political rhetoric to identifying the things we can do to help the citizens we serve,” said Rawlings-Blake.

Oklahoma City (OK) Mayor Cornett, Vice President of the Conference underscored the same concerns. “Collectively, we are frustrated by the conversations taking place on the political campaign. We don't see the real issues affecting America being addressed by the candidates. ... We hope when we gather after the election with a new President in place, the partisanship that has dominated the American landscape for the past decade or so is gone.”

New Orleans (LA) Mayor Mitch Landrieu, Conference Second Vice President echoed the sentiment. “The Presidential Candidates in many ways are talking past issues that we confront on a day-to-day basis. Mayors spend a lot of time talking about real issues because we don't have the time to get stuck on ideology. The mayors of America are calling on all the Presidential candidates to focus on the issues that really matter to the American citizens. ... The occurrences in Flint are the canary in the cold mine. [We] can either pay now or pay later. Unfortunately, the later costs a lot more.”

Miami Beach (FL) Mayor Philip Levine explained the importance of the occasion held in his city and its timing. “As everybody knows, mayors get things done. ... We are in a Presidential election year and, of course, we want our voices heard.”

Video of the mayors' press conference can be found at www.usmayors.org