



Cities on a Hill

NEWSLETTER

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CCI Hosts

Mayors' Education Summit

Mayors Support Accountability, Choice

The education policy debate is increasingly coalescing around more alternatives for parents. That was strikingly evident at the Center for Civic Innovation's Mayors' Education Summit held in Washington on October 26th.

The event gathered together several education policy experts—including the Manhattan Institute's Chester Finn and Floyd Flake—with the mayors of seven U.S. cities:

Indianapolis' Stephen Goldsmith (also CCI's Chairman); Milwaukee's John Norquist; Jersey City's Bret Schundler; Nashville's Phil Bredesen; St. Paul, Minnesota's Norm Coleman; Raleigh, North Carolina's Tom Fetzter; and Washington, D.C.'s Anthony Williams, who gave the keynote address. (Mayors Goldsmith, Bredesen and Fetzter have each left office since the Summit).



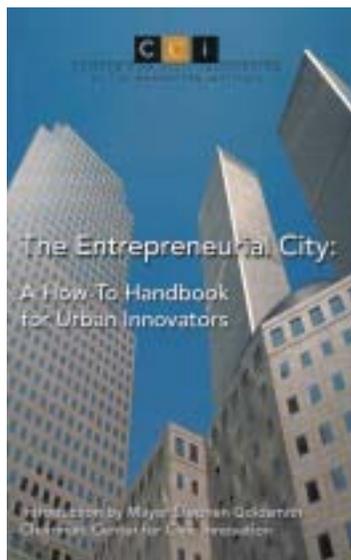
D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams offers his thoughts on education reform in Washington.

As with any group so large and diverse, there were plenty of opinions and more than a little disagreement. But much more newsworthy—and exciting—were the broad areas of agreement that united the mayors and the other panelists. These can be summarized under two broad headings:

(cont'd on page 2)

CCI Publishes *The Entrepreneurial City*

A "How-To" Policy Book Written By Mayors, For Mayors



The Center for Civic Innovation is proud to announce the publication of *The Entrepreneurial City: A How-To Handbook for Urban Innovators*.

The first collection of its kind, *The Entrepreneurial City* brings together in one small volume the thinking of the nation's most successful mayors and innovative thinkers on urban affairs. All of the most important issues facing today's city and local leaders—from crime, to schools, to budgeting and many more—are treated in brief compass, in an easy to read and understand format. For each issue, a series of specific ideas—explained by officials who have put them into practice—is presented alongside case studies that illustrate their effectiveness. Together, these recommendations provide a comprehensive, battle-tested agenda mayors can quickly implement to improve their city's quality of life.

The Entrepreneurial City features essays by New York's Rudy Giuliani on cutting crime and improving quality of life, Chicago's Richard Daley on improving public schools, Indianapolis' Stephen Goldsmith on privatization, Jersey City's Bret Schundler on economic development, and Cleveland's Michael White on revitalizing housing for the poor.

In addition to entries by these and other notable mayors, *The Entrepreneurial City* also includes submissions by such experts as Manhattan Institute Senior Fellow Chester Finn on education, MI Senior Fellow John DiIulio on civil society and mediating institutions, and the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise's Robert Woodson on the effectiveness of private, faith-based programs.

Each section also includes a list of contacts—people in government, academia, and the think tank world—knowledgeable about the specific policies outlined. Copies can be ordered for \$10 apiece from CCI's website (www.manhattan-institute.org).



Accountability is Essential

Hold Educators Accountable

Just as with any business, the people who run schools should be required to meet clear standards and should face significant consequences for failure. For a variety of reasons—many of them structural—this is rarely the case today. What is needed is clear-cut “top down” accountability—wherein teachers are accountable to principals, principals to superintendents, and superintendents to elected officials. Ideally, such a system would combine “retail” freedom to innovate at the school and district levels with “wholesale” standards of achievement enforced at the higher (i.e., city, county and state) levels. Where this has been tried, it has been proven to lead to greater energy and innovation in school reform efforts and to better schools.

Put Mayors in Charge

In most U.S. cities, mayors have very little direct control over general education policy, contract negotiations or day-to-day operations. Yet because they are—rightly—perceived as their city’s chief executive, they are often held accountable by voters for low-performing schools. Moreover, they realize that a healthy city requires an educated populace. As Mayor Coleman of St. Paul put it, “the future prospects of our cities, our cities’ children, depend upon the ability of cities to innovate and become performance-based centers of excellence in education. Mayors get this. Mayors understand this.”

But mayors are frustrated with their institutional inability to have much of a direct impact on school policy. The mayors at our summit expressed great enthusiasm for the recent reforms put in place in Chicago. There, thanks in part to Mayor Daley’s leadership, the old inefficient and unaccountable system has been replaced by a city agency accountable directly to the mayor—and, by extension, voters and parents. Already, the Chicago schools—once considered the worst in the nation—are making great strides.



More Choice For Parents

Ideas not long ago on the fringe of the education debate—like charter schools and vouchers—are fast gaining acceptance in wide and diverse quarters. Their common thread is the belief that more alternatives for parents will better serve children and also place needed pressure on the system for reform.

Charter Schools

The first charter school in America opened only in 1991. Less than 10 years later, there are now more than 1,700 throughout the country. All of them are different from each other of course. But they are similar in one vital respect—they are vastly different from traditional, over-regulated conventional public schools. More differences mean more alternatives for parents.



More differences also mean more innovation and more experimentation. The last several decades have taught that monolithic instruction methods prescribed by a central bureaucracy do not improve education. If anything, they stymie innovation and lead to inertia. Charter schools, with their total freedom from bureaucratic control, are laboratories for what works. That kind of “retail” freedom, when coupled with a “wholesale” system of accountability for results, promotes positive change and gives parents options.

Vouchers

Vouchers are still the most controversial education reform idea out there. But mayors like Milwaukee’s John Norquist and Jersey City’s Bret Schundler are increasingly supportive because they believe vouchers will lead to better education for all students.

Vouchers open up dozens of alternatives in a way that even charter schools really cannot. But we should not think of these ideas as being in competition—they are not. They are complementary. More alternatives being available means more innovation and experimentation for us to draw from, and more competition pressuring the education system to reform.

Clearly, a consensus is forming around key reform ideas. And it is a sure sign of progress when that consensus starts to include elected officials rather than just intellectuals and experts.



From top to bottom: Mayor John Norquist, Mayor Bret Schundler, Children’s Scholarship Fund President Darla Romfo and Joe Viteritti explain why school vouchers and market competition can improve urban education.



From left to right: Rev. Floyd Flake, Roger Harris, Steve Klinsky, Mayor Norm Coleman and Bruno Manno discuss the charter school revolution.



MI Senior Fellow Chester Finn, Mayor Tom Fetzner and former Mayor Phil Bredesen share thoughts on how mayors can influence education in their cities.

“Broken Windows”

Probation:

The Next Step in the War on Crime

Many factors have contributed to the national reduction in crime, but better, more innovative policing is certainly the most important. Perhaps the most innovative and effective strategy of all is “broken windows” policing, which is based on the theory that enforcing the laws against low level crimes and disorder prevents more serious crime as well as the disintegration of neighborhoods.

This past summer, the Center for Civic Innovation published a major study entitled “Broken Windows” Probation: The Next Step in Fighting Crime, which explores how the same theory could improve the practice of probation.

These key facts show why reforming probation is so important:

- On any given day, more than three million people on probation are living in communities throughout the United States—that amounts to just under 60 percent of all offenders (people either incarcerated or under some form of supervision by the justice system);
- More than half of those on probation have been convicted of felonies;
- Roughly two-thirds of probationers commit more crimes—many of them serious and/or violent—within three years of receiving probation;
- At least half of all probationers do not comply with the terms of their probation, such as getting substance abuse treatment or performing community service;
- About 10 percent do not stay in contact with the system at all, and very little effort is made to apprehend them.

The bottom line, our authors found, is that in most cases probation is not working. It does not rehabilitate offenders, its record at preventing recidivism is shaky at best, and it often fails to protect the public.

Still, the authors of the study insist that probation is necessary because of the extraordinary costs of dealing with three million probationers through other means, such as incarceration. And they lay out a clear agenda for reform.

Make Enforcement Swift and Sure

Probationers who know they can get away with violating the terms of their sentences—

as is so often the case now—will violate them. This permissiveness must stop. All conditions of a probation sentence must be enforced, and all violations must be punished quickly. Probation programs that are strictly enforced are proven to be more successful.

Supervise Probationers in the Neighborhood, not the Office

All too often today, a probationer’s contact with his probation officer amounts to no more than a few minutes a month, in the officer’s office—if, that is, the probationer bothers to show up at all. But firsthand knowledge of where offenders live, their families, and their environments are crucial to meaningful supervision. So is supervision that takes place outside regular office hours. These measures may require extra effort and cost a little more, but case studies of agencies that have tried them show that the benefits more than repay the expense.

Allocate Resources More Rationally

Probation officers must spend more time supervising offenders who are most at risk of violating their conditions of supervision and those whose offenses or affiliations pose a public safety risk (e.g., sex offenders, gang members, drug dealers, those with histories of violence). This requires thorough knowledge of offenders’ records gleaned from investigation reports, juvenile records, psychological evaluations and risk/needs assessments.

Probation officers should also be assigned geographically to small areas rather than to cover offenders throughout a whole city or county. This will maximize the amount of time officers can spend on actual supervision, and also help them get to know the communities that they serve.



MI Senior Fellow Carlos Medina and Commissioner Bratton talk about their joint efforts to bring “broken windows” policing to Latin American cities.



MI Senior Fellow John DiIulio and former New York City Police Commissioner Bill Bratton discuss “broken windows” probation reform.

Develop Partners in the Community

Probationers are in the community 24 hours a day. But they only have contact with probation officials a few times a month at most. Thus, developing partnerships with neighborhood groups, schools, businesses and churches—as well as human service, treatment and nonprofit agencies—is key to successful probation strategies. The model partnership is Boston’s Ten Point Coalition in which Rev. Eugene Rivers and many other Boston-area ministers work together with the probation department to reduce crime and change the lives of probationers.

Establish Performance Based Incentives and Hold Officers Accountable

In New York, programs like Compstat—which provide up-to-the-minute crime statistics to police commanders—allow for the timely and precise deployment of resources. A streamlined management structure rewards commanders for reducing crime within their commands—and holds them accountable if they do not. These initiatives can and should be applied to probation. The paramount outcome for probation is public safety. Probation departments and those who run them should be judged on how well they deliver this outcome.

Probation is the weak link in today’s criminal justice system, one that desperately needs to be reformed. This report shows that effective reforms can be accomplished quickly and at a fraction of the cost of hiring more cops or building new prisons. No other law enforcement effort offers such a great potential return in increasing public safety with so little investment of new resources.

How Urban Innovators Tackle Crime and Education

A Message from CCI Chairman

Stephen Goldsmith

This issue of *Cities on a Hill* focuses on two important issues: education reform and crime reduction.

Education reform is on everyone's lips these days, not always for the best of reasons. The fact is, our cities' public schools are largely failing our kids, and no one can deny it anymore. The good news is that elected officials and reformers are working together to fix these schools in a consensus-building way that would have seemed impossible just a few short years ago.

In October, CCI held a Mayors' Education Summit, bringing together the mayors of seven cities with leading education experts to discuss what is being done—and what must be done in the future—to improve public education. It was heartening to see such a diverse group of mayors—from the South, the Northeast, and the Midwest; Democrats and



CCI's Chairman, Stephen Goldsmith.

Republicans; some black, some white—agree so wholeheartedly on a core set of principles, like instilling accountability and providing more alternatives for parents. And it was fascinating to watch as the black Democratic Mayor of Washington and the white Republican Mayor of Jersey City debated the merits of charter schools versus vouchers, taking sides you would not expect based on a purely partisan analysis of the issue. Clearly, the old dichotomies are crumbling away.

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Our cities have become much safer over the past few years, thanks largely to more effective and more innovative policing. But they can be made safer still by applying these same methods to other aspects of law enforcement. Probation is now emerging as the next frontier in criminal justice reform. No other effort we can make offers as much promise for improving public safety in our cities at so little cost. CCI has made a decisive contribution to understanding how probation can be improved with its report "*Broken Windows*" Probation. Great gains can be had from overhauling this under-appreciated arm of the criminal justice system, and we expect that you will be hearing a lot more about this effort in the months to come.

I also want to mention CCI's new book, *The Entrepreneurial City: A How-To Handbook for Urban Innovators*. It is exactly what the title suggests: a guide to the best policies and practices with proven track records. Cities continue to be the nation's most exciting laboratories of effective reform. If you want to know what new ideas are being tried and what is working, look no further. This brings it all together in one volume.