



The United States Conference of Mayors

1620 Eye Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20006
Phone (202) 293-7330 • Fax (202) 293-2352
E-mail: info@usmayors.org URL: usmayors.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Wednesday, February 24, 2010

Contact: Elena Temple
202-309-4906/etemple@usmayors.org
Carlos Vogel
202-257-9797/cvogel@usmayors.org

U.S. MAYORS PUSH FOR URGENT ACTION ON BROAD FEDERAL JOBS BILL

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Conference of Mayors President Burnsville, MN Mayor Elizabeth Kautz today is leading a bipartisan delegation of more than thirty U.S. mayors in meetings with federal lawmakers on Capitol Hill to encourage them to put aside partisan differences and quickly pass a comprehensive jobs bill that puts Americans back to work and invests in Main Street metropolitan economies, where joblessness is concentrated.

In a press conference today prior to their Hill meetings, mayors highlighted the growing unemployment numbers in their individual cities – 13.5 percent in Los Angeles, CA; 10.6 percent in Philadelphia; 14.9 percent in Providence, RI and 13 percent in Trenton, NJ -- and pressed for a sense of urgency on Capitol Hill.

“Mayors deal face-to-face with unemployed citizens because we see these people everywhere – in coffee shops, grocery stores, beauty salons and barber shops. And they all tell us the same thing – all they want is a good, dependable job so they can support their families,” said Kautz.

These unemployment rates will continue to plague our cities for years to come if we don’t act now,” Kautz continued citing economic forecasts by Global Insight that show by 2011, over 100 metropolitan areas will still have an unemployment rate higher than ten percent.

Global Insight reports also show that unless more aggressive action is taken to create jobs, by the end of 2011 the Los Angeles metro area (39 percent of California’s economy) is projected to have a 9.6% unemployment rate; Providence metro area (47% of Rhode Island’s economy) is projected to have an 11.4% unemployment rate; and Akron (28% of Ohio’s economy) will have an 11.1 % unemployment rate.

“These persistently high unemployment rate projections are extremely sobering and give us grave concern for the unemployed,” commented Kautz. “Mayors are holding the nation together by making impossible decisions everyday, and we have made cuts to the point where only bone is left. This year will be one of the toughest for local budgets with cities facing severe shortfalls and even more employee layoffs.”

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, who is Vice President of the Mayors’ organization added, “Like other cities around the country, Los Angeles is experiencing its own financial difficulties and

like families all over America, we have been forced to refocus our priorities and make difficult decisions, including laying people off. These are not easy decisions, but they are necessary to restore the city's financial health."

Kautz recognized the Senate jobs bill introduced by Senator Reid (D-NV) as a first step saying, "While mayors are pleased that the Senate has agreed to move forward with a modest tax bill to help small businesses hire new workers and create new jobs, no one should be under the illusion that this bill alone can address the nation's unemployment problem."

Last month, more than 200 of the nation's mayors came to Washington, D.C. to advocate their 2010 Metro Agenda for America as a means to job creation. The Metro Agenda prioritizes direct fiscal assistance to cities, block grants for green jobs, investments in neighborhoods through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), COPS grants for public safety jobs, summer jobs for young people and targeted transportation projects for infrastructure jobs.

The nation's mayors are pleased the House passed a jobs bill last December that includes many of their Metro Agenda priorities, and are calling on the Senate to act on the House bill. Mayors are also working with leaders in the House of Representatives, including Education Chairman George Miller (CA) on a proposal, to be introduced soon, that responds to the needs of MainStreet with funding for job creation and job retention in cities.

Noting the bipartisan group of mayors gathered from both large and small cities, Kautz said, "We were all here in Washington last month, we are all here now, and we will keep coming to our nation's capital until a jobs bill is passed. We hope that Congress will follow the mayors' example of working together to address the employment needs of America's people. And we also hope Congress shares our sense of urgency to move quickly to help American families who are struggling."

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 city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. More information about the Conference is available at usmayors.org <<http://usmayors.org>> .

PARTICIPATING MAYORS:

Mayor Elizabeth Kautz, Burnsville, MN
Mayor Ralph Becker, Salt Lake City, UT
Mayor Christian Bollwage, Elizabeth, NJ
Mayor James Brainard, Carmel, Indiana
Mayor Christopher Cabaldon, West Sacramento, CA
Mayor David Cicilline, Providence, RI
Mayor Robert Cluck, Arlington, TX
Mayor Michael Coleman, Columbus, OH
Mayor Joy Cooper, Hallandale Beach, FL
Mayor Mick Cornett, Oklahoma City, OK
Mayor Frank Cownie, Des Moines, IA
Mayor Robert Duffy, Rochester, NY

Mayor Michael Gin, Redondo Beach, CA
Mayor Mufi Hannemann, Honolulu, HI
Mayor Patrick Hays, North Little Rock, AR
Mayor Darwin Hindman, Columbia, MO
Mayor Jennifer Hosterman, Pleasanton, CA
Mayor Harvey Johnson, Jr., Jackson, MS
Mayor Ron Littlefield, Chattanooga, TN
Mayor Mark Mallory, Cincinnati, OH
Mayor John Marks, Tallahassee, FL
Mayor Arlene Mulder, Arlington Heights, IL
Mayor Michael Nutter, Philadelphia, PA
Mayor Frank Ortis, Pembroke Pines, FL
Mayor Douglas Palmer, Trenton, NJ
Mayor Donald Plusquellic, Akron, OH
Mayor David Pope, Oak Park, IL
Mayor Miguel Pulido, Santa Ana, CA
Mayor Jim Schmitt, Green Bay, WI
Mayor Brian Stratton, Schenectady, NY
Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Los Angeles, CA
Mayor Brian Wahler, Piscataway, NJ
Mayor Elaine Walker, Bowling Green, KY

###

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.