

United States of America
White House Faith-Based and Community Initiative
Innovations in Effective Compassion Conference

LUNCHEON KEYNOTE

GOVERNOR CAMACHO: Well, good afternoon. And, Jay, thank you so much for the kind introduction. As mentioned, my name is Felix Camacho. I am the Governor of the Territory of Guam. I am sure many of you, I hope some of you, do know of it. (Laughter.)

We are quite far away. We are the western-most territory of the United States. It took seven hours from Guam to Honolulu and then another five hours from Honolulu to the West Coast. Actually, we flew from Honolulu or Kauai to Chicago and then down in here. So you can imagine it has taken a whole day to get here. Jay, thank you so much. (Applause.)

I think it is significant to know that not only in the continental United States but its territories, inclusive of Guam, there is also the Northern Marianas and then the rest of what's called Micronesia. If you spread out the islands, it's larger than the contiguous United States. But most of it is ocean. (Laughter.)

So you can see the extent of faith-based and community initiatives reaches out into Asia Pacific. Now, everything that we have seen and heard over the past two days has pointed definitively in a single direction. Government is most effective in addressing human need when it welcomes every effective partner, faith-based and secular, large and small. It is most effective when it taps into and multiplies the ingenuity of social entrepreneurs when it harnesses the passion of dedicated volunteers and the compassion of neighbors serving neighbors.

Looking back over the past seven years of President Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative, the results have been impressive: nearly 90,000 children of prisoners matched with caring mentors; ex-offenders returning to prison at rates less than half the national average; 200-plus thousand adults or addicts helped towards recovery through thousands of faith-based and other community organizations, many partnering with government for the first time ever; major reductions in the number of homeless veterans and chronic homelessness overall; millions of AIDS victims in Africa restored to health and vigor. This demonstrates what can occur when dedicated nonprofit organizations are given a central role in national efforts to solve the great human needs of our day.

Let me propose that I believe that what lies ahead will be even more exciting than what has already been achieved. Let me give you three reasons for that. First, a tremendous foundation has been laid for the future expansion. We now have a broad range of proven tools to use that enable the government to tap into the unique strengths of grass roots nonprofit organizations: intermediary grants, vouchers, beneficiary

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choice contracting, Web-based networks. We also have clear constitutional guidelines for government partnerships with faith-based groups so that can become or welcomed as full and equal allies in this vital work. And pioneers do the hard work. They have gone, and they have got to cut down the trees, break the soil, and learn what grows well and what doesn't. Now that much of the pioneering work is done, we can build far more quickly, benefitting from the testing and learning successes and failures that have come before. Second is the vision of the faith-based and community initiatives is well-aligned with the future we all knew was coming. Whether in commerce, government, education, or charity, the future isn't one of centrally designed command and control systems. As we have heard from Steve Goldsmith this morning, it is by network. Problem-solving in the past brought together a handful of experts in capital city to design programs. Problem-solving of the future taps the brightest and most passionate people from across the country and does it in ways that are well fit to each unique situation they address. That approach is at the heart of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative vision. And, third, the American people stand ready to help us in this effort.

Giving to America's charities hit an all-time high last year, topping \$300 billion for the first time. Volunteerism is at historic heights as well. And all across the nation, innovative source entrepreneurs are bringing new solutions to age-old problems. So this future is not merely or even primarily a single national one, but, rather, it is a vision that will be owned and multiplied by leaders at every level. It will find unique forward-leaning expressions in cities, counties, states, and territories. It is governors, mayors, and countless others embracing the Faith-Based and Community Initiative fully, as it really is a critical and effective strategy for solving real world problems. Now, this portrait of the future I am painting is not merely prophetic. It is already happening. Today 35 governors have Faith-Based and Community Initiative offices or liaisons of their own. This includes 18 Democrats and 17 Republicans. It is clear that this vision transcends politics in a way that very few things can today. And today I am proud as Governor of Guam that I have established a Faith-Based and Community Initiative on Guam. (Applause.)

And, as with the federal initiative, it will be focused, first and foremost, on solving some of the most pressing issues facing the people of Guam and Micronesia. As President Bush describes, it will be a determined attack on need. And I feel it is important that we establish this in the Territory of Guam because if I may just share with you what is happening, imagine we have an island in the middle of the Pacific that is 210 square miles. We have about 170,000 people living there. And the Third Marine Expeditionary Force from Okinawa is moving to Guam. That means we will have a 2 percent increase in our population in a

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mere 6 years. That means the social impact, the infrastructure impact, and the way of life as we know it as islanders will change dramatically. We call ourselves the tip of the spear for defense of America in the Pacific. Any hot spot that happens in Asia, a quick response, military response, to that will come from Guam. We have B-1, B-52 bombers, fighters, submarines, nuclear attack. And many ports of call come through our island. So we are at the forefront of the defense of this nation. But our lives will change. And I know that as a government that depends on tourism as its main economic engine, there is no way that we can financially take care of all the social problems that we face. But by partnering with faith-based and community initiatives or organizations, we can do it together. And the key is that: partnering. And so as I close, I want to say that, as I know it, faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. (Applause.)

Thank you. And hope is competent expectancy. And to all of you, I have to say that all of you have the ability as individuals and as organizations to do whatever you need to do. In your faith and in your hope, you can overcome every trial and accomplish things you never thought possible. And I ask that you never shrink in fear when opportunities or even obstacles come your way. With an attitude of faith and expectancy, you can do great things. And you can bless and you continue to bless others with your good work. You have, each one of you have, a servant's heart that looks for ways to meet other people's needs. And I am talking about people in need, in dire need. All of you are transforming lives from the inside out as you touch the hearts and minds of these people in need. And so I ask, let us not become weary in doing good for at the proper time, we will reap a harvest if we never give up. Thank you and God bless. (Applause.)

MODERATOR HEIN: Thank you so much, Governor.