

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

MR. MEDEFIND: ... It is now my great privilege to introduce a man who has earned a reputation as one of America's great social innovators, both inside of government and out. He's worked and served and led in think tanks in Washington, D.C., but also worked in federal government, state government, help engage and lead welfare reform efforts in the states, started the Sagamore Institute and led that for many years, but now he leads the President's Faith- Based and Community Initiative. And this man brings together what I was talking about earlier, both the burden and the hope. He's an individual who feels that burden for the needs of Americans, the needs of the world and yet at the same time applies a very, very sharp mind to those problems in ways that frequently brings solutions that no one else would have thought of. It's my privilege to introduce the Director of the White House Office of Faith- Based and Community Initiatives, Jay Hein. (Applause.)

MR. HEIN: Good morning. It's a delight to be in your company today. I could be the most popular man in this room if I just had Nikki come right back up here and I sat down, I put these notes away. (Applause.) You heard Jedd make reference to her story, that was inspiration enough, but the gift you have in those vocal chords and in your demeanor, reminds us why we're here because today is a hopeful day. Today is a historic day. It was seven and a half years ago that the President of the United States said that the best of America can be found in the compassion of America. And he started something called the Faith-Based and Community Initiative which is not a Washington, D.C. thing. We're your servants. It's a community thing. And that's why we are so delighted this many years later to look at a room that's at capacity. It's going to be over capacity when the big guy gets here at lunch, but 1500 registrants to this conference.

Some may think Faith-Based and Community Initiative, you don't read about it a lot in the newspapers. It's an old idea. It's something that was started pre-9/11, way in the early part of the Administration. Is it relevant? Well, your participation today shows just how relevant it is because the needs that are resonant in your community, homelessness and hunger, and the drop out crisis, demand the best of us. And so you showed up. What we'll do is our best to inspire you and hopefully equip you to go back and do more. But today is a bit of a look backwards, but it's a longer look forward to see what we might be able to accomplish together.

So that's a long way of saying thank you, Nikki, for personifying our mission and thank each of you for participating with us, not only in this conference, but day to day in your service to your neighbors. It's exciting to be in Washington, D.C. Jedd mentioned you hail from all 50 states and indeed the initiative is a

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50 states story. It's always fun to come to Washington. The monuments are grand. We're here up in the Northwest part of the City. Hopefully, you can get downtown and see the monuments and the marble with those great words engraved in the walls that talk about the uniqueness of the America experiment, a democracy that is so uniquely American. But oftentimes what happens in those grand buildings, the Capitol, and other officialdom in Washington, D.C. can be a bit sterile. We talk about policy. We talk about statistics. We talk about funding. And all of those things are important because hopefully, in all of our work here in Washington, we do create a better environment for you, but indeed, as I said earlier, the work is done in communities.

And the President understood that in 2001. He was inaugurated for the first time and he had these words to say: "Compassion is the work of a nation, not just government. It is more than the calling of politicians. It is the calling of citizens. It is citizens who turn mean streets into good neighborhoods. It is citizens who turn cold cities into real communities." And so nine days after he said those words on the Capitol steps when he was inaugurated as President, he started the Faith-Based and Community Initiative by signing the very first Executive Orders of his Presidency and he created a White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and then he created centers for faith-based and community initiatives, now 11 federal agencies and you will hear from them today. (Applause.) Thank you. Thank you.

It's a big deal because as Jedd mentioned, we've changed the way we do business in this town and we've changed the orientation. The President said when we see human need, we will respond. That's the first order of business. We need to be aware of the needs around us, but government, as big and as powerful as it is, we will look first to faith-based and community groups to solve those problems. We know that you are the first responders to crisis anyway. We know that you are the last responders. You stay in the fight. So it is a rational point for us, you know, what can we do to lift up your arms. How can we leverage what is the best of government? We can convene, look at us today, we set the agenda, we set the policies, we do have a lot of money to put out, and if we can do so artfully to follow the contours of your work, the personal and the caring touch that you offer, then we will reach farther together.

You will hear today so much about what our efforts look like. You will hear from the Cabinet Secretaries that run those centers, at least a handful of them. You'll hear from the President of the United States, who will give us a landscape view of just how much has been accomplished and just how hard we're trying to reshape government on your behalf. But then you will also hear from you. You'll hear from social entrepreneurs, who are getting it done, and innovators, who we're trying to learn from and whose

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success we're trying to replicate. And then as I said earlier, we'll consider together just how much more we have to do. I also mentioned, you know, this is a story that doesn't resonate very much in the media, does it.

We hear about the Church- State debate often in the national conversation and that's an important part of the conversation. We work very hard in this administration to find the right balance to follow the constitutional lines of protecting each of us in our free exercise of religion. President Bush believes deeply that private faith is an inherent right. We should have a free exercise to be a faithful people. He often says that people of faith, of different faiths or not faith at all are equally citizen. They're equally American, but it is a right of Americans to have the ability to practice our faith, and that's inherent in the first amendment of the Constitution. The President also knows that private faith has public value when it translates into loving a neighbor as oneself. But we also understand the other side of the first amendment equation, which is that government won't be in the business of picking a religion for the people. We won't establish a church. And so, finding that fine balance is an important part of our work. But too often, that's the part of the story that resonates in the media, sort of the controversy side of it or maybe a political side to it.

I get questions a lot these days, what will Senator Obama do? What will Senator McCain do with this initiative? And I have answers to that that are hopeful answers. Both of them speak very favorably about the Faith-based and Community Initiative.

While that garners a lot of media attention, that too is not the majority of the story. The majority of the story is a service story. It's an innovation story. It's a reform story. And again, our agenda is just jam packed with chapters of that story for you. We have 200 speakers who will not all be at the podium, so I don't want you to feel weary on the front end. You get to pick most of them in your workshops according to your particular needs, but we have 200 speakers. We have 1,500 of you who have registered. This is a big and enlarging story, and I don't know what kind of press clip we'll get after today's session. And to be candid, that's not our interest. Our interest is in inspiring you and equipping you.

What I would like to do, as I've mentioned, you're going to hear a lot of particulars from the Cabinet Members and the President and others. What I would like to do is just now get a couple of quick high notes before we turn our attention to the Cabinet Member portion of the program. And first, I would like to talk a bit about money. I am announcing today that we have just analyzed the results of the fiscal year 2007 Federal Grant Competitions. All the federal agencies in Washington, Education, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, that are associated with this initiative, of course, hold grant competitions to deliver

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dollars for the services according to their program needs. We've taken the time to study those grant competitions to find out who is winning the dollars, which is the first time that we're aware of that government has been that intentional at trying to understand the contours of government and nonprofit sector partnerships. And the headline that I will share with you is that in fiscal year 2007, the federal government invested \$15.3 billion to faith-based and community groups across the country. That's a big number. That's a 3.9 percent - (Applause.) That's a 3.9 percent over fiscal year 2006. It includes \$2.2 billion to faith-based non-profits, and the \$2.2 billion to faith-based groups also are joined with a 20,000 unit number. That's how many groups win these grants. So those are big numbers.

They maybe don't resonate deeply with you, but at a broad level, it says that the federal government is a major investor in the nonprofit sector and we have reports for you that we will be distributing throughout this conference that show state by state where those grants reside, so we're beginning a new and more dynamic conversation with Governors about how their nonprofits and their states are winning these competitions and that will enliven their interest in you, I think, because they'll find out you're doing after school services and housing services and so many other pursuits that are agenda items on their desks, so we're creating a new understanding, but we also need to acknowledge that we're not the primary investor in the nonprofit sector. Those are big numbers I just talked about, billions of dollars.

But Giving USA is a research organization that just released a report last year that said for the first time in history, private dollars, private philanthropy, private giving amounted to more than \$300 billion for the very first time in history and of those dollars, \$229 billion, the majority of the philanthropy in America is done by you, by individuals. And that also speaks to the heart of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative because it isn't all about government funding. It's all about more funding and more innovation to solve greater problems. David Eisner is here. You'll hear from him tomorrow. He's the head of the Corporation for National and Community Service and tomorrow, after hearing today a lot about government reform and how the federal government has organized itself to serve you better, tomorrow we're going to talk about social entrepreneurship and this marketplace of volunteerism and philanthropy and private strategies because it's all one big thing. If we believe need outpaces supply, that social need is greater than that which we've organized to respond to it, we need the best of all of us and we need public dollars spent wisely and we need private dollars spend effectively and we need to leverage the two. But those are big abstract concepts.

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Something else we'll present to you today, some faces of this initiative. We held an awards competition called Portraits of Compassion and those tens of thousands of partnerships that I've mentioned where nonprofits are winning federal grant competitions. We opened up a creative competition to them and we said if you've gotten a grant since 2001 in this Administration, we'd like you to submit a three-minute video that puts a face on this work. And we had entries from all over the country. You're going to get to see the winners today. I should note briefly how we got that done. Health and Human Services organized this competition for us. We used technology that I don't think I could ask my kids this, I don't know this factually, but I don't think this technology existed in 2001. We asked them to upload, I think is the right term, on iTunes and Google video and I better look at my notes, YouTube and MySpace. (Applause.) They did. You did. And so today, you're going to meet via video the domestic winner and you're going to meet the international winner. And then we're going to use a video to help introduce the President and it's going to put a face on those like Nikki who are really leading this initiative. But we also have something else I want to draw your attention to and that's a website.

Also with gratitude to Ben O'Dell and his colleagues at Health and Human Services under Secretary Leavitt's leadership, they're hosting a website for us, sort of patterned and branded after the conference theme. And on that website, you're going to see fact sheets on the 15 great human needs that we've organized to present our story in to you today and you'll see fact sheets that speak to the results of the initiative, but also the great needs that need to animate more of our service. If you go to our website, perhaps you've already visited that to register for this conference. It's fbc.gov. We're always careful to make sure that you get the c in there. fbi.gov would take you to a whole other area of government, but fbc.gov will link you that website and you'll see the Portraits of Compassion video winners and you'll see the great needs fact sheets and I won't be longer here.

I wanted to summarize a bit the Cabinet Members' presentations for you. I won't do that for the sake of time, but what you'll hear from them are the contours of the story you'll see on these fact sheets and you'll see how in prisoner reentry and disaster response and all the other great needs that we're addressing, how government is an action on your behalf, but more so how you're responding to those needs and accomplishing just horrific outcomes. But as inspired as hopefully you'll be and encouraged that we're in the fight with you, that we're seven and a half years later and we're more relevant than we ever were and we're more in action than we ever were, of course we're going to leave this session realizing that

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we have that much more to do. When 50 percent of students drop out of high school before completion in inner cities and too many of our neighbors go hungry in a prosperous society like ours, we can't rest.

I drive into Washington and look at those monuments every day and as I cross the Potomac there's one gentleman that greets me every single day and it's with a wave and he's a homeless individual that lives under the bridge near the river. And he has a sunny demeanor and he's always with a smile and wave, but he's a terrific reminder of why we need to be more busy.

There's a great story about Martin Luther King who, of course, told us that the arc of history is long, but it bends towards justice and we're going to claim that promise today. But a good friend of mine, John Hope Bryant just shared this story with me. He's good friends with Andrew Young who walked the journey with Martin Luther King and Martin Luther King had just returned from the Middle East. David Eisner just returned from the Middle East yesterday, he told me. And Dr. King was speaking at an event. And following his return and the person introducing Dr. King said "oh, Dr. King, you're just like the Good Samaritan. You're just one that lifts up the least, the last, the lost and the injured." And it's true, that that was a part of his life. But he didn't say this publicly. He turned to Andrew Young privately and he said you know what, I do not want to be the Good Samaritan. He said I was on that road to Jericho. It's a dangerous road. It moves from a very high elevation to a low elevation. It has severe twists and turns. It's a dark and dangerous and rocky place. He said I want to be the guy that fixes the Jericho Road. I want to be the guy that puts street lights on it. I want to be the guy that paves it.

You're both. You're the Good Samaritan. We thank you for the lifesaving work that you do every day and we thank you that you're our partner in paving the Jericho Road. Thank you very much.
(Applause.)