



The United States Conference of Mayors

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Statement by U.S. Conference of Mayors President Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa in Reaction to President Obama's State of the Union Address

Washington, DC - Below is a statement issued by U.S. Conference of Mayors President Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, in reaction to President Obama's State of the Union address:

"In his State of the Union address [tonight](#), President Obama presented an inspired and inspiring vision of an America built to last. An America where everyone gets a fair shot, everyone does their fair share, and everyone plays by the same rules.

"Last week, nearly 250 mayors gathered in Washington, D.C. We conferred with President Obama at the White House and released a detailed report on the state of the cities.

"The report was clear. Nearly a fourth of the nation's metropolitan areas – including my home of Los Angeles – will struggle for five more years to regain the jobs lost in the Great Recession.

"In his address [tonight](#), President Obama showed the country that he will keep fighting for the investments we need to turn our economy around. At its heart, the speech was about renewing the basic bargain with the American middle class, especially those looking for work or struggling to pay their mortgage.

"Now it's Congress' turn. Congress needs to do its job.

"To put America back to work, Congress should start by passing the Boxer-Inhofe surface transportation bill, a bill that includes the innovative America Fast Forward initiative.

"America Fast Forward is simple. It would accelerate the construction of locally-funded road and rail projects by providing flexible, low-interest loans from the federal government.

"America Fast Forward has the enthusiastic backing of 115 bipartisan mayors in Blue States and Red States. It has won the support of a wide range of business, labor, and environmental organizations. This includes support from odd bedfellows such as Thomas Donohue, President and CEO of the US Chamber of Commerce, and Richard Trumka, President of the AFL-CIO.

"We also ask leaders in Washington to step up their support for the Community Development Block Grant program. CDBG provides nearly \$3 billion annually for programs such as affordable housing and job training for low-income residents. Eliminating the program would be a devastating blow to our citizens.

"Our cities cannot afford another season of congressional inaction. As the President said, now is the time to invest in America. Now is the time to pass America Fast Forward. Now is the time to get America back to work."

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