WASHINGTON, D.C. – Tucson, AZ Mayor Robert Walkup, along with U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) President Burnsville Mayor Elizabeth Kautz, USCM Vice President Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, and USCM Second Vice President Philadelphia, PA Michael Nutter, today introduced a CIVILITY ACCORD to the nation’s mayors at their annual legislative conference and encouraged the 200 plus attending mayors to sign the document.

The Mayors’ Accord was presented at top of the of the opening session of USCM 79th Winter Meeting, and Mayor Walkup, who addressed the entire session explained, “We believe that because mayors are the elected leaders closest to the people, restoration of civility must begin with us. We are in a unique position to have a positive impact on behavior – individual and collective – and to lead by example. While the tragedy in Tucson is the impetus for this Accord, it represents a commitment that must live on in every mayor in our nation from this day forward.”

The complete text of the Civility Accord can be found on www.usmayors.org, but the core principles are as follows:

- Respect the right of all Americans to hold different opinions;
- Avoid rhetoric intended to humiliate, de-legitimatize, or question the patriotism of those whose opinions are different from ours;
- Strive to understand differing perspectives;
- Choose words carefully;
- Speak truthfully without accusation, and avoid distortion;
- Speak out against violence, prejudice, and incivility in all of their forms, whenever and wherever they occur.

Conference President Burnsville Mayor Elizabeth Kautz remarked, “This accord is an important step in encouraging political leaders at all levels of government, regardless of political affiliation, to commit to work together in a spirit of civility and respect in their service to the American people.”

Job creation and retention are also at the top on the mayors’ agenda as they convene over the next three days to meet with federal lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, Cabinet members and President Obama. Much of the discussion during the meeting, including a mayors and CEO panel on Thursday will center on joblessness in the U.S. and the need for job creation. Mayors are pushing the Administration and Congress to work together on strategies to help unemployed people in America’s cities, where 85% of the people in this country live.

“The jobs picture for cities and suburbs remains extremely challenging,” noted Mayor Kautz referring to a new economic report released today by the Conference of Mayors and Global Insight that shows almost one-third of the nation’s 363 metro areas will still have an unemployment rate higher than 10% at the end of 2011. Moreover, the mayors’ report indicates 152 metropolitan areas (42%) will not gain back their pre-recession job levels until after 2014.

“This data is solid proof that Congress needs to be laser-beam focused on jobs creation,” said Kautz. “We are in the middle of a ‘jobs emergency’ that demands decisive and swift action.”
Mayor Kautz added, “As we try to slog our way out of this jobs recession, there are still families all over the nation that are suffering tremendously from prolonged unemployment. Without job growth in metropolitan areas, there can be no sustained national recovery. Our cities and our metro economies are centers of our national economy. We ignore them at our own peril.”

The Mayors are collectively advancing their job creation priorities in their new Metro Agenda, which calls for protecting Community Development Block Grants to help develop job creating projects in local communities, infrastructure spending through public transportation and energy block grants, as well as maintaining other key investments that the mayors say the nation still desperately needs. The full Mayors’ 2011 Metro Agenda can be found at www.usmayors.org.

Mayor Kautz underscored the urgency of the mayors’ for a metro agenda focused on jobs. “The nation’s mayors are calling on all levels of government, as well as the private sector, to work closer together to build a bold vision for what cities and metropolitan areas will look like in the coming decades. And job creation is the key to that vision.”

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. For a complete meeting agenda, list or participating mayors and video of Conference proceedings, please visit www.usmayors.org.

###