


Congressional Black Caucus Inc.

306-307 U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - ANNEX
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515 (202) 225-1691

October 31, 1977

TO: Congressional Black Caucus Members

FROM: Parren J. Mitchell 

RE: Approval of Summary of CBC Urban Policy Roundtable

Attached for your review, comment and approval is a summary of the CBC-sponsored Urban Policy Roundtable held earlier this month. This summary will be circulated to attendees and other invitees for comment and made public after their input. We plan to follow up our meeting with Secretary Harris with additional meetings and policy statements with respect to urban policy planning.

For your information, I have also enclosed a brochure describing the little-known, but potentially important White House Conference on Balanced Economic Growth, which will take place at the end of January 1978. This may be the Administration's forum for gaining support for its urban policy goals. We are looking into the nature and extent of Black participation in the conference.

Please let the Caucus office know of your approval of the summary.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

306 House Annex
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-1691

URBAN POLICY ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY

October 11, 1977

In order to discuss the Administration's initiative aimed at formulating a comprehensive urban policy, the Congressional Black Caucus convened an Urban Policy Roundtable attended by representatives of about 20 organizations, who met on October 11, 1977.*

This report on the Urban Policy Roundtable summarizes the key points made by participants under the six major subject headings. It is intended to be used as a guide for development of positions by the groups involved and as a starting point for discussions with Administration officials concerned with urban policy. Comments and further analysis should be sent to the Caucus.

INTRODUCTORY

Congressman Parren J. Mitchell, Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, reported on the Administration's efforts to date on urban policy and on a meeting between the Caucus and Secretary of HUD Patricia Roberts Harris and White House adviser Stuart Eizenstat on Friday, October 7, 1977. Congressman Mitchell stressed the need for participation in the Administration's budget preparations, presently underway, and listed five key concepts to be applied to any policy proposal concerning urban policy:

- targeting
- linkage (between public and private efforts with people in the target group)
- avoiding dislocation
- planning and coordination
- citizen participation

Congressman Ronald Dellums led the second part of the meeting, stressing the need to base urban policy on a commitment to jobs tied to solving other human problems, including the need for decent housing, education, transportation and health. He pointed to the failure of urban policy so far to produce that link on a large scale and in a coordinated fashion.

It was clear throughout the discussion that the difficulty in formulating urban policy is that it runs directly into all other national and international issues from the economic issues to questions of national and international priorities. The military budget and tax reform were pointed out as the two major sources of funds for urban revitalization. There was an underlying agreement that strong presidential leadership, not simply cabinet leadership, is essential to make any major urban policy initiatives effective.

* List of attendees attached.

JOBS

- Passage of H.R. 50, the Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act, underlies any urban policy initiative. Coordination of economic policy and of urban policy is essential.
- An urban policy, while targeting on low-income persons, must be a national policy to receive broad political support.
- There must be a plan for an increased number of public service jobs tied to specific tasks with an urban revitalization impact, such as in the areas of housing, energy and transportation.
- Any effort to encourage businesses to return to and remain in central cities should focus on labor-intensive businesses, although there was concern voiced about programs to provide economic incentives to businesses (see Economic Development section, below). A tax credit for employing neighborhood individuals was said to be preferable to a tax deduction for businesses locating in central cities.
- Industrial and public service jobs should focus on health, education, recreation and overall human services that would provide a return on the investment businesses made by relocating in the inner city.
- When defense jobs are cut, there should be a coordinated effort to move those laid off into other professions concerned with urban development.

HOUSING

- Government housing programs should focus on low-income persons through targeting. They should not provide aid to economically sound people and institutions.
- Renovation of abandoned dwellings, as well as those in substandard condition, should be greatly expanded for lower-income persons; the program should be comprehensive, rather than on an application basis.
- Home ownership is extremely important and should be encouraged. St. Louis is a good example of a city with an excellent rehabilitation and ownership program.
- Low-income housing programs which are working should be expanded, as indicated by the GAO report on that subject. These programs were abandoned by the Nixon-Ford Administration.
- A housing equivalent of the Full Employment Act should be prepared.

NEIGHBORHOODS

- Focus on preserving and upgrading existing neighborhoods.
- A family-oriented neighborhoods policy is needed.
- Urban policy must include social components, e.g. health, welfare, education, recreation, crime prevention. The present Administration efforts ignore many of these areas.
- Urban policy must be coupled with urban and regional policy (see below).
- More vigorous enforcement of the Fair Housing Laws to open up suburban areas is essential.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- The Urban Development Bank concept was generally supported, but deep concern was expressed over the apparent Administration direction of making it primarily a vehicle for bringing business back to the central city, rather than addressing broader concerns of urban growth and development.
- Encouragement of and aid to cooperatives through the Coop Bank Bill is essential; community-based credit unions should be encouraged.
- Tax incentives should encourage balanced neighborhood development, including housing renovation; tax incentives for business should stress those which have been in and remained in the neighborhoods. As mentioned above, there was support for a tax credit for the hiring of neighborhood residents.
- More grants should be made directly to community-based organizations and to private groups. Fund locally-based financial structures.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

- Urban revitalization must be coordinated with regional and urban policies.
- There must be vigilance that regional schemes do not undercut central city development.

TRANSPORTATION

- The key issue remains providing access between homes and jobs for lower-income persons.

URBAN POLICY ROUNDTABLE

ATTENDEES

October 11, 1977

Congressman Parren J. Mitchell	Chairman, Congressional Black Caucus
Congressman Ronald V. Dellums	Congressional Black Caucus
Congressman Augustus F. Hawkins	Congressional Black Caucus
Carl Holman	National Urban Coalition
Eddie N. Williams	Joint Center for Political Studies
Robert S. Browne	Black Economic Research Center
James Farmer	Black Economic Research Center
Yvonne Price	NAACP and Leadership Conference
James Gibson	Potomac Institute
Dorothy Height	National Council of Negro Women
Dorothy Duke	National Forest Products Association
Johnnie Booker	National Urban League
Ted Adams	Unified Industries
Herbert Long, Jr.	Unified Industries
Eugene Lowe	Center for National Policy Review
Charles H. Reid	National Conference of Black Mayors
Cushing Dolbeare	Ad Hoc Low Income Housing Coalition
Pablo Eisenberg	Center for Community Change
Gale Cincotta	National Peoples Action
Alix Gould Myerson	Public Interest Economics Center
Ambrose Lane	National Center for Community Action
Vicky Mangiarlo	
Claude Helms	
Barbara Williams	Congressional Black Caucus Staff
Kenneth Colburn	Congressional Black Caucus Staff
Helene Colvin	Congressional Black Caucus Staff
Arnold Schuchter	Congressman John Conyers' Staff