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## **CITIES OF OPPORTUNITY TASK FORCE COMMITMENT TO ACTION**

*More than 30 mayors from across the country sign Commitment at Gracie*

**NEW YORK**—The United States is a country that has long valued opportunity, fairness and equality. Yet, too many Americans, no matter how hard they work or try to find work, have stagnant or low incomes, dwindling wealth, and trouble affording life’s basic necessities, like housing, food and health care. As members of the Cities of Opportunity Task Force, we recognize that rising inequality and declining opportunity are threats to our fundamental values and to the nation’s economic growth.

We agree that bold action and a multifaceted approach are required to create more genuine opportunities for all residents and create more equitable cities. And today, we commit to work together to respond to this crisis and take action to leverage the power of municipal governments to advance local strategies and a national, common equality agenda.

We have agreed that the following principles will guide the work of the Cities of Opportunity Task Force:

- Produce economic stability for city residents that allows residents to meet their basic needs;
- Increase upward mobility of residents to create a vibrant and expanding middle class that reflects the ethnic and racial diversity of our nation;
- Make cities affordable, accessible, livable, sustainable and inclusive places to live;
- Maximize City infrastructure, investment, purchasing power, and other leveraging tools to expand opportunities and equality for residents; and,
- Ensure that the federal and state governments recognize the importance of cities in producing national prosperity and equality and empower local governments.

We have agreed to support and advance this common agenda in our own cities, to the fullest extent possible and support other cities’ efforts to take similar actions. We will also build together a national urban agenda together. We have committed to begin by putting income inequality, early childhood education, and broadband at the center of the task force’s national equity agenda, and to grow it to include other critical issues, such as affordable housing and transportation.

We agree to advance at least one of the following strategies under each issue area:

### **Income Inequality**

- ***Local autonomy over wage laws:*** Work to obtain local authority to make changes to minimum wage and benefits laws affecting City residents, where it does not exist.
- ***Better wages in our cities:*** Support better wages in our cities, such as increasing the minimum wage or getting businesses that receive substantial City subsidies to pay living wages or hire hard-to-employ workers.
- ***Benefits to make wages work:*** Make work pay by improving supports to help workers and their families, such as paid sick leave, paid family leave, and other benefits for workers.
- ***Financial empowerment and youth employment:*** Support efforts to enhance financial empowerment and promote employment opportunities for City youth.

### **Early Childhood Education**

- ***Create or expand pre-kindergarten and access to childcare:*** Work to provide or expand pre-kindergarten and other early childhood education and childcare programs that are accessible for all children, particularly children from low-income families.
- ***Promote high-quality education:*** Address the inequality in school systems and close the early childhood education achievement gaps to create opportunities for every child and better prepare our 21<sup>st</sup> Century workforce.

### **Broadband**

- ***Provide for 21<sup>st</sup> Century broadband and bridge the digital divide:*** Work to ensure that 21<sup>st</sup> century broadband services are provided to all residents—including lower income residents and start-up businesses. Work to provide education and training to low-income residents, people of color, and women to ensure technological efficacy, creating new opportunities.
- ***Promote network neutrality through municipal franchise options:*** Create corporate guidelines that protect network neutrality, including but not limited to comprehensive non-discrimination of lawful content.

In support of the above efforts, we also agree to work together to achieve federal action on:

- ***Nationwide minimum wage increase:*** Support increasing the federal minimum wage.
- ***Funding commitments for early childhood education:*** Advocate for existing federal programs that support early childhood education.
- ***Nationwide universal pre-kindergarten:*** Support expanded access to high-quality early childhood education for children across the nation.
- ***Broadband advocacy and initiative:*** Advocate for federal programs and initiatives that bolster technological innovation, and accelerate and diversify the workforce pipeline in technology for low-income individuals and people of color.

The following mayors signed the Commitment to Action at Gracie Mansion today:

Mayor Bill de Blasio, New York, NY  
Mayor Martin J. Walsh, Boston, MA  
Mayor Kevin Johnson, Sacramento, CA  
Mayor Stephen Benjamin, Columbia, SC  
Mayor J. Christian Bollwage, Elizabeth, NJ  
Mayor Byron Brown, Buffalo, NY  
Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Chicago, IL  
Mayor Bill Finch, Bridgeport, CT  
Mayor Steven Fulop, Jersey City, NJ  
Mayor Javier Gonzales, Santa Fe, NM  
Mayor Vincent C. Gray, Washington, DC  
Mayor Charlie Hales, Portland, OR  
Mayor Toni Harp, New Haven, CT  
Mayor Sylvester James, Kansas City, MO  
Mayor Mitchell Landrieu, New Orleans, LA  
Mayor Lee Leffingwell, Austin, TX  
Mayor John Marks, Tallahassee, FL  
Mayor Gary McCarthy, Schenectady, NY  
Mayor Stephanie Miner, Syracuse, NY  
Mayor Michael Nutter, Philadelphia, PA  
Mayor Frank Ortis, Pembroke Pines, FL  
Mayor Annise Parker, Houston, TX  
Mayor Ed Pawlowski, Allentown, PA  
Mayor Pedro Segarra, Hartford, CT  
Mayor Kathy Sheehan, Albany, NY  
Mayor Paul Soglin, Madison, WI  
Mayor Marilyn Strickland, Tacoma, WA  
Mayor Brian Wahler, Piscataway, NJ  
Mayor Lovely Warren, Rochester, NY  
Mayor Setti Warren, Newton, MA  
Mayor Nan Whaley, Dayton, OH  
Mayor Dennis P. Williams, Wilmington, DE

Mayors Joy Cooper of Hallendale Beach, FL; Ed Murray of Seattle; Edwin Lee of San Francisco; and Michael Brennan of Portland, Maine were not present at the first meeting of the Cities of Opportunity Task Force, but have agreed to sign onto the Commitment to Action.

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