

Center for American Progress



A PANEL DISCUSSION ON:

**“ENDING CONCENTRATED POVERTY:
NEW DIRECTIONS AFTER KATRINA”**

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DEREK DOUGLAS: On behalf of the Center for American Progress, I wanted to thank you all very much for joining us this morning for what will be a very exciting and informative panel. My name is Derek Douglas. I'm the associate director of economic policy at the Center and also direct the Center's work on economic opportunity.

We have with us today an incredibly distinguished panel. I won't take the time to read all the bios, but the people that you have sitting here are at the forefront of the movement to bring greater homeownership and housing opportunities and breaking up the concentration of poverty in this country. They've written on it. They're leading innovative and creative programs to do it, and I think that we're going to learn a lot when they talk about what they're doing and what they believe the vision and goals should be for progressives trying to work on issues of poverty.

I should mention before we start to ask you all to turn off your cell phones and pagers. I also want to highlight the packets that you've received. In these packets are materials related to the Center, as well as a brief that we did with New Visions that sets out a number of progressive policy options for the Gulf Coast. And each of the panelists prepared their own vision of what should be done with respect to housing policy and in the Gulf, and we've included those briefs. And there's one other brief that was written by a senior fellow at the Center, Hillary Pennington, that talks about job training and Katrina.

And finally, it was handed out, I believe, an article by Margy Waller that was written in the *Washington Monthly* that relates to these issues on transportation and Katrina.

There are few issues that affect a person's life and opportunities as much as housing. Housing is much more than a place in which a person lives. It affects where you work. It affects where you go to school and the educational opportunities you have. It affects where you go for healthcare. It affects the type of financial services, the banks you go to, the access to capital, and the safety that you have in your communities.

The issue of Hurricane Katrina woke people up to a problem that existed in this country for some time. And I'm not a big one to quote a lot of statistics, but I want to provide some concrete numbers for the difference in outcomes that a person has if they live in a high concentrated poverty area versus a lower one.

According to the most recent census report on areas with concentrated poverty, just let me give you a couple of statistics. We know that the poverty rate is 12.7 percent and there's 37 million people in poverty. According to the numbers, eight million people

live in what the U.S. Census defines as high poverty areas. Those are poverty areas with 40 percent or more – those are census tracts with 40 percent or more people below the poverty line.

If you live in a census tract with 40 more percent – in a high poverty census area, you're five times more likely to be unemployed than if you live in an area or a neighborhood that is below the poverty rate. You're three times more likely to not graduate from high school, four and a half times more likely to live in a family of seven people or more, three times less likely to graduate from college, three times less likely to own a home, and 11 times more likely to have an annual income of \$10,000 or less.

Katrina didn't just wake us up to the existence and persistence of poverty, it also was a case in point for how we as a country have not done enough to deal with the issue of poverty – concentrated poverty. And what we've done today – the panel that we've assembled is to get at that question and to help us who are working on the issue, who care about this issue, think about how we can address and get at the issue of concentrated poverty.

What I'm going to do today, first I want to mention that I got a call. You notice that someone's missing up here. David Brooks. He called me this morning and said he woke up with a case of strep throat and that he was very apologetic, but was unable to attend and wished us well, so unfortunately he cannot be with us.

What we're going to do is have each of the panelists give very brief remarks. Then we're going to engage in a moderated discussion for a short time where the panelists will talk about some of these issues and the vision we're getting from them. And then we're going to open it up to the audience.

We'll start with Bart Harvey.

BART HARVEY: Thank you. I'm Bart Harvey, chairman and CEO of the Enterprise Foundation, and the Enterprise Foundation is a national nonprofit providing decent, affordable housing and a path up and out of poverty. And we work with community-based partners across the country. We've raised \$6 billion; invested it very effectively: less than 1/10th of 1 percent default rate on the investments that we've made mostly in urban areas to help provide 175,000 units of decent, affordable housing and help put "hard-to-employ" people into entry-level jobs. So we work in communities like the one that you saw from Katrina – in New Orleans that Katrina exposed.

I think the take-aways that we have is that what the rest of the country saw in the images that were coming out of New Orleans is, as Derek said, not unique to New Orleans, although New Orleans is the second – the city with the second-most concentration of poverty in the country. There are a list of cities, but every major city in the Northeast, Midwest, and some in the West have large areas of concentrated poverty.

I think we would all agree that having areas of concentrated poverty is not a desirable thing; that people in those areas are cut off from the mainstream economy. I think we need to look at how these areas occurred over time, and they are through changes in the economy. They are through some of the old racial policies that we had in this country, which concentrated minorities in certain areas and some of them are due to the continuing changes in our economy. I think everyone on this panel would agree that we want to have mixed-income, mixed-use communities that connect better to jobs and good schools; that that is the way to provide neighborhoods of opportunity, which – not last resort is which is what we're seeing in these areas around the country.

We think that there are tools with which we can make those changes occur, and we're going to discuss those in a little bit. So this is not a hopeless situation you're looking at, but rather exposes in some degree a failure of housing policy to follow through on what people like ourselves know works around the country. And I'd say we also need to be solving not for the last century's issues of the economy, but for what's coming at us very fast in the current changes in our economy going forward. And I'll leave it right there.

MR. DOUGLAS: Next we'll hear from Renée Lewis Glover, the chief executive officer of the Atlanta Housing Authority.

RENÉE LEWIS GLOVER: Good morning. Derek has said who I am, so I won't repeat it. I may get it wrong. (Laughter.)

Let me just put some context around this issue. When I started the work in Atlanta – and it was reported today that Atlanta still is the fifth highest concentration of poverty in that area, so we've actually been working at this for ten years and we still have a lot of work to do. I want to talk about how we might elevate the conversation because I don't think that this is a partisan issue. I think we have to ask ourselves, what kind of society does America want to be? And I don't believe that we can be a successful country if we continue to defer addressing these issues.

And in approaching the work, when we look at the families who today have lesser resources than we have, the fact of the matter is that all of the people that we're discussing are created by God and, therefore, they have unlimited human potential. So the question is, can we create living environments and opportunities for these individuals, who like us are creations of God, so that they can tap into their human potential to achieve the things that they were created to give to the country? And I think too often when we look at the families who have fewer resources we don't see that. We see people who a lot of folks who feel need to be paternalized or taken care of, as opposed to provided opportunities so that they can make a positive contribution.

What we have found in Atlanta – we've now created 13 mixed-use, mixed-income communities – is that they absolutely work and they are addressing the core issues. And what are the core issues? The core issues are that we have segregated ourselves in this society in such extreme ways that we have destroyed the inner-city

infrastructure because of white flight, middle-class flight, and that's why we have broken school systems. That's why we have urban sprawl, because everybody is looking for that perfect existence so they don't have to bump up on one another and have these encounters that they worry about.

And so we know we have to fix that problem, because guess what? God isn't making any more land and so we have to figure out how we can have more dense development. And if we continue to write off a larger and larger segment of our society, we will lose our competitive edge in this whole global discussion. Because I think if you've read *The World is Flat*, one of the issues there is that we as an American society are losing our competitive edge because we can't fix the education issues, we can't fix our society issues. And so the question is not whether we should address these issues, not whether we should create mixed-used, mixed-income communities; it's really when.

And so we continue to defer this. We don't have the political will today to do it, but I will submit to you that we have to address it because we've got to get a larger percentage of our population educated. How much human waste, how much human potential can we continue to afford as a country to support? And it really lies with us. So this notion of tackling these issues really tackles where we live as a society, and I would submit to you that there are solutions, but it requires an investment. And if we don't invest today, it will cost more tomorrow, but we will have to invest.

We're not prepared, I believe, as a society to continue to provide housing, but in prisons rather than in healthy communities with greater opportunities. So I think this is such an urgent issue and I have so much passion around it that I think we've got to deal with these issues, elevate the discussion, and figure out how we can make an investment – not a give-away program so that people are sustained in poverty, but make an investment. Make the hard decisions so that the families and the people who have unlimited potential can tap into that potential and make this a greater society, a greater community. And I think that is our charge.

MR. DOUGLAS: Thank you.

Next, we'll hear from Angela Glover Blackwell, who's the founder and chief executive officer of PolicyLink.

ANGELA GLOVER BLACKWELL: Thank you. Good morning. And I am so pleased to be here to talk about this important issue, and I just agree with everything that's been said up to this point. I certainly agree with Derek's opening comment that in America today where you live has become a proxy for opportunity. It just determines everything. I think that Bart has it right when he talks about the interconnectedness of all these things, and that Renée is certainly putting us in the right place when she reminds us this just isn't an issue of those who are being left behind. The way that we're doing policy today is creating a problem for the country. In fact, it's creating a problem for the world.

What we seek to do at PolicyLink is to address inequality and inequity by working to build the society in which everybody can participate and everybody can prosper. And we have focused on trying to find a huge framework in which we can work in that direction. And we think that framework is really to focus on including the things that have been talked about so far in putting forward equitable development as a response, because what we really need to come to is that our development pattern has reinforced and perpetuated inequality and inequity even as we have made progress on other fronts, even as we have made progress through the legal system, knocking down racial barriers, even as we have made progress in some policy areas putting often very well thought-out programs and strategies in place. Our development patterns continue to move opportunity, whether you're talking about education or housing or what people need to be healthy, away from those who need it most.

Equitable development takes that challenge of our development pattern on head first and says that we need to develop in ways where we consciously integrate our people-based approaches to change with our place-based approaches to change, so we begin to understand that education and healthcare programs and early childhood and child care all need to happen in the context of the places where people live, understanding how we begin to spread opportunity and spread people throughout the region so they can access opportunity.

We need to understand that our public investments need to advance our broader goals so that when we are investing in schools, when we're investing in highways, when we're trying to attract investment dollars to communities that we really demand double bottom line results: economic returns for investors, but economic and social returns for people whose lives are impacted; that we need to make sure that we consciously reduce local and regional disparities and understand that we will never have authentic, effective policies in place if the people whose lives are being impacted don't have voice in those strategies.

So when I talk about equitable development, I'm talking about a new way of thinking our development through. And we believe that that kind of approach can begin to get at some of the problems that have been in place for a long, long, long time that have just recently caught the attention of the American people because of the events that happened in the Gulf region.

MR. DOUGLAS: Thank you.

Finally, we'll hear from Alexander Polikoff. He's the director of Public Housing Transformation Initiative, Business and Professional People for the Public Interest, and was also the lead attorney in the Gautreaux litigation.

ALEXANDER POLIKOFF: Good morning. Yes, I'm from BPI in Chicago, and yes, from the Gautreaux litigation, but here this morning to talk about Katrina and what the proposals have been.

It's a mammoth human tragedy, and that makes it difficult to criticize anything that's useful that seems of a reconstructive sort. At the same time, everyone seems to agree – not just we four talk-alikes here on the panel, but even people at the opposite ends of the political spectrum – that one of the objectives should be to avoid rebuilding the concentrated, racialized poverty of pre-Katrina days in New Orleans. So the question becomes, beyond immediate, quasi-emergency reconstruction, what strategies are best calculated to avoid just that?

Broadly speaking, two kinds of long-range policies have been proposed. First, economic policies designed to restart the economic engine in the Gulf Coast area, such as tax incentives for business, and keeping on course with long-planned tax reductions at the national level. A second set of policies I'll call family policies designed to enable individual families to escape their concentrated pre-Katrina circumstances – concentrated poverty pre-Katrina circumstances by moving to nonpoor neighborhoods either elsewhere than they were before or in new mixed-income communities that enable the poor to live among the nonpoor on site through the kinds of equitable development that Angela and Renée have been talking about.

In yesterday's *New York Times*, the first set of policies was touted by Mike Pence, Republican of Indiana, who leads the conservative caucus. Tax reductions for the prosperous, Pence is reported as saying, are a key to fighting poverty. And in the same article, the second set of policies, the family-type policies that we're talking about here were described by Stuart Butler, a vice president of the Heritage Foundation, as "expanding what's failed before."

Well, Republicans seem to have the votes, but a look at the record calls the Pence and Butler views into question. Under both Republicans and Democrats, the record of enterprise zones, empowerment zones – remember those? – giving tax incentives to businesses to reinvest in high-poverty areas, distinctly not a successful record in fighting concentrated poverty. On the other hand, the use of targeted housing vouchers in the Los Angeles earthquake of 1994 was by all accounts quite successful, not only as an immediate humanitarian response to the earthquake, but as a route out of concentrated poverty for many of the participating families.

And indeed, as Jason DeParle pointed out in yesterday's *Times* article, "During the sustained economic good times of the 1990s, unparalleled in our history, while poverty statistics generally improved, we hardly made a dent in concentrated poverty." And today, we have bigger and worse black ghettos of the sort that we saw on TV in New Orleans than we had way back in 1970 in the aftermath of the urban riots and the Kerner report warning us about two unequal societies.

So where does that leave us? We want to avoid a return to concentrated, racialized poverty in New Orleans, and if we also want to do something about the many other cities in the country that have their own black ghettos, we're going to have to move beyond tax reductions for the prosperous. As you may already know, I think we need a national housing mobility program as a complement to inner-city redevelopment of the

mixed-income variety so that these two policies together targeted on concentrated, racialized poverty areas will give the people who live in such areas the only kind of opportunity that ultimately is going to make a long-range difference for them: the opportunity to live in nonpoor neighborhoods.

MR. DOUGLAS: Thank you, Alex.

A lot of excellent points were made by your presentations, and I want to start with the first question to follow-up from what Alex said when he compared kind of the economic policy approach to some of these other ideas of mobility. And it raises the question of what is it that we can do that will be successful in the rebuilding to break up poverty concentration in the Gulf region and a policy that would apply nationwide?

So, Renée, based on your experience and what you've done, what do you think will work?

MS. GLOVER: Well, what has worked and what we will continue to do is using public sources to incent private involvement by the private sector development community and private investors. And what we're doing is building healthy communities, as opposed to building a nicer brand of affordable housing because we do know that all services follow disposable income. So if we're looking at sustainability and looking at opportunities, we have to have communities that in fact are designed to attract families from all walks of life. And by incenting the private development community and incenting the private investment communities, we in fact are creating communities where everyone wants to live.

And all of a sudden, because you have the disposable income, a lot of the services that we know can't be subsidized to sustain themselves over a long time in fact are there because the retailers come in, commercial development comes in, and then schools in fact start being more competitive because the families who are there with their children in those schools demand that the schools are high-performing schools. So I think as we look at the strategies, we have to look at things that are sustainable and that use market principles that, in fact, work.

And I think our challenge is to use the subsidies so that we can financially engineer the affordability without segregating the families or taking them out and putting them in a community that is built more cheaply to address the folks who are worried about, well, did it cost too much? That's the wrong strategy because then what you're doing is creating something that isn't sustainable and that is away from and apart from the things we've been talking about, like great schools and great quality of life amenities.

But that's been the strategy in Atlanta. Simply put, we are creating within our private sector development partners market-rate communities with an affordable, seamless – a seamless, affordable component so that we're not recreating low-income neighborhoods that will eventually fall down because of the lack of disposable income and the kind of fundamental drivers that sustain great neighborhoods.

MR. HARVEY: Let me – can I jump in on this? And agree with Renée, and I – but I'd take her one degree farther. There are a number of our cities who have lost their economic competitiveness, and you've seen lots of businesses move out of those cities. And if you take Baltimore as an example of that, which was based on the port and manufacturing, et cetera, what's left in that city really are the meds and the eds, the medical institutions, the educational institutions, and really a sea of poverty that would not be that much different if there were a flood there than what you saw in New Orleans. And I think we have to even go farther.

We've got to get to greater scale exactly along the lines of what Renée is saying. It's taking the assets that we have – and this is actually going on in Baltimore where you take Johns Hopkins, the largest employer now – the hospital and Kennedy Krieger – and the area around it is in abject poverty – 50 percent vacant – and have a concerted effort to redesign around that economic base, which employs 23,000 people, to bring in new office buildings so that biotech life sciences has a place to go other than the Silicon Valley from Hopkins to fairly treat the neighborhood and have their voice in what gets remade so that it really is fair, to take large acreage, in this case 80 acres in the heart of the city, and redesign it around mixed income, mixed-use principles, and connect workers back into those entry-level jobs.

And right now, less than 15 percent of the jobs – entry-level jobs of the 23,000 workers go to people in that surrounding area, so there are a set of policies that you can use and there's a very structured financial envelopment of it, but it took the city. It took eminent domain in this case, a word no one likes to hear anymore. It took fair policies towards the people that were going to be affected as to what happens so that eminent domain didn't hurt them. And it took a basic understanding of economics. Part of that are new schools that connect to this area. Part of them is the work that has to come to sustain people in this area, and reorienting that part of Baltimore around what are the remaining economic strengths for the longer term.

And just one other note on that is Johns Hopkins gets the largest amount of NIH grants and has – is number six in the country in patents and licensing and it all goes somewhere else, and the city needs that revenue base. So we – there are ways, not always, but there are ways that we can reconceive things, and it takes an investment for the longer term if you're going to have a fair, competitive city that is going to offer opportunity, not last resort, to the people that are there.

MS. BLACKWELL: But nothing will work if we continue to build policy based on stereotypes and fear. Nothing will work if we continue to build policy based on stereotypes and fear. What we have to do, and we are all saying it in one way or another, is that we have to create policies that will spread the fair distribution of affordable housing throughout regions so that people can live in opportunity-rich neighborhoods and by living in opportunity-rich neighborhoods people will have access to so many of the things that we try to do through programs, that we try to develop programs that get failing schools to work better. But if we move people into opportunity-rich neighborhoods, they

will have access to schools that are working at a very high level and they will begin to achieve at high levels, graduate, and go on to reach their full potential as we're beginning to see happening in Raleigh, North Carolina.

That if we move people to opportunity-rich neighborhoods, so many of the programs that try to figure out how to get people to find out about jobs, how to be able to connect to jobs, how to begin to create natural job networks, which is how people get jobs. Those things will happen because people will live in neighborhoods where their friends and their neighbors have jobs, and the jobs will be close to them and they can get to them.

We need to stop building policies based on fear where we keep trying to move people away, put walls around our own neighborhoods, heavily police the areas where we concentrate people who are poor and different or of color, and we need to start making sure that all neighborhoods in the region are livable communities, and we need to ask ourselves, what does it mean to be a livable community? It means that it's safe, that there are good schools, that there's access to parks and supermarkets and grocery stores. Now, we know how to do all of these things. Every single thing that I have mentioned, I can give you a policy and I can give you an example of where it's working. We know how to solve problems. You show me a problem, and I'll show you a place where somebody has solved it.

The problem is that we have not taken any of our wisdom and knowledge to scale because we have stereotypes about people. We think people don't need that, people don't want that, people won't appreciate that, people won't handle that properly, and then we deal with all this fear that we can't really create these mixed-income communities because we're talking about bringing in people who we are afraid of. We are afraid of what they're going to do to us. We're afraid of what they're going to do to our children.

One of the things that we started to see around Katrina, which I thought was positive, though we haven't seen enough of it and we haven't sustained it, is that you had to be blind in America not to see that the people who were suffering in the Gulf region were just like all the people that we know and love, people who love their families, people who want the best for their families, people who are struggling to make ends meet.

And while we saw people who were not those who we know and love, we don't have to go to the Gulf region to find them. We can find them in our families, in our neighborhoods, in our schools, and our workplaces. There are always people who are bad actors, but we saw a majority of people who shared the values that we all share. We need to break down the stereotypes, break down the fear, and begin to pull out what we've learned over the past 50 years and start applying it.

MR. DOUGLAS: That raises the question and you mentioned that if there's a problem, we have the solution. I think – what is the solution? What do we do? We have in New Orleans 250,000 families displaced. Renée talked about the mixed-income

communities, but clearly that's not going to get to all those folks. When we talk about these neighborhoods like these cities, Atlanta, Chicago, you have thousands of people living in these poverty-concentrated areas. What can we do? What's the policy that we could do that's going to address this problem?

MR. POLIKOFF: Let me jump in and try to respond to that, Derek. I think it's an elephant in a room. If we do the marvelous things that Bart and Angela and Renée are talking about and rebuild inclusive mixed-income communities in place of the concentrated poverty communities that we saw on the TV screens in New Orleans and that exist in so many other cities across the country, the elephant in the room is there aren't going to be enough places in that rebuilt, mixed-income community for all the people who formerly lived there to return. And of course, everybody says at the outset, "I want to go back. I want to go back," and all the politicians say, "We're going to build back. We're going to build back."

Well, if they all want to go back and if we build back for all those people, we aren't going to get what Bart and Renée and Angela are talking about. That's the elephant in the room. So that's Derek's question. What's the answer?

MS. GLOVER: Well –

MR. POLIKOFF: Well, I think the answer is housing mobility – excuse me. I'll be real quick.

I think we have got to face up to the necessity for giving an opportunity of voluntary, not an involuntary opportunity, to those who wish to do so to move to different communities. The Gautreaux program has shown that it works for those families, and if done right, it doesn't harm the receiving communities. It's a big challenge. I don't want to suggest that it's like rolling off a log, but as Angela says, state a problem, she can point to a solution.

We do know the solution. We've got to, as she says, bring it up to scale. What I'm urging is difficult, though it seems to be (to concede?) in light of the current politics. Not only must we do the reconstruction in New Orleans in a different way than we constructed it in the beginning, but we have to recognize that that different way will involve fewer places for people to return who are poor than the number who lived there before. We've got to make arrangements for those people on a voluntary basis to go elsewhere. Housing mobility is the way to do it. That should be viewed as a complement to the inner-city rebuilding on the mixed-income community basis.

MR. DOUGLAS: Do you want to respond, Renée?

MS. GLOVER: Yeah. I wanted to underscore I think what everyone here has said, that we have to take this to scale. And I think what we have to do is embrace this issue as a societal issue because the fact of the matter is that when you think about the very small amount of investment that the government has made in initiating some of this

new thought process, it really is just a drop in the bucket. And I think that if you get on the ground and you get in the cities and ask people what kind of city do you want to have, what kind of society do we want, most people would say, I want a society where more people than not are able to succeed and have a great education. Heck, I want my kids to have a great education, and so on and so forth.

So the question is, can we as we deliberate all of these challenges really come up with the political will to make the kind of investment that can indeed break down these areas of concentrated poverty? And I think the thing we often leave out of the discussion is what is the impact of these areas of concentration are having on the larger society in the larger city?

You know, we spend a lot of time on building prisons. There's now – we've got so sophisticated now we can look at third-grade achievement to determine how many prisons we need to be planning to build in the out years. Well, we need to do more dot connection because when you think about the investment that we're really asking to be made here, it's really a very small thing and it's got to be at scale because I would submit to you that we need to have economic integration across all neighborhoods, because that's really what this is calling upon.

This isn't about, well, let's have an experiment in each major city where we'll have these mixed-income communities. We need to mix incomes across everywhere. And what has happened in Atlanta most recently is the recognition that people do not want to be out in the exurbs and the suburbs disconnected from the cultural center, all of the activities that go on in cities. They want to bump up on each other. For the first time in ten years, condominiums are acceptable. We did not believe in Atlanta in multi-family for-sale housing. It just wasn't going to happen. Now they can't build enough of them quick enough because people are tired of the commute. We are the poster child for urban sprawl.

Well, one of the ways that you deal with it is starting to look at cultural diversity, income diversity. And I think that this is happening in so many of our urban areas, so let's not, for God's sake, flip the thing on its head and move all of the poor out of the city, and then have the well-to-do living in the city, and then we'll just push the issue out to the suburbs.

I know that we have the political will to solve these issues, and they can be done at scale, but we have to be intentional about it, and we have to stop thinking about this as a program for poor people. We're really talking about building a healthy society, because if we don't, we will continue to lose our competitive edge in America. We are importing workers. We're not outsourcing work that we can't get done.

I mean, the thing that was so striking in Tom Friedman's work is how we have to outsource work that we can't get done here because we don't have an educated populace. I mean, we're about to go – we're about to tip into insanity here, and these things are things we've got to face and have got to start grappling with because these are not just

areas of concentrated poverty. This is who we are as an American society, and whether or not we're going to tackle the hard issues, so that we can be stronger as a society and as an American competitive global participant.

MR. HARVEY: Let me just add –

MR. DOUGLAS: Why don't you go ahead on this?

MR. HARVEY: – one more elephant in the room, which is that most of our policies that are set up informal and formal, and through regulation leads exactly to concentrated poverty. So if you take Alex's – which all of us would agree upon in saying that a housing choice voucher ought to be used, you ought to look carefully as to how it is used and where people can move because of what may be a fair market rent, because of what other regulations are with it, because of the zoning and other issues that are being instituted by suburbs exactly not to take people with these vouchers.

So low-income housing tax credits, you say, "Gee, you ought to site people where the jobs are, and you ought to get them out to better schools, et cetera." Just taking Maryland for an example, the county legislator has an informal signoff and so we called in all of the developers and said, "Why aren't you doing family housing out in these counties?" And they said, "Because we can never get it through. That signoff never comes. We can only do seniors," so all of the family housing has to go back into the city.

So this is easy to say and the policies make sense, but there's got to be changes. The vouchers have to be portable beyond a political jurisdiction's line. We really ought to be thinking regionally. As some of the best cities that really are examples of having an integrated society that works in the day and the night, the Portlands, there are a few of them, so they get – you hear them over and over again, or the policies that have worked like it has in Montgomery County with inclusionary zoning. But these are very tough issues. The policy is all oriented the other way, and we're citing the examples of the things that we are doing, but it is proportionately small to the forces that are in place that lead exactly towards concentrated poverty, and by race as well.

MS. BLACKWELL: If I could, because I wanted to do some –

MR. DOUGLAS: If you could have one follow-up –

MS. BLACKWELL: – of what Bart just did; that is, to be clear about what it is we can do and we can do it now. One thing that we need to do is to make sure that we put everything in place to allow people to move to the places where opportunity exists. That means that we have to consciously identify those policies that stand in the way of that and in the Gulf region to make sure we deal with them, so that if we want to use low-income housing tax credits to be able to put housing where the community can provide what people need, we need to deal with that. I mean, if we – we are looking at a looking at a lot of waiving things. Let's not waive the wrong things. Let's waive the right things so that we can do what we know.

When you talk about moving to opportunity, the first thing you come up against is exclusionary housing policies, no rental units. All the houses have to be a certain lot size; that you have to have a two-car garage. Those kind of exclusionary policies keep low-income people of color from being able to move into opportunity-rich neighborhoods. So we need to identify those policies that exclude and get rid of them so that a strategy that gives people vouchers to be able to go where they want to go – that they can do that.

We need to make sure that any new housing that is built, any massive rehabilitation that takes place is done under a policy of inclusionary zoning so that we don't build anything without requiring that a certain proportion of it has to be available for low-income people. And all low-income people are not at the same level of being low income, we need to have some that's 80 percent of the median income, some that's 50 percent of the median income, some that's 30 percent of the median income so that we can get a full range.

We need to make sure that as we're building communities we're not just building housing and leaving people in places where their families cannot thrive; put in affordable housing in a place where you have a failing school, where you have no place for recreation, where there are no supermarkets. That doesn't work. So we need to not only make sure that we're putting low-income housing in communities and calling them mixed-income, but why would people who have higher incomes want to come there? So you have to make sure that the amenities that attract people are in place.

And then we need to make sure that in the process we're dealing with what makes people poor in the first place: the lack of income, the lack of wealth, the lack of assets. So in doing this, we need to build into it strategies that build income, that build assets and home ownership and savings and all of those strategies, so that we need a set of policy goals. We need to align our policies with those goals, getting rid of things that keep us from doing what we know we need to do, and then we need to have a proactive set of strategies that help us to create in the Gulf region a model for the nation to be able to do what we have known we have needed to do for a very long time.

MR. DOUGLAS: Let me ask one last question before opening it up to the audience. And there've been a lot of elephants in the room this morning; I think this is another one. The ideas that have been put forward on the table all involve low-income people moving into communities with higher-income people and living with them. There was also a lot of discussion about these policy barriers that we need to break down that are preventing us from getting the type of integrated – economically integrated communities that we want.

Twenty years or so ago, housing integration used to be at the forefront of the progressive policy agenda, but one reason that it isn't anymore, or at least a lot of people think, is the not-in-my-backyard phenomenon, which was low-income people moving next to people who make more money, who are wealthier. The low-income people don't vote. The people who have the money do vote. They do not want them in their

neighborhoods, and it creates pressure for policymakers or politicians to shy away from these issues and to start putting up the barriers that you all are talking about.

In these innovative progressive proposals that you're talking, how do you deal with that issue where there's a backlash from some people in the community who have the voting strength to say, "I don't want to go along with having hundreds of low-income people moving into my community." Alex?

MR. POLIKOFF: I'll take a quick shot at that, Derek. Of course, I'll give you the complete answer in about five seconds, right? The problem of NIMBYism can't be ignored. There are a lot of Americans – millions of Americans who have been fed with generations of racial prejudice and anti-poor prejudice and that's the way they feel and they're about to protect what they've got. And while I couldn't be a stronger supporter than I am or that Angela is of inclusionary zoning and dealing with exclusionary zoning practices, those ordinances and laws are embedded in countless thousands of municipal city councils around the country. They're local. They're not even state. They're not national, and we aren't going to get rid of them overnight, and those attitudes and those practices are in place.

What to do about them? Well, there's no easy answer, but I think it's got to start with being realistic. We aren't going to get rid of exclusionary zoning policies. We aren't going to force inclusionary zoning down the throats of suburban America. We still have to figure out a way to get those people who can't move back into the mixed-income communities, because there aren't enough places for them, an opportunity to move to communities of opportunity elsewhere where all the good things are already in place.

My answer – partial answer though it is – because we need, as Bart rightly keeps saying, a whole range of policies and we have to do everything we can on every front. We have to recognize that the housing choice voucher program is a special animal, because it makes an end run around suburban zoning policies. All you've got to do is to find a willing landlord to rent. There's no exclusionary policy that can prevent a private landlord from renting the apartment that's already properly zoned to whomever he wants.

The Gautreaux program and other mobility programs around the country and moving to opportunity HUD's five-city demonstrations have shown on a small scale that it works if you keep the numbers down, if you have the right counseling pre and post-move for the families so that they are certified as likely to be good tenants and good neighbors, and to deal with the NIMBY scare factors – controversial, I know. In my opinion a national housing mobility program has got to take account of the reality of NIMBYism and limit the number of voucher families who move into any given community in any year.

My forthcoming book has the numbers all worked out. We could do it on a national scale, make a huge dent in a decade in black ghettos throughout the country with no more than ten families per year moving into any community, and we know, as William Julius Wilson said, the Gautreaux program worked because the numbers weren't

threatening. If we keep the numbers down and we have the program at a national enough scale, it can work.

MS. BLACKWELL: We would not have dealt with the legal racial discrimination that existed in this country without courage and people being uncomfortable and having to struggle. We can't get around that. We are at that same moment again. This time, they're not legal barriers so much that we have to break down as it is our own attitudes and fears. I'm not going to say that I'm opposed to what was just put out there, but it breaks my heart to think that as a nation we are still at that point where we have to actually put a number on the number of low-income people of color who are going to be allowed to move into a neighborhood in a given year because we carry so much racial prejudice and stereotype and fear.

We must confront this head on. I'm not Pollyanna. I do understand. I have been in these battles. I have seen what they're like, but the way to respond is not just to assume that we can't be better. So at the same time that we're pursuing a number of strategies that take into account the backwardness that we still are holding onto as a nation, we need to also come up with some strategies that put the issues squarely on the table. You can't get around community meetings, town hall sessions, the media playing an important role telling the good news. And there's plenty of good news of neighborhoods that have been transformed and people are living next to people they never thought that they would, and they have found friends, they have found good neighbors, they have found people just like themselves. Tell the good news. Do some of that hard work that you have to do when you're at a cultural struggle, which is exactly where we are right now. People have to get together. They have to talk it out.

So try some innovative strategies, but don't ignore the fact that the challenge that we faced in the 1950s is still the challenge that we face today and it's going to be painful for some people. Some people are going to get mad.

Here's one other thing: that there are a lot of communities that are more willing to do this than we realize. There are a lot of older suburban communities that are beginning to experience what inner cities have experienced through all of these years, and these places hold a lot of affection for people. People – white, black, Latino, Asian – don't want to see their communities go that route. And to begin to provide support in those places, rather than just let them go, these failing, older inner-ring suburbs, rather than just let them go, recognize that we're beginning to have the very experiment that we're talking about happening naturally. As people are moving out of inner-city communities and they're moving into these places, we have mixed-income communities. We need to invest in the schools. We need to have business investment. We need to have jobs so we can stabilize these places. The only time that we seem to have mixed-income, mixed-race neighborhoods in America is when they're transitioning, either in transitioning from being upscale to being disinvested or they're transitioning from being a disinvested community to a gentrifying community. When we see that happening, let's stabilize these places and begin to let the natural experiment thrive.

MS. GLOVER: I would add very quickly –

MR. DOUGLAS: Quickly, because then we're going to open it up.

MS. GLOVER: Okay. On the NIMBYism issue, I think the real approach to it is tapping into enlightened self-interest. And as I've talked about the whole urban sprawl issue, that represents a genuine opportunity, and things that people weren't prepared to accommodate before all of a sudden don't look as difficult because when they see themselves out on the highway commuting for hours they say, well, gee, I might be able to get over it.

And the second component is that it has to be excellently delivered. I think what we can't do is have something that is creating a problem and look at it and say, "Oh, that's not a problem. You just have to accept it," as opposed to addressing to make sure that we're talking about an excellent opportunity. We can't force programs on families.

And I think some of the resistance has been all of the experiment that has been made around the programs: "Oh, we shouldn't require people to work. Oh, we shouldn't do this. Oh, we shouldn't do that." And quite frankly, we need to come together around a set of goals, outcomes that we know that we can achieve if we work together to achieve them because I think, as Angela says, there's a lot of untapped willingness to embrace and do a whole lot of things, but people want to know, well, what is this going to be not only today, but what is it going to be five years from now, ten years from now? And I think that the willingness is there; we just have to tap into it.

MR. DOUGLAS: Thank you.

Let's open it up now to the audience. And first, if there are any reporters here who have a question, we'd like to take their questions first. Okay. Can you take the mike? Before asking your question, speak into the mike, state your name and your affiliation.

Q: Morton Kondracke from *Roll Call*. Mr. Polikoff, are you suggesting that – I'm a little confused as to whether you're saying that the evacuees from New Orleans should be encouraged, if they want to, to go elsewhere in the country or that they should move to different neighborhoods in New Orleans or both, but –

MR. POLIKOFF: The former.

Q: The former.

MR. POLIKOFF: It's their choice.

Q: Yeah. And what – and so what –

MR. POLIKOFF: (Either?) place. I mean, they should be encouraged to go wherever they want to go, but it should be explained to them what the opportunities are in communities of opportunity anywhere they're interested in going.

Q: What do you think the optimum numbers are like for returning and not returning to New Orleans?

MR. POLIKOFF: New Orleans? I don't know. I think that's a question for psychologists. (Laughter.)

Q: Hi. Julie Kosterlitz, *National Journal*. I actually have a lot of questions about this, but one question is if you think about bussing, for example, and the way some communities have rolled back on that with both sides, some in inner-city communities saying, well, we want community-based schools. We have a community. Is there something of value in these communities that you're sort of giving up on by talking about basically a strategy of dispersion and dispersal? And people talk a lot about extended families, extended family networks that they fall back on in hard times: are you perhaps missing something about whether people really want to be dispersed and live in communities where they are in a minority?

MR. BLACKWELL: There is a lot of value and we need to – I'm glad that you asked that question because I think it's very important to lift up the things that are of value. And when I talk about building livable communities in addition to creating opportunities for people to move elsewhere, those livable communities are places where people live now that we need to think about where they were living before this happened and think about how to make those more attractive places to live. And one of the things that will make it a more attractive place to live is for it to be a mixed-income community, but let me tell you what would be lost if people's concentration in terms of race and family got diluted to the point that people felt isolated in what was once their own community.

One thing you need to worry about is political voice. We still live in a country in which people of color, African-Americans, Latino, people who are Asian, Native American need to have the ability to have their representatives representing them, whether it's in city hall or whether it's in Congress. We have been able to achieve that because people have been living in concentrations based on income, based on race ethnicity. And so this notion of political voice is something that we have to take into account when we're talking about breaking up the concentration that exists. That's one.

The next is culture. Culture and the cultural traditions that people feel are very important, that those things people would really feel that would be a loss, and then the thing that you've mentioned in terms of family. I am not suggesting that we wouldn't still have communities that were predominantly African-American, but they wouldn't be communities in which 40 percent or more of the people lived below the poverty level. The problem with concentrated poverty is that the concentration of poverty – it's not the concentration of race.

I had the personal experience, many years ago now, of growing up in a racially segregated community, but an economically integrated community, and it was economically integrated because all of the black people in the town that I lived in lived in the same area, but people who were high income and low income all lived in the same place. And I will tell you, people who were poor and lived in our community had access to many things that I'm sure helped them to do better in life. So breaking up concentrated poverty does not mean that we're necessarily forcing people not to be able to live near the cultural institutions that are important to them or people who share things that are important, but this issue of political representation is very important and we need to take it into account because we're not going to get the support of – very often – people of color if they feel that what they are going to lose by moving to communities of opportunity is political voice, which is essential in a country that still has all of the issues that we do in terms of fairness and equality.

MR. DOUGLAS: One second. Anymore reporters, questions? Yes, right here.

Q: Hi. My name is Toni Coleman (ph) with Gannett News Service. I worked in St. Paul, Minnesota, for five years and I did a story on the distribution of Section 8 vouchers, and I found that most are in low-income areas partly because the landlords in the high-rent areas didn't want to be bothered by Section 8. And so how do you, Mr. Polikoff, get over that issue? And also, the vouchers only paid for so much and so folks couldn't afford to live in the high-rent areas even though they were subsidized.

MR. POLIKOFF: Simply, what we ought to do in my opinion is earmark the vouchers so they're only good for use in a low-poverty neighborhood; say, less than 10 percent. And as far as the fair-market rent problem is concerned, for the demonstration program I'm talking about, which would cover New Orleans and other places of concentrated poverty throughout the nation, there'd be one additional requirement apart from the controversial one of not concentrate – reconcentrating the families in the locations: HUD would be directed to approve a fair-market rent, whatever it was, for the program families based on comparable rents in the communities to which they wanted to move. So the national fair-market rent wouldn't preclude you going into good communities that have rent levels that are too high. It's a technocratic answer, I'm sorry, to your question, but that's – you've got to deal with the program specifics, as Bart was talking about earlier, that preclude the operation of the voucher program in a way that effectively addresses concentrated poverty. It could be done right.

MR. HARVEY: And I think there's one other addition to that is you've got to make the landlords feel more comfortable with the process of collection, eviction, et cetera, and that's a very tough issue. Renée and I were on the Millennial Housing Commission and that was debated back and forth, but it – you have to have something that makes sense to the landlord to take on if that landlord's willing to do it, and you find that willingness will vary over time. If it's a tight market, they won't fool with anything from Section 8 on. If it isn't so tight a market, that's when they're more susceptible to

saying, yeah, well, we'll take something on. But understanding the private market is critical of this, not only the fair-market rents, but the –

MR. POLIKOFF: I agree with what Bart has said, but I'd just add that that's doable, too. There are simple things we can do with respect to landlords to make them feel more comfortable. I'd give some examples, but I won't take the time to do it.

MS. GLOVER: And I just want to underscore that issue in terms of the standards around programs. And I think one of the things that has happened with some of the housing programs is that they've also become experimental programs, and that's where the advocates like to play, the legal aids of the world and the so on in terms of, "Oh, you can't have standards. You can't have screening. You can't do this. You can't do that." And what has happened is that in a compromise situation, oftentimes landlords who would participate in the program have been scared off. And I think we've got to come together again around a set of common sense policies that would support screening and good behavior.

I mean, interesting thing about concentrated poor neighborhoods. If you get on the ground and speak to the families, they don't want any of the bad things in their neighborhoods anymore than the things that families who are not in concentrated areas say they don't want. No one wants high crime, failing schools, a lot of mess and confusion, but the advocates, in a lot of cases who don't live in these communities, insist that if there's going to be a government subsidy, then there can't be standards. We've got to reconcile that because I think that has actually served as a disincentive for greater participation by families who would like to see these programs truly achieve the outcome.

MR. DOUGLAS: Yes?

Q: Good morning. My name is John Taylor. I'm the president of the National Community Reinvestment Coalition. I want to say I agreed with like 94.6 percent of what you all said, but I don't know why I came to that conclusion. (Laughter.)

I guess, you know, when I think about the concept of ending concentrated poverty and then listening to – I mean, first off I don't – I actually don't think we're talking about rocket science or anything like that. I actually think kind of the way Angela I think succinctly put it is that you show me a challenge or a problem, and I'll show you somewhere where someone has dealt with it successfully. And so it's – and then we talk about coming to scale and changing strategies and changing policies.

And I guess where I would love to hear some more conversation is I think at least most of us who have been in this effort many years, including pro-integrative neighborhoods, the antidote to racism, and I'd love to talk to you about that whole thing of the conflict between people of colors' representation and then integrating neighborhoods and the fear of having people of color, but that's a whole other panel.

But the notion of – we are left with – where I’m left with this conversation is, yes, I agree. Yes, yes. And we get to that point, though, where we’re all talking about policy change, and the real elephants in the room are the elephants in the country who will not allow – (laughter) – for that policy change. And so the question becomes, how do we change the policies so these brilliant ideas, non-rocket science experiments, and all these things that are working that indeed many people in this room also could add to that pile of successes can become policy? And whether it’s the Lakoff approach – the messaging, branding, how we reach the American public, how we get them to consider the things that we’re talking about, not just the solutions, but why it is important – the way you all began about this is in all of America’s interests.

MS. BLACKWELL(?): I think that one way that we – one thing that we have to do among many things is to be prepared for a long struggle. There is no easy way through this. This goes to the core of who we are as the American people, and the American people represent all of these points of view. This is the fundamental question for the next period of time for this country, whether it’s going to thrive or whether it’s going to be an embarrassment in the world. We have to come to grips with embedded and continuing inequality, and the fact that it tracks lines of race. It is the intersection of race, class, and poverty that has this country stuck. It is a challenge to democracy. Democracy will not live up to its promise if it can’t get through this moment.

Therefore, I am not one who is in favor of thinking that we just need to change the way we talk about it. I think it is more fundamental than that. I do believe in trying to pick your words carefully, but in picking the words carefully, I don’t want to mask the differences. We do have differences. We need to bring those differences out into the surface and see if once you fully define the difference who wants to own it. Who wants to own it? Because there’s some very ugly things happening in this country that by letting the language become acceptable and soft and gentle, people can identify with that position. I’m for taking off that language and showing it for what it is and say who really wants to stand and say, “Yeah, that’s who I am. I don’t want those black people living next-door to me because I don’t trust them.” So whoever is willing to say that, own that, and let’s talk that through. Let’s take it apart. Just look about whether or not there’s any reason to accept that.

So my response is, I think that we have to get more direct in this conversation; that we have to understand that we are going to have to struggle through some tough things and we shouldn’t struggle through the things we don’t have to struggle with because I personally believe when it comes to these issues of race and inclusion that the American people are better than they seem. I absolutely believe that. When it comes to issues of race and inclusion, the American people are better than they seem. But what we have not been able to do is to frame and put forward the policies so that the American people can see their better selves, but in order to do that, we have to let them see the ugly side, too, so they could say, “Oh, no. That is not me. I do not own this. I do not stand there.” Some people will, but I don’t think in the end most people will.

MR. DOUGLAS: Anyone else want to –

MR. POLIKOFF: Just want to add on the framing of the policies point, a little anecdote. Sir Michael Marmot, a British (epidemiologist?), wrote a book called *The Status Syndrome*, and in that book he relates how a group of doctors in England spent a great deal of time during the Thatcher administration exploring the relationship between social equality and health problems. The Thatcher administration could not have been more disinterested. They come up with a bunch of recommendations from that study and when Tony Blair came into office in 1997, they pulled the study off the shelf and it became in major part national policy under the Blair administration.

The moral of that story is to emphasize – in my opinion, is to emphasize what Angela said. We've got to not only – it's a small part of what she said, so I'm emphasizing it – we've got to not only work on politics – the first answer to your question – and do it against the background of belief that we are better or we can be better with respect to race and inclusion, but in my opinion, like the British doctors did in the '90s, we've got to articulate the right policies, even though they don't have any chance of being adopted tomorrow. In my opinion, we ought to take the small miracles that Renée Glover is performing in Atlanta and what Bart is doing miraculously also all across the country. Write these up in terms not just of anecdotal success stories, but policies that made those things possible and that need to be brought to scale. And, of course, I would add housing mobility to that also.

MR. HARVEY: And, John, one more quick comment, which is the other side of it, just – I think it's going to be around economics; that if your cities fail, your metropolitan area is failing – yeah, I think Rush Limbaugh would have a field day with this conversation, say – I can see him twisting it. And so twisting the language is what's happened so far. No one's put it in economic terms as to what's happened, what's happening, why things are the way they are and where they need to go. And when more of the middle class begins to feel what's going to happen and is happening – and you read *The World is Flat* and you'll see that there's a strategy for very few of us in that economic determinism that's coming – I think they'll be more sympathetic to not latching onto the cartoons that are presented every day on talk radio as to what's happened.

And we have to lay out that these aren't failed policies. These are economic issues that have resulted in what you're seeing today, and we also have to own up that part of low-income areas and people are things we don't approve of. This is what Renée is going to, and we sort of, say: everybody – every low-income person is a good person. It isn't true. It isn't true. They may have gotten there one way or another, but these are where the standards come in, too. And so you can't take those visuals that can be so easily twisted without owning up that there are behaviors involved in this that we don't approve of. There is a whole background as to why this is the way it's happening – has happened. There will be more of this coming forward and either as a country we're going to deal with it or we're going to be in gated communities. We're going to be Latin America. And that – there are no answers from what the conservatives are putting forward.

And if you look for Katrina where they say urban homesteading is your answer, even if it worked, even if it had some – it's 1 percent of the – I mean, there weren't – there isn't an answer. Or enterprise zones? Those are going to solve people out on the streets looking (frayed?)? There wasn't an answer. No one said – you haven't given us an answer. And there is an answer in vouchers that for some reason won't be used in this and won't be used because they want to cut them. So I am making this political, but I don't mean it as a political, but give me some answers to what's going on here one way or another.

MR. DOUGLAS: I wanted to get Margy there.

Q: Margy Waller. I work at the Brookings Institution, but for purposes of this morning I'll identify myself with my article in the *Washington Monthly*, which you all have in hand.

What's striking to me about this conversation and about what's been discussed about solutions to poverty post-Katrina is that we seem to separate the housing and poverty concentration conversation from transportation. Location cannot be separated from transportation and yet we don't see any discussion – we really haven't this morning and haven't really post-Katrina about how to solve that problem. We know that a quarter of poor households don't have cars. It was double that in Katrina. We know that the reason people weren't able to leave New Orleans was largely because they didn't have a car they could drive.

My solution in my article is that we should devise a tax policy that promotes support for what is a true cost of work for everyone, and that's commuting. And we ought to make it easier for low-income people to get cars. And in part, that's because in my opinion, public transit, while we should continue to invest in it in dense urban areas, is not going to be the solution for most poor families the way it isn't for most other families.

I wonder if you all have a thought about that or reaction to the transportation question.

MS. BLACKWELL(?): Absolutely. It is absolutely important. Thank you for bringing it up. I had written it down a couple of times and never quite got to it; that in addition to moving to opportunity and making sure that all communities are livable, the other strategy is making sure that people can link to opportunity. And the transportation one is interesting because it goes both ways. It allows people to be able to link to opportunities wherever they are in the region, but really good transportation investments also create opportunities in the places where people live.

Transit-oriented development is a wonderful strategy to be able to allow people to link throughout, but also to create business opportunities and mixed-income communities and housing opportunities. I think transportation is absolutely key, and Katrina pulled the blanket off of that problem as well. Thank you for bringing it up.

MR. DOUGLAS: This gentleman here had his hand up for a while.

Q: Hi. My name is Raymond Coates (ph), and I'm a community resource specialist for the (unintelligible) Family Support Collaborative. I hear a lot of the solutions and all of them seem pretty good, but I think in working with people who – and I do houses. That's what I do. Is that one of the things we have to talk about is personal development, because you can move people in a lot of different places, but they'll feel isolated if they don't feel adequate enough to live in those places. People are not foolish. People understand something about where they need to be in life.

Now, I personally if I lived in a very nice neighborhood, which I don't – (laughter) – I would be concerned if there were a heavy influx of the kind of people that live in my neighborhood – (laughter) – because – no, no, not because I think that I am better than they are. We all improve as we go. But if we don't deal with the individuals – the ability to develop people, then we can develop all the land we want. People will tear it down, not because they're just (trifling?), but because – simply because they don't know.

An interesting thing I found in working with people that came here from Katrina disaster was very few of them saw the disaster as an opportunity to return home to great jobs. They didn't see that. They didn't see it as an opportunity to go home and rebuild their city with their own hands. I think that's – we're talking about moving people to self-sufficiency, because that's really what we're talking about, rather than housing. We're talking about self-sufficiency. If we're going to do housing, we must do self-sufficiency. If we're going to develop affordable neighborhoods, we must develop people. Thank you.

MR. HARVEY(?): Agreed.

MS. GLOVER: Yeah, well –

MR. HARVEY(?): Oh, I'm sorry, go ahead.

(Cross talk.)

MR. DOUGLAS: – go ahead and respond, and then we'll have time for, I think, one more question. You want to comment on that one or not?

MR. POLIKOFF: Yeah, take some comments on that one. Renée is about to comment, though.

MS. GLOVER: Yeah. What I was going to say, the fact of the matter is that I don't think we'd be having this discussion at all if it weren't driven by developing people. And that's really the underpinning of all of this because, quite frankly, what we have not done is focus on what kind of outcomes we want from the people and it all starts with environment. I don't even think you can get to the human development

conversation if you're talking about people being in terrible places where they're worried about their safety, their ability to get up and go to work and those types of things. So that is part of the strategy; there being a human development strategy as well as a real estate repositioning where we're actually taking people out of these terrible circumstances and putting and creating healthy communities so that as the human development occurs, there are better schools, better opportunities, and better jobs.

I think what has happened too often is the thought that you can do an intervention in a terrible neighborhood where you can't even get to the conversation because there's so many forces pulling at families: crime that takes advantage of poverty, and so on and so forth. So it has to be a dual strategy because the people deserve and need an investment, but at the same time we have to have high expectations because I think the other part of that equation is to assume that because someone is poor at a given point in time they have nothing to contribute or offer, and that just sends the wrong signal. So you're actually dead on.

And that's why I think there's such a sense of urgency and quite frankly political mandate for us to deal with these issues, because we are by neglecting these issues writing off a larger percentage of the American society. And there will be a payday to be reckoned with if we don't start addressing those issues.

MR. DOUGLAS: Let's take one last question. Yes. Okay. We'll take both of those. You'll be last.

Q: My name is Latoya Johnson. I work for Senator Hillary Clinton and I have one question. I just moved here from Louisiana and the first thing I did when I showed – well, the first response I got when I showed my potential landlord my ID was “I don't want to deal with people from Katrina. I don't want to deal with all that,” even though, like, I was coming here in search of a job not because of Katrina, and I have a great degree from the University of Chicago and I'm not dressed like people who may be from high-income area – I mean, high-poverty areas.

My question is, what are we doing – like, what are your ideas for things that we can do right now for the thousand people in my home town still living on cots?

MR. DOUGLAS: Okay. Let's take them both.

Q: My question relates to that actually. I'm Maureen Markham. I'm a consultant that works with nonprofit agencies, community based and local governments around affordable housing issues. And I think that we have a herd of elephants in the room and I appreciate what Mr. Taylor said because I think that the immediate issue right now has to do with the elephants that are in charge.

And as you're all saying, we know how to do this. We have the solutions. What I see the problem is is that you folks that are up there on the panel are not the ones that are

making the decisions that are going to affect what's going to happen down there next week. And what can we do about that?

And I'm particularly concerned about the fact that it does take the public will and I don't think we – the decision-makers do have the public will to make the investments that's necessary to bring these programs up to scale. And particularly what can we do to stop the reverse Robin Hood mentality that's going on where we're taking money from the poor, giving it to the rich, and the reconstruction of New Orleans is being funded on the backs of poor people? I'm talking about tax cuts.

MR. HARVEY(?): Just to take the last part of your question first is I think people have to speak out on it exactly the way that you have, and I think more people have to come out. And interestingly, right when Katrina hit, what the Senate was going to discuss was the permanent repeal of the estate tax, and then they thought, well, gee, that's a little unseemly, isn't it, for the top 1 percent of Americans to do something while we've got this catastrophe?

So I think out of what's happening in Katrina, there have to be voices that are saying, "Look, here's what you're doing." It's this simple. And is this what we want to do as a country? And that's doing what Angela said, which is the dirty little facts – just make them very clear. This is what you're doing. Is this what you believe? And then finding the language in the way to get that across.

As on the second part just real quickly, in good faith we are part of the planning (unintelligible) that are going on right now in Mississippi. We'll see if we have any say in it, as well as in New Orleans. And I think everyone who is involved ought to find a way to play a part so that the policy that comes out of it is as good as it can be made. And I think you have to go in with an open mind and try your hardest to make what you'd like to see happen happen.

MR. POLIKOFF: Also the here-and-now question with this past –

MS. BLACKWELL: Yeah, I agree with that, but I also wanted to add that this is a wonderful opportunity for philanthropy to play a role because we need to magnify the visibility and the voice of people who are bringing a different perspective and to really be able to make sure that different leaders and policy advocates get into this mix. And I think that philanthropy could play a very important role in helping to do that.

In terms of what about the people now – I also heard in that question and what about the people now who are not poor but are suffering enormously? I was thinking about that just as you asked the question because I think it was the comment here in the exchange about people who need a certain investment in order to be able to take advantage of opportunities and people who have issues that perhaps nobody wants to embrace at this point: that we do often lump all people of color together.

And one of the things that was very obvious in Katrina is that there were many people with high education, have had good jobs, and had been living in middle-income communities who are in terrible shape, who are having difficulty getting on their feet because racism still exists in society and it does not make distinctions. It assumes that if you are black you carry every stereotype that people don't want to be bothered with.

And so in thinking about our policies, we need to understand that just because people aren't poor, if they were impacted by this and they are of color, they probably are going to need some assistance in order to get back on their feet more than if they were white and in the same circumstance because they have been able to overcome a lot in getting their livelihoods pulled out from under them put them right back at square one in many places. So I think it was very good to say that we need to have a strategy to deal with that.

For people who we're trying to deal with right now, we need to have a lot of things that have to do with health and safety, and loans, and making housing available to them, and helping people to connect with jobs. And I haven't heard enough about really pushing that forward as a whole strategy for people who need just a little bit of help to get back on their feet, but more help than you might think because of the reality of race in America.

MR. DOUGLAS: Renée?

MS. GLOVER: Yeah. I just want to leave this thought with you: these problems are infinitely solvable, but we have to see how each of us plays a role, and I think too often it's very easy to sit back and say, "Well, that's someone else's problem." This is every American's problem and the fact of the matter is what happens in the American society is something that we either should support or not support through not only voting, but interacting with our congressional folks and this, that, and the other.

And I know we take a lot for granted and we don't connect the dots. I mean, I don't think that people feel that, well, poverty really doesn't impact me. Poverty really doesn't impact my city or my county or my state, or do we even think about the impact of poverty on our competitive place in American and in the world? I mean, I don't think we really connect the issues. Everything is so fragmented. We don't even connect schools with housing, with transportation, because we've got a government structure around all these horribly fragmented governments and people are saying, "Well, we need to come up with more creative affordable housing programs."

We really are talking about building a society and we've got to get more engaged, so we have to be more informed and we have to connect the dots because all of these things are going to have an impact on each and every one of us whether we realize it or not, so we all need to get engaged and understand these issues. This is not something that we have the luxury to come to a policy meeting about and forget about when we go back home because these things, in the aggregate over time, are changing the very mix of how this country is reacting to people who are becoming – by and large, we are losing our

middle class and it's getting to be much more of a segregated society in terms of the very well off and the not so well off. And people take comfort in the fact that I hope I'm up in one of these other categories, but we really need to be thinking about what is happening as a fundamental matter.

I mean, we haven't voted on a lot of the things that are occurring and these policy changes and the redirection of budgets and all of these things – we have to connect the dots. Some people don't even understand that these tax cuts are taking money out of the government to fund these programs because – and whether or not we care about these programs, it becomes academic because there's no money to direct to it. And do we care enough to get engaged, to connect the dots, to understand what's happening because it all lies with each and every one of us?

MR. DOUGLAS: I'm going to let Renée be the last word on the subject. And I just want to again thank the panelists for being with us today. I think we covered a lot of ground. There's obviously a lot more things we didn't get to, but I hope this is the first of many conversations on this topic. And I want to thank all of you for coming and sharing and engaging with us on these issues, and we'll see you next time.

(Applause.)

(END)