

GOOD MORNING, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

DEPUTY MAYOR BENFORD, THANK YOU FOR THAT INTRODUCTION.

IT'S GREAT TO SEE SO MANY NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEADERS TOGETHER FOR THIS MORNING'S HISTORIC EVENT.

ACTING U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION, JOHN KING JR., THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE WITH US.

I ALSO APPRECIATE THE PRESENCE OF CONGRESSMAN EMANUEL CLEAVER AND CONGRESSWOMAN FREDERICA WILSON.

CONGRESSWOMAN WILSON, MY SPECIAL THANKS TO YOU FOR CO-HOSTING THIS LOCAL ACTION SUMMIT WITH ME TODAY.

MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS AGO, CONGRESSWOMAN WILSON STARTED A PROGRAM TO HELP YOUNG BOYS IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY WHO WERE AT RISK FOR DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL. TODAY, CONGRESSWOMAN WILSON'S PROGRAM BENEFITS THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS IN OUR COMMUNITY.

IN FACT, HER PROGRAM WAS SO SUCCESSFUL THAT SHE EARNED AN INVITATION FROM THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION TO SERVE ON THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL OF THE “MY BROTHER’S KEEPER” ALLIANCE.

CONGRESSWOMAN WILSON, THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT YOU’VE DONE AND CONTINUE TO DO FOR OUR COMMUNITY’S CHILDREN.

I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU TO FURTHER BRIDGE OPPORTUNITY GAPS IN EDUCATION AND CAREER READINESS, ESPECIALLY FOR MIAMI-DADE’S AT-RISK YOUTH.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THANK YOU FOR JOINING ME AT TODAY’S LOCAL ACTION SUMMIT.

THE “MY BROTHER’S KEEPER” COMMUNITY CHALLENGE IS AN INITIATIVE TO ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY LEADERS ACROSS THE NATION TO DEVELOP PLANS TO IMPROVE LIFE OUTCOMES AND CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE.

THE CHALLENGE IS A CALL TO ACTION FOR COMMUNITIES TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO CLOSE EDUCATIONAL AND OPPORTUNITY GAPS SO THAT ALL STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL -- COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY.

GIVEN THIS CALL TO ACTION, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS HAPPY TO ACCEPT PRESIDENT OBAMA'S "MY BROTHER'S KEEPER COMMUNITY CHALLENGE."

THIS CHALLENGE IS EASY TO ACCEPT BECAUSE "MY BROTHER'S KEEPER" DIRECTLY ALIGNS WITH THE COUNTY'S EXISTING INITIATIVES, SUCH AS OUR HEAD START PROGRAM, THE JOINT ROUNDTABLE ON YOUTH SAFETY, THE YOUTH SUMMER JOB PROGRAM AND MANY OTHERS, TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OUR 2.6 MILLION RESIDENTS THROUGH EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

BY ACCEPTING THIS CHALLENGE, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HAS AGREED TO BRING TOGETHER REPRESENTATIVES FROM OUR COMMUNITY TO CREATE PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS THAT WILL GIVE OUR YOUNG RESIDENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GROW, LEARN AND WORK IN A SAFE COMMUNITY.

AND THAT'S WHY MANY OF YOU ARE HERE TODAY.

AS EXPERTS FROM MIAMI-DADE'S PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS, YOU WILL PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN MIAMI-DADE'S IMPLEMENTATION OF A COHERENT, CRADLE-TO-COLLEGE-TO-CAREER STRATEGY SO THAT ALL CHILDREN IN OUR COMMUNITY CAN REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.

I NOW CHALLENGE YOU TO OFFER YOUR INSIGHTS AND EVIDENCE-BASED SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO BRING ABOUT REAL CHANGE TO MEET THE GOALS OF THE PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE.

ALL IDEAS ARE WELCOME BECAUSE THE ONLY WAY THAT WE CAN BRING ABOUT THE KIND OF CHANGE WE NEED IN OUR COMMUNITY IS BY WORKING TOGETHER.

WE'VE GOT A SOLID FOUNDATION, AND NOW WE NEED TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE FOR OUR CHILDREN AND OUR GRANDCHILDREN.

SPEAKING OF GRANDCHILDREN, MY DAUGHTER GAVE BIRTH TO MY SIXTH GRANDCHILD YESTERDAY. SO NOW, I HAVE AN EVEN GREATER REASON TO MAKE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY BETTER FOR OUR YOUNGEST RESIDENTS.

EARLIER, I MENTIONED SEVERAL COUNTY INITIATIVES THAT DIRECTLY ALIGN WITH “MY BROTHER’S KEEPER.”

I RECOGNIZE THAT MANY OF US HAVE BEEN WORKING HARD FOR YEARS TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF “MY BROTHER’S KEEPER.”

FOR EXAMPLE, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HAS ONE OF THE LARGEST AND MOST SUCCESSFUL HEAD-START PROGRAMS IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES. THROUGH THIS PROGRAM, WE’RE PREPARING MORE THAN 7,000 LOW-INCOME CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 5 TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL.

THROUGH OUR JOINT ROUNDTABLE ON YOUTH SAFETY, WE CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER -- LAW ENFORCEMENT, THE SCHOOL BOARD AND THE COMMUNITY -- TO FOCUS RESOURCES ON PROVIDING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY. THESE

RESOURCES INCLUDE EXPANDING PROGRAMMING IN OUR COUNTY PARKS AND PROVIDING MORE AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN.

I ALSO INCLUDED \$1.7 MILLION IN THE BUDGET FOR THE YOUTH SUMMER JOB PROGRAM. THIS FUNDING PROVIDES OUR CHILDREN WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN VALUABLE WORK EXPERIENCE, WHILE STAYING ENGAGED IN SAFE, POSITIVE ACTIVITIES WHILE SCHOOL IS OUT FOR THE SUMMER.

THESE INITIATIVES SHOW THAT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HAS DONE A LOT TO EXPAND EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL OF OUR RESIDENTS.

AND I KNOW THAT THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR EXPERTS WHO ARE HERE THIS MORNING STAND READY TO ACCEPT THE “MY BROTHER’S KEEPER CHALLENGE.”

TOGETHER, WE WILL FIND WAYS TO FURTHER EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES IN OUR COMMUNITY.

**CONGRESSWOMAN WILSON, THANK YOU AGAIN
FOR PARTNERING WITH ME TO BRING “MY
BROTHER’S KEEPER” TO MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.**

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THANK YOU FOR
WORKING WITH ME TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE
FOR OUR COMMUNITY’S CHILDREN.**

**MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL, AND MAY GOD
CONTINUE TO BLESS MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!**

