

**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES  
5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS  
May 24, 2006**

**Thank you Mayor Hood for your kind introduction and good morning to you all. What a great honor it is to be here among such a remarkable group of leaders.**

**I'd like to acknowledge my fellow mayors and thank them for allowing me to accept this award on their behalf, and on behalf of local officials everywhere engaged in this very important work.**

**This group embodies the spirit that's spreading all across America – and the profound change that is happening in public policy, in how we view the development of our youth in this country.**

**For mayors, public policy is personal. We know the people who are being lifted up or let down by the actions of government. We know their names.**

**So when we see an opportunity to do something better, we understand the costs of delay.**

**We recognized that kids actually spend more time out of school than in school, and yet for many years, we as a society have viewed the school hours as our only opportunity to build up our kids. And even worse – school time has been seen as our only responsibility to our kids.**

**Meanwhile, it has been clear that too many of our children aren't experiencing the intellectual and emotional growth they need to succeed as effective wage earners, good citizens, and healthy adults.**

**Our cities and our nation are suffering for it. And with stiffening economic competition from abroad, it poses an even greater threat to our future economy and the strength of our democracy.**

**The reality is that June Cleaver is no longer waiting at home. Most kids live in single parent households or in**

**homes where both parents work. And many or most of those single parents or guardians can't afford an afternoon tutor or karate class.**

**So what mayors have done is to embrace this reality as an opportunity.**

**When the adults in community start looking at out-of-school time as an opportunity to provide kids some of the tools they don't get in school, our future starts looking a lot brighter.**

**We can teach new kinds of skills and excite in them an interest in learning about the world around them.**

**And since after-school is very often provided in partnership among public, private, and non-profit entities – as opposed to a centralized, government run program -- it starts to look like an even better investment. And I know I speak for every mayor present in deeply thanking all the funders who believe**

**in this work. I would like to say a special thanks to the Wallace Foundation.**

**It's certainly a good investment for all the usual economic reasons. If we do not pay today, we can expect to pay tomorrow – in social, juvenile justice and economic losses.**

**But it's even more than that. Economic competitiveness is incredibly important, but it's not everything.**

**As a society, we should also be deliberate about investing in the kind of world we believe in.**

**After-school is an opportunity to teach things like character, compassion, and civic virtue. A love of music, good athletic skills, the art of mediation, and so much more.**

**The healthy growth of our children will translate into economic success and the moral strength of families, communities, and our very nation.**

**That's why folks like all of you here are making the difference, and why we have to continue to bring the message home to every community nationwide.**

**Thank you, and thank you again for allowing me to accept this on your behalf.**

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