THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

WELCOME TO SHELBYVILLE:

A FILM AND DISCUSSION ABOUT IMMIGRATION AND

CHANGE IN A NEW DESTINATION

Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, September 15, 2010

Welcome:

BRUCE KATZ
Vice President and Director, Metropolitan Policy Program

KIM A. SNYDER
Director and Producer, *Welcome to Shelbyville*

Panel Discussion:

AUDREY SINGER, Moderator
Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution

DAVID LUBELL
Executive Director, Welcoming America

MIGUEL GONZALES
Welcoming Tennessee Ambassador
Shelbyville, Tennessee

MARGIE McHUGH
Co-Director, National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy
Migration Policy Institute

Closing Remarks:

REBECCA CARSON
Chief, Office of Citizenship
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

* * * * *

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. KATZ: I'm Bruce Katz and I'm director of the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution. And so welcome to Brookings at the Movies. I was hoping they'd have popcorn out there, but maybe later when it gets to the booze part of the equation here.

We're very, very pleased to have the opportunity to do -- obviously not the premiere of this film, but a showing of this film and to be co-hosting this with Active Voice, an organization that is just doing phenomenal work using film, television, multimedia, to give visibility to issues like health care and criminal justice and immigration and sustainability. And Ellen Schneider, thank you for being here.

It's also a real pleasure to have the Migration Policy Institute as a co-sponsor of today's event. Their National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy focuses on how new destination communities and states are dealing with the impact of immigration.

So let me just give very short context for the film from a national perspective and then sort of really try to introduce the flow here. As some of you know, we released the Brookings State of Metropolitan America report earlier this year that really showed the very complicated dynamics underway in this country through this decade in terms of population growth, aging, diversifying, in a country that really, in many respects, is splintering along new cultural and educational fault lines and the national trends we uncovered. Audrey Singer, who I'll introduce in a

sec -- it's not going to be surprising to people in this room -- immigrants now number about 39 million people in the United States. That's 12.5 percent of our population or 1 in 8. And that really is approaching the high watermark that we saw during the early part of the 20th century when the U.S. population was nearly 15 percent foreign born. And, you know, the Great Recession has slowed the pace of immigration in the last couple years, but, as we all know, that's a temporary pause.

I think from our perspective as a metropolitan program, what's fascinating is the special geography of immigration. You know, immigrants used to be concentrated in fairly few traditional gateways -- the big metropolitan areas, like New York and Chicago and L.A. and Miami. And really what's been going on in this country since the 1990s is immigrants are finding new opportunities in many places with little or no history of immigration. So since 2000, metro areas in the South, or particularly the Southeast, have experienced significant immigration for the first time and really have led the nation in terms of their growth. So we're talking about South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina.

Among the top 20 immigrant growth metros in the country, 14 were located in the Southeast, including 2 in the state of Tennessee. Nashville saw the fourth highest growth of any metropolitan area, 83 percent, and Shelbyville is to the south of Nashville. Knoxville experienced a 63 percent increase in its foreign-born population. The mayor of Knoxville is actually running to be the governor of the state of

Tennessee right now. And these are places that were traditionally black and white. And what they are seeing is a very quick presence of foreign-born residents, particularly Hispanics, who represent the fastest growing group of newcomers.

You know, Shelbyville, along with other places in Tennessee, along with other places in the Southeast, is really emblematic of this fast growth and societal change. So what's happening really in these new destination areas, what Audrey calls the new gateways of immigration, is really, really important for how the United States assimilates and integrates millions of people over the course of the next several decades, and how newcomers and long-term residents, you know, work together, particularly given the context of the recession to build strong and sustainable and prosperous communities going forward.

So this film, you know, raises these questions. I think it provides a real world setting for understanding immigrants in new settings, you know, one where race and religion and class and gender are really key elements of the context.

And before I introduce Kim Snyder, the filmmaker, who will spend a few minutes talking about what we're about to see, let me tell you about the rest of the event. After the screening, which runs about an hour, we'll have a panel discussion led by Audrey Singer, my colleague who leads our immigration work at the Metropolitan Program. She spent the past nine years in our program working on the new geography of

immigration and the economic, social, civic, and policy implications of these trends. And then following that panel we'll have a reception that will take place in the meeting room next door. If there's no popcorn I'll go out and buy some.

And, you know, Kim Snyder is an award-winning producer and director of this film. Her film has already been the recipient of a Gucci Tribeca documentary fund grant -- you don't usually see those names put together -- and was officially selected to be part of the U.S. State Department's 2010 American Documentary Showcase, which is very interesting. The film will air in PBS's *Independent Lens* in early 2011. Kim has also co-created the BeCause Foundation, which has produced a series of short documentaries on social innovators around the world and directed and produced the 2011 documentary, *I Remember Me*. So, Kim, welcome to Brookings and thank you for doing this important film.

(Applause)

MS. SNYDER: Welcome and thank you for coming. And Bruce, thank you for setting such a great context for what we're about to see.

I really want to thank Brookings and Active Voice, Ellen and Audrey, and their staffs for putting this together. You are the first -- technically the first public audience to see this film, so it's always really nerve-racking. And I couldn't -- I can't think of a better venue actually to launch this film.

Two years ago, when I went down to Shelbyville, Tennessee, to really chronicle a year in the life of this town, I really couldn't -- I knew it was a hot button issue and all of the trends that Bruce has pointed out were obviously there, but I really didn't imagine that two years later it would become even more important. And I think one of the things that's really struck me -- we did just show the film to a contingent of the town of Shelbyville on Sunday and that was really exciting. But I think one of the things that struck me in terms of what's happened in the last weeks in this country is there just aren't that many positive stories. And I think they're really needed right now. So I really respect what's happening in Shelbyville.

I also want to acknowledge the BeCause Foundation, which has been with me in support of this from the beginning, my colleague, Erin Swarensen who is here, and a couple of people who are up here from Shelbyville. We have Don Miguel, who is a beloved subject in the film. We have Kataly Minueto, who was part of the Welcoming Tennessee Initiative. And we have Sarah Hunt here, who has -- who I just had wonderful conversations with -- there you are -- and was our wonderful moderator of our panel on Sunday. And also Kent Lewis, who is a very wise and welcomed faith leader in the community down in Bedford County.

So having said that, I am excited to show the film. It feels very nostalgic. I did my graduate work across the street, so it feels sort of

like old homecoming back to this block. And as Bruce mentioned, it will premier on PBS. And also I want to acknowledge Victoria Sloan . We just traveled in August with the film's sort of unofficial premier to Nigeria. And that was sort of unexpected with this really exciting new initiative of the State Department called American Documentary Showcase. And more than anything, that trip really showed me how global and the resonance of the story of Shelbyville has in Europe and elsewhere in the world. I do think it's sort of the issue of our times.

And with that, I look forward to just making sure there's no one I didn't acknowledge. If Susan Cohen is here, she's the person behind the State Department initiative that landed me in Nigeria and that was very exciting. So I look forward to hearing a lively discussion after and hope you enjoy it.

(Film shown)

MS. SINGER: Welcome again, everybody. I'm Audrey Singer. I'm in the Metropolitan Policy Program here at Brookings. And I'm so glad all of you could be here today. We are thrilled to have this film event with Active Voice, who have worked really hard to make this happen in the first place and who have been part of the process making this event happen.

And welcome to Kim, of course, the filmmaker. You will not have an opportunity to talk to Kim here on the panel, but at the reception she's going to be there and you can ask her all the questions you want

about making the film.

We're also delighted to be co-sponsoring this event with the Migration Policy Institute. And we have Margie McHugh here, who is the co-director of the Immigrant Integration -- National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy.

And I'm going to introduce our panelists and talk a little bit about the movie first. We've got three people on stage here with me who approached the immigration issue from three very different points of view. Miguel Gonzales you might recognize from the film. We have a movie star here at Brookings. (Applause) Not often that we have one.

He's -- we're very happy to have him here with us today. Miguel has lived and worked in Shelbyville for 18 years and has played a key role in immigrant integration under the auspices of the Welcoming Tennessee Initiative. And we'll hear more about that in a few minutes.

Margie McHugh is co-director of the National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy at the Migration Policy Institute. The center is a national help for leaders in government, community affairs, business and academia to learn about today's immigration challenges and opportunities. Prior to joining MPI, Margie was for 15 years the executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition, an umbrella organization for over 200 groups in New York that work with immigrants and refugees. Welcome, Margie. (Applause)

And we also have David Lubell joining us from Atlanta,

where as executive director and founder of Welcoming America he runs a national grassroots-driven collaborative that is working to create a welcoming atmosphere community by community. Prior to starting Welcoming America David founded the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, also known as TIRRC, where he served as executive director. Welcome, David. (Applause)

Well, I'm just going to say a few words about the film first, just to get the conversation going. Then I will ask some questions to our panelists before opening up to questions from the audience.

So, what are some of the big things we learned from this film? I mean, there are so -- it's so rich. There are so many layers. It's about race and ethnicity. It's about history. It's about immigration. It's about changing restructuring of our economy and work. It's about a small town. It's about universal values. It's about faith and many more things.

But we've learned specifically from this film that demographic and cultural change has moved away from the big cities and major suburbs of large metropolitan areas and into smaller towns like Shelbyville. Shelbyville is the story of a southern Bible-belt town, and until recently, white and black and overwhelming U.S. born, challenged by the swift changes that are occurring due to immigration. That's what makes Shelbyville somewhat unusual. We're not used to seeing this context and how immigration plays out. But is there something universal, also, about the Shelbyville story?

Immigration is such a core part of our national identity and our narrative, our experience in this country, but we know it's a relatively new experience for many places like Shelbyville. There's a larger national dialogue that's going on around immigration right now and we're often not as aware of smaller places that are changing quickly through immigration as we are the larger places or the places with the most political tension or social conflict.

For me, some of the most compelling things about the film are how this film portrays the complexities and the fluidity of the way both immigrants and members of the receiving community make adjustments to their way of life, to their way of thinking, to their way of interacting with each other. And you actually see how people change during the course of this film, which was only a year long. But this is certainly not something that happens overnight. It's a very long process. But over a period of time, a longer period of time, all groups may begin to accept a new way of life for the entire community. It remains to be seen in Shelbyville and a lot of other places, but it seems like there are a lot of key elements that are already in place there.

So this process, which we often refer to as the immigrant integration process -- some people use the word assimilation or adaptation -- is essentially how immigrants find their way here in this country as workers, as neighbors, as parents, as students, while the institutions and the individuals and communities they interact with also

engage in this process.

The final thing I'll say about what was important to me about this film is it shows specifically how this immigrant integration process can be enhanced by key people who are intentionally helping to make it happen. And they do it by being cultural brokers, by being informal and formal leaders in their communities, by learning English, by teaching English, and by otherwise civically participating in various aspects of community life. So I think this is -- there's a lot of richness in this film.

And I am going to start with Margie. In your role as co-director of the National Center on Immigration Integration Policy at MPI, you have a very broad agenda, a wide range of issues that you cover, including language, education, employment, the work force, civic engagement, and citizenship. And so the idea of immigrant integration is multidimensional and complex and it's a process as we've just seen. Can you help us understand some of the key parts of this process? Who the main actors are, what the primary institutions are, and then maybe talk a little bit how Shelbyville fits into the bigger picture.

MS. McHUGH: Certainly. Sure. Well, I think you hinted at some of it in the remarks you just made teeing up the conversation. I think that maybe the easiest way to boil down the integration process because we could, you know, be very confused after an hour of talking about all the different definitions people use and what they think is included. But if you look simply at what our laws look for as people become citizens, I think

that's a great place to start, and it's simply looking at someone's ability to speak basic English language; that they've not become what we call a public charge, that people are able to fend for themselves here in the country; that they have abided by our laws; that they take an oath of loyalty. And, you know, that's sort of the welcome that we extend. We say once you've gone through a number of these things, of course you have to be on a legal track in order to do that and, you know, spend the required amount of time and all that sort of thing, but basically I think the way we think about integration, at least through our laws, is the basics of English, the basics of under -- oh, sorry, basics of history and civics, understanding the laws, abiding by them, and making your way through their process.

Of course, what people in communities want is a lot more than that or they hope for more than that, that people will have more than a beginning understanding of English and that they will become more engaged in their communities. And really many of us hope for full civic participation so that communities can really be made much stronger by people coming together and, you know, I think you saw the beginnings of that here in the film.

You said who are some of the main actors or institutions? I think obviously it's all those folks you saw in the film. It's your people in local and county government. It's, I mean, just on the U.S. side, very much people who are in government, people who are leaders in their

community, whether it's in sort of what we would call the non-governmental organizations or community organizations, faith-based organizations. And of course, it's immigrants and the organizations that they might establish to represent themselves as well. But I think the actors are different from place to place, but very often it's the same sorts of institutions that you'll see around the country that are stepping up and taking a role in this process.

But I think one of the interesting things about the film is that it really does show that this needs to be a two-way process. You know, that if we want integration to happen there has to be an opening for it. It really does need to be a two-way process. And that there is -- you know, we have a public space now that's become a lot narrower. There's not as many people in it and so it's harder to get those sparks to have sort of the good sparks, not the bad sparks, you know, but to get people talking and find places for them to come together because everyone leads such busy lives and is so busy with their, you know, their family schedule, their family agenda, less involvement in a lot of these institutions, et cetera, et cetera. So I think we do have a bit of a quandary, particularly in, you know, in some places where there's not a lot of civic space for coming together.

Was there another part to the question or is that enough for getting going?

MS. SINGER: Yes. Take your time because you're kind of laying a lot of groundwork for us here.

I was just wondering if you could talk about how Shelbyville fits into the bigger picture. What's happening there? Is that similar to other places you work and places all across the country --

MS. McHUGH: Right.

MS. SINGER: -- and with organizations and agencies across the country? How is it similar? How is it different? What are the characteristics there?

MS. McHUGH: Well, I think this was a fantastic job that you did with the film, Kim, and you know, Shelbyville is obviously very different from a lot of other parts of the country. Most immigrants are still coming into the five large immigrant-receiving states, California -- the traditional states: California, New York, Chicago, Texas, and -- oh, I said Chicago, sorry -- Illinois, Florida, and Texas.

But obviously over the past 15 to 20 years there's been this new destination phenomenon that you've documented very well in your work, Audrey. But so I think Shelbyville is different both because even for a new destination city it's -- you know, the population that they have has that history of black-white racial tensions. And then also that -- I don't know if this was just sort of an artifact in the film about the focus on a refugee population, but really the face of immigration in most of the new destination states is much more Mexican, much more unauthorized, and people are poor and not in any sorts of jobs where you might, you know, sort of -- legal jobs the way a job at Tysons might be.

So it's a little bit different in that regard because the refugee population is a very tiny piece of the -- overall a pretty small piece of the flow in the country. But, you know, it's part of what makes Shelbyville so incredibly interesting. And obviously, all of us, you know, come from smaller, you know, some level of geography that at some point gets small and we all know that those places have their very, very specific, you know, dimensions to them. And so I think that, you know, I wouldn't want to downplay that somehow Shelbyville is so much harder than other places because I think this is hard everywhere. I think this is -- this process of change is a hard thing for people to take on wherever you are in the country. And having come from New York where you would think that everybody was so used to this, you know, in every neighborhood around the city we, you know, our eye was on these sorts of issues and what sort of mediating institutions were there. And, you know, was the process really happening? Was it really possible for immigrants to really join a larger community?

MS. SINGER: Thank you, Margie. That was great.

You know, just to add my 2 cents, I thought it was remarkable how well many of the residents recognized these issues, like how diverse it was, how quickly it had changed, and how much they were -- they tied it to the rest of the country. And I thought that was another, you know, key thought that, you know, we forget about these things. But people do recognize where they are in this country, as well as where they

are in their neighborhood or in their city or in their town.

MS. McHUGH: Could I -- if I could just take one liberty with that. You know, we -- one of the things that we do in my organization is run something called the E. Pluribus Unum Prizes. And we just started it two years ago and it's awards for exceptional immigration integration initiatives. And actually, the Welcoming Tennessee Initiative was one of the awardees last year in the first year of the program. And part of what we're trying to do with that is first of all, make the practices that are happening around the country more available to people who want to find out, you know, what all the different sorts of programming or efforts that are underway. But also because they think all we hear, and especially since everyone is so tuned in to national media and to that national narrative, that narrative is always drawn to conflict and it just makes a better story. But for every story of conflict that you hear there's usually, I would say, probably more like 1,000:1, not even 100:1, more positive initiatives that are underway where people really are trying to figure out how to make this work and they really do see that this is very often part of their own family's history or they see it's very much part of the future.

And so I think that that whole issue of what is the narrative around immigrant integration is a very important one for people to take hold of because there is no question that we don't do enough as a country to support having that happen. But I think nevertheless it's happening all over the country every minute of every day and that we should really be

trying to raise that up a lot more because I think a lot of people would be heartened by it. And it would set a different -- a much needed tone.

MS. SINGER: Thank you. I'm going to turn next to Miguel, a long-time resident of Shelbyville, and part of a prior wave of immigration to Shelbyville, primarily made up of Latin-American immigrants.

So now you find yourself playing an important role assisting newer immigrants to make a life in Shelbyville. Could you talk a little bit about say the parallels between Latin American community and Mexican community in particular and Somali immigration to Shelbyville, and maybe what some of the major differences are, too.

MR. GONZALES: Well, I've been in Tennessee since 1992. And when I first came to Tennessee, I was brought by General Motors, who opened the Saturn plant. And we feel like we like to live in a small town because we came from San Fernando, California, which is a big city. So we find this city, Tennessee, Shelbyville, and it was so nice because the people were so friendly.

But again, back then it was just a few of us. You know, we only had like six or eight members in the church, and we feel like we were welcome. The thing that happened, you know, like when Nissan and General Motors started bringing more jobs to Tennessee, more people started coming to Tennessee. And with that also, that's when the people feel like there was a change in the way the people live. More people, more Hispanics, more -- a lot of people from Michigan, and then later on

the Somalis. So we all came and really changed the life of the people in Shelbyville. And I understand that.

I feel like it is hard to absorb so many people coming with different ways of living, different cultures. But I find out that through the church I was able to help those who come after me because I see the need of somebody stepping in and say you'll do something. So we start helping the Hispanics coming in from Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico. And I help my pastor to celebrate once a month service.

And then I say can you celebrate every two weeks at least because more people are needed for faith, you know? So he said if you help me I can do that. So I start, well, I can help you. So we started helping each other. And then we went from two weeks to a weekly service. And then our congregation changed from 8 to 10 persons to 200, 300 in a matter of a couple years. Now it's over 1,000, you know.

And it's so great when you feel like you can make a difference for those who don't know the area, don't know the people, don't know the way of moving around. And anybody in this country can do that because it's very easy to welcome somebody who is new in the area and tell them, you know, can I help you? You know, like how can get the water connected? You know, how can you get your driver's license to change it from where you come from? Or things like that. And I find that it was not difficult for me to start helping other people.

So now with the Somalis going through a little bit worse than

our case with Hispanics. Hispanics have different issues. The Somalis are refugees that have more privilege. They've been brought to this country and we as Hispanics we come sometimes illegals and we don't really have the same comforting. And, you know, like Somalis. But the Somalis face the culture and also what's going on with the Muslims. So I see why we face different issues or different points, but in a way we all feel like we are in some ways discriminated a little bit. But it's not so much the discrimination. I think it's the people who live in Shelbyville feel comfortable with the way they used to live and it's so hard like we heard in the movie, the change. It's always hard for us to accept the change.

MS. SINGER: Maybe you could say something about how you got involved with Welcoming Tennessee and kind of making the link between the Latin American community and the Somali community.

MR. GONZALES: Well, I think I'd like to say thanks. Thanks to David and Katalina , who -- since she just left. First, I start work through my church and then I see the necessity of get some more help. So Terry came over and helped me because they tell me you can be a leader in your community. You can do more things than just assist in the church. And that's, for me, that's very valuable what they helped me to -- I'm not a perfect person really. I'm an open person that likes to help. And if I can do it, I always ask David. Or nowadays it's a different president, but (inaudible) is there for me to support when I need some kind of help.

Thank you.

MS. SINGER: Well, then that's a good -- that's a good way to bring David into the conversation. Can you talk a little bit about your motivations for first starting TIRRC and then Welcoming America and how that all happened for you? What the model looks like in your communities across the country?

MR. LUBELL: Sure. And there's -- some of the motivations were idealistic and some of the motivations were sort of -- just sort of happened.

So I moved to Tennessee. I actually grew up in Philadelphia so I'm a Yankee, like all you guys. But I moved to -- I moved to Tennessee in 1999, actually for a relationship. So that was the motivation to move to Tennessee.

And I just spent time in Ecuador, where I felt very welcomed by the families -- the family that I lived with and by the people in the country. And it made it a lot easier for me to have a wonderful experience and meet a lot of people and learn Spanish. I learned it there.

Coming to Tennessee, which you know, I had done community organizing and basically coming to Tennessee the immigrant community had grown so quickly. And I was seeing the problems that immigrants were facing. I started to do community organizing. Immigrants did not feel welcome in Memphis, which is where I was then, and there was a lot of tension between the community.

And I ended up getting involved in a campaign around

access to driver's licenses. I helped to lead a campaign in Tennessee that changed the law around that. And then September 11th happened and the climate in Tennessee and the climate around the country shifted a lot. And at that point, we -- I quit my job as a local organizer in Memphis and started, with the help of many other people -- I became the first staff person for the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition. And the model for that organization ever since then, we were able to help keep the law, make some moderations -- modifications to the law, and then start doing a lot of other really important work empowering immigrants, such as Miguel and others to become leaders and to develop a voice.

And that was the purpose, was to develop a voice for the immigrant community in Tennessee. There were, you know, hundreds of thousands of people and policy decisions were being made. Other decisions were being made and immigrants did not have a voice at any tables really at that point in Tennessee. And we got very involved with organizing an immigrant community, and we got very involved in spending a lot of time at the Tennessee legislature. And over time, as more and more bills -- bills started to look more and more in the legislature like the bill that passed in Arizona recently. We had 65 one year in Tennessee. Sixty-five punitive bills introduced; some of them passed.

As we saw more and more of these bills, we, you know, I just was sort of getting tired of the fact that legislators weren't doing the right thing and I would have a lot of conversations with them. There were some

that wanted to do the right thing, but they would say have you talked to people in my district? Have you talked -- I mean, things are changing a lot in my district and you haven't talked to one person in my district. You know, whether it be Bedford County or other countries. And the truth was we hadn't.

And so we started -- I learned about another program called Welcoming Iowa, which was a temporary program, but again aimed at talking to, you know, native-born Iowans. And we started a project, you know, we started Welcoming Tennessee in 2006. And it was not a policy campaign because, you know, what we started learning as we would go into communities is that if you tried to start the conversation with policy, that was how you ended the conversation.

And, you know, you can see in the film, people -- a lot of those people in the film are not ready to talk about immigration policy. And a lot of people around this country are not ready to talk about immigration policy. They haven't even -- no one has ever explained why there's this huge whatever, you know, the community is, whatever the ethnic group is. No one ever explained to them why, except for maybe, you know, a talk show radio host and things like that, fill in the blanks, fill in the void for other people who haven't told them.

And they want to understand what's going on. And they haven't communicated with immigrants in their communities. And immigrants are just trying to, you know, you saw how difficult life is

working at the Tyson factory. You know, immigrants are just trying to get by and so, you know, we tried to change that dynamic. And we went to -- Shelbyville was one of the first communities we went into. And we actually went into Shelbyville after I had gone to -- Miguel and Centro Latino and Ms. Lucy invited me to be part of a beauty pageant for the reina of Ms. Shelbyville Latina.

And I just noticed that they had, you know, real people from, you know, the power structure within Shelbyville at this reina event. You know, a former county manager, current county manager, the sheriff, and you know, we started thinking that this was a place where there was real potential, but also where there was a lot of, you know, tension. And, you know, the immigrant community had grown ridiculously quickly in Shelbyville. And so we decided that that was a place where we wanted to work. Miguel, Lucy, other people decided that this was something that they wanted to do.

And so we used a new approach, the welcoming approach. And now we have -- Welcoming America is really a replication. We have now 14 states, as it said in the movie, that are -- 13 states that have replicated the model that we used, not just in Shelbyville, but other parts of Tennessee as well. But the model is, you know, not policy. Go out and get immigrants and non-immigrants talking together. Change the messages people are hearing about immigrants in their communities. And slowly change the dynamic by interacting with real people and organizing

and empowering people within the community to start doing what, you know, doesn't necessarily happen automatically on its own.

MS. SINGER: So from what I'm hearing and what I know about your initiative, the idea it to move away from a sort of immigrant rights-based approach which a lot of advocacy organizations have and start bringing in all of the major players, including U.S. born residents of a place to kind of work on this together.

MR. LUBELL: That's right. It's not an either/or at all. The immigrant advocacy infrastructure in this country that a lot of people don't know about is extremely strong and extremely important. And, you know, the model that we had in Tennessee and New York, the idea of empowering immigrants to develop their voice in the policy arena is extremely important. And so we're not trying to replace that by any means. We're just trying to complement that. You know, there's a need for advocacy, but there's also a need for conversation for understanding. You know, putting policy aside and having that conversation. That wasn't really, you know, from what we could see on a really -- it was happening in communities, but it wasn't happening in sort of a concerted way. And so we have started to do that.

And we have a network of groups that are learning, you know, every time you try an approach in Idaho or we try an approach in Nebraska, you know, there's something that worked, you know. You know, having this kind of -- this type of dish at your dinner or saying, you

know, playing a board game that talks about this really works. We have a network that learns -- each state learns from each other. It's like a learning laboratory. And so we're just trying to, you know, build upon what happens in communities and try to take it again to the next level.

MS. SINGER: Thanks. One thing that's of huge concern nationally, I mean, the big debate right now is about border security, enforcement issues, illegality. We're focused on that in terms of the laws that are being passed, in terms of the media attention that's given to conflict. And it generates a lot of mixed feelings among the public.

So this is a question for any of you. I don't know, maybe David you can start this. How does Welcoming America specifically approach conflict at the local level? And, you know, I think the film address the issues. You know, we see how people talk to each other and the kinds of things that they get, but what can you say about that specifically? And maybe Margie and Miguel you have something to say, whether you want to or not.

MR. LUBELL: Well, I'll start the conversation if that's okay. I mean, basically some of the things that get lost in the debate, you know, national debate or when you see it even on the state level around immigration is it's seen as all conflict and you have two sides. It's portrayed as two sides that are sort of hotheaded in different ways and they're both, you know, characterized and things like that. But in reality, you know, the truth is that everybody, even on the polar sides, there are

some grains of truth what everyone is saying. But most people are more in the middle around the issue.

And so the important thing is, in order to get around the conflict, is to stop yelling and stop letting the media sort of escalate or make, you know, create a megaphone for people who are yelling. And you need to have a conversation. The conversation does need to start by sort of acknowledging the fact that -- and we do this. We have, you know, dialogues. Part of what we do are dialogues and it's one of many things that we do. But in any dialogue you have to start by acknowledging that, you know, people's fears and anxieties are real and not calling people racist and not calling, you know, whatever the terms may be. But really, you know, getting real about the fact that, all right, I live in this community. And again, it's not me; it's Miguel saying this and people within their community. We're helping them gain their voice, but saying that, you know, I live in this community, you live in this community, this is my perspective. I want to hear your perspective.

And the country needs to have a conversation about immigration instead of a yelling match about immigration. And it needs to start in communities. And it's not happening. It starts to happen and it happens somewhat, but it needs to happen a lot more. And until we have that conversation on the local level it's not going to happen. I don't think our country, especially with the demographic changes that are happening, will be ready for national change in the way that we need it until we have

those local conversations.

MS. McHUGH: I think I would just jump in on that on the policy side of it and say that, you know, we get asked a lot by local elected officials what to do about some pretty tough arguments that are happening in their communities around immigration. And I actually think starting in the place you're at, but then actually bringing it over into a policy conversation that we are encouraging and trying to support a lot of local elected officials in trying to open up the conversation in their communities because personally, I mean, and even organizationally, I would say that, you know, we would say that people are right to be extremely frustrated with the immigration policy that we have. It's hard to see very often whether it's anchored in the national interests, what those national interests are, and how can we have a policy that really both perceived and in actuality really meeting needs of local communities.

And so, you know, I often argued in New York how do we get an immigration policy that would give us more home health attendance and fewer day laborers. We had spent 25 years trying to deal with racism in the construction industry in New York, and suddenly, with a lot of the immigration we had, all of, you know, those workers leapfrogged over all the African Americans that we were trying to get into those jobs. You know, and this was a very progressive city that was saying, hey, we're willing to work with this, but give us something to work with and can we stop pretending that we can set an immigration policy from the federal

level. Shouldn't there be more of a role for states and localities?

So I would say, you know, I'd love to see these local conversations built out even further to say what is happening in our community. And Kansas is maybe the example I would use just because when I was out there recently speaking with a lot of their county commissioners, just even among their county commissioners you had one group saying we need 10,000 more people where we are. Another group saying our, you know, light airplane engineering industry is going to fall apart. So we have very specific immigrants that we need. And then another area saying, hey, you know, we made a big mistake. We let these poultry or whatever factories they were open up. You know, now suddenly we have 500 more kids we need to build a school for. We gave them all sorts of tax breaks, you know, we can't afford to do it.

So, you know, I think that it -- that here just among these county commissioners you had the full array of opinion and need as they were, you know, as they were themselves articulating it. Oh, and they are also saying that they had all these counties that people were aging in, that they had absolutely no young people left in, that they had nobody left to do any of the work on the land and nobody who was going to be able to take care of those aging populations. So, you know, that's a whole lot of different kinds of immigration policies that you need just in that one state. And we still keep acting like we can magically wave a wand and set a few categories and numbers at the national level and that that's going to meet

the needs of the country.

So, anyway, I think that, you know, that hopefully we can build out into more rational conversations at the local level about where is immigration needed and for what, and then what does that mean for the federal immigration policy that we should have.

MS. SINGER: Thank you. Do you want to say anything?

MR. GONZALES: I just want to mention my father came to this country in 1944, and he was working for the Pacific Railroad in California, Oregon, all those states. And he came for just short term, you know, like 8 months, 18 months, and he goes back home. And I guess, you know, I don't try to say that we need this program reinstated or bring back the braseros, but when they canceled all those programs the people decide to come into the United States and decide to stay here. And I think it's a wake-up call for the immigration to reform the whole thing because we need to do something and just try to see what is the problem.

I'm a leader in my community and I help people coming in. I'm welcoming to Tennessee, welcoming to Shelbyville, but, in the meantime, I also try to help those who are separated by immigration. They've been sent back to Mexico, the kids are here, the kids are born in the United States. The kids are living with uncles and family relatives. So I said something is wrong with this system. They need to work out something to avoid something worse coming in the future with all these people, all these kids who are going to have some resentment about this

politics side issue. You know, so I'm sorry that I -- I just want to mention that. They need to fix that to keep -- the United States is so famous, so great about the people who came to this country. We all bring something, either food or culture or fashion, whatever. But we enhance this country. We make it a great country. So let's keep doing that.

We've got to make the United States go back and be the greatest country that it used to be and the best thing we need to do is just treat the people with respect. Be more human. Be more like -- what they need from us or what we need from them. If we need them, just help them. If we don't need them, I'm sorry, but you need to go back home. But in a human way. Do you know what I mean?

And I'm sorry that I get emotional sometimes, but I'm an immigrant and I feel like I give something to this country. This country gave me a lot. I've got six kids. Well, five; one passed away. But I've been able to send my kids to college. And by doing that I feel like I give something back to this country. They gave me a place to live, a job. Now I give my kids. So my kids are going to be able to provide better service for us when we retire because they're the future of this country. If we let them -- I hear President Obama a couple days ago said to the kids at school, dream big. Yes, I support that. But our kids, a lot of Spanish kids, they're not legal in this country. They're so smart. These kids graduate schools with honor roll students, with a high 4.0 average, but they cannot continue their education. We waste all this talent by not allowing these

parents to be legal if they serve. I'm not saying legalize everybody, but those who are -- you know, respect the laws, those who are -- follow the right pattern in this country.

So I just want to mention that because I need to say something for these people who are suffering. Right now I'm trying to help people who are in the border. They wanted me to bring their families back home to Mexico and I'm not -- I can't do that. You know, there's so much I can do through the help of peers, through the help of my pastor, but there are so many things that somebody else needs to do something.

I'm sorry. I changed -- I went in a different direction.

MS. SINGER: This is Washington. It happens all the time. (Laughter)

MR. GONZALES: So I'm not the exception?

MS. SINGER: No. I want to take a few questions from the audience and, you know, we can see who wants to answer. How about back there and here? Back there first.

SPEAKER: Hi. This question is for Miguel. I wanted to hear a little bit more about the integration of the Burmese community into your community. It sounded like that's kind of a new wave of immigrants of newcomers. I wanted to hear about how that process is going in the community and what kind of learnings you're having.

MS. SINGER: Wait. We're going to take one more. Hold your thought.

Do you have the microphone? Yes.

SPEAKER: In watching the film, one gets the impression that -- probably a real impression -- in the case of Shelbyville it was the blacks and the Latinos that took the real action, that kind of carried the day as far as the integration efforts that you talked about. Now, is this a generalized trend? Is this something that you've seen in other communities as well? Or is it something which is a onetime affair?

MS. SINGER: Okay. Thanks.

Miguel, why don't you answer the first one and then maybe David could start with the second one.

MR. GONZALES: Well, back to the first question. I guess because we all suffered the same thing, we all passed through the same similarities, we like to be part of the helpers, the ones who say how can I help. And the best thing is to organize like meals. You know, like international bring something from your country, I bring something from my country, and we all share. And we make them feel comfortable. We don't really like to impose ideas or ways of living because they have their own and we have our own. But the best thing is not to tell them what to do. It's just if we can help you, let me know how can I help.

MS. SINGER: Miguel, do you know much about the people that have come in from Burma?

MR. GONZALES: No. No. We're just talking about Somalis.

MS. SINGER: Okay.

MR. GONZALES: I'm sorry.

MS. SINGER: Because her question was about the Burmese.

MR. GONZALES: I confused that, too, because I thought it was Somalis.

MS. SINGER: That's okay. Yeah. So that's the brand new group that's coming in now.

MR. GONZALES: No. I'm not aware of them.

MS. SINGER: Okay.

MR. LUBELL: Well, I should point out that since the filming of *Shelbyville* -- well, first of all, in Shelbyville there's definitely a lot of involvement by Latinos, African Americans, Somalis. But, you know, also by people in the white community. And Sarah Hunt who is here today is an example of someone who is very active in Shelbyville working with Miguel, Lucy, Welcoming Tennessee. You know, it's more multiethnic now than it was back during the filming I should say. I mean, just as far as the core group of people. There's always got to be a core group of people in these types of campaigns.

But, you know, whether -- in our 14 states it really depends on the demographics of the state. Tennessee, it's a particular case that in the south it's got -- for its population has gotten a lot of refugees. Nashville, for example, has a ton of Kurdish refugees and the Kurds are

very involved in Welcoming Tennessee in Nashville. And as far as African American -- Latinos, African Americans, Somalis, we're starting a campaign in Detroit and we're -- and the campaign in Detroit is making a very specific effort to reach out to the African-American community as much as possible and have them be part of the campaign from the beginning. Involving people at the beginning makes a big difference as far as later, but it depends on the demographics. It depends on the leadership. It depends on a lot of different factors, but there are certainly cases where it is African-American and Latino, but there are other cases where it's a very different makeup. It depends.

MS. McHUGH: I might just jump in for a second and say that -- I don't know if the woman who asked the question is from -- if you're involved in refugee resettlement, but I would just say from our work with the E. Pluribus Unum Prizes program and just from my work in the field, that obviously the refugee resettlement agencies make a very big effort to help with the integration of refugees that they're resettling, often on very few and even shrinking federal dollars. And every often it is the need of one community that's really in the lead on a lot of those efforts. And I'm just remembering a very compelling program that I believe was run by the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants up in Vermont where every refugee family that was brought in was paired with another family in the state so that over a several year period they always had that family that they could fall back on their assistance and really come to know American

holidays, solve problems with registering their kids for school or, you know, any number of things that would help them sort of along their journey.

So I think there are quite a few efforts like that. I'm just remembering another one started by a woman whose brother died in the 9-11 attacks. And she was out in Arizona and started a major refugee program bringing together the native born to support people who were being resettled because she wanted something good to come out of her family's tragedy. So, you know, I would just say that there's a lot of both faith-based, as well as with the refugee groups that are not faith-based, but have been doing this work for many years that I think there's increasingly a lot of work to engage the native-born community with refugees in particular. You don't see it as much for immigrant communities I would say more generally, but certainly for refugees because of the particular circumstances that they're arriving in.

MS. SINGER: Let's take two more questions. Right there and there.

SPEAKER: Thank you. About the faith-based help, I was kind of concerned. The scene where church leaders are talking about welcoming people and helping people, they're also talking about converting people. And I was kind of concerned about that, wondering if the church has maintained their help of people if they decided not to convert, if they wanted to keep their religion. And if I could personally say

it, I don't think it's necessarily always a good idea to start helping someone by first telling them you want them to convert.

MS. SINGER: Okay. Let's hold that thought. And right there. Yeah.

SPEAKER: Hi. I was interested in the newspaper, the role of the media, in part because I've been reading this book called *The Race Beat*, which is about how the black and the white press covered the Civil Rights Movement. And on the heels of *Brown v. Board of Education*, they actually anticipated that all these small town newspapers would have to be dealing with this really complex issue and started a new service that was to make sure that there was clear and unbiased information available.

And so I was just interested in your experience. You know, it's a very complex issue and we see the going back and forth negotiating over how new groups are portrayed. So what education needs to take place and how has that worked out actually, you know, just from the initial dialogue?

MS. SINGER: Okay. So we've got one question on faith-based groups reaching out to immigrants in special ways. And then another one on how the media -- is the question really like how can we retrain the media or -- I don't mean it that way, but what are the next steps that people need to know who are journalists in this country in terms of the changes.

MR. GONZALES: I think I can say something on the faith

side because I work for a church. And through the church I've been given help, but I never really asked them to be members of my congregation. And we open the doors to all people from different countries. We have Guatemalans, Mexicans, Hondurans. And although we have a tendency to be members of one group, now we respect the idea of they can choose to be. And we don't do that. Personally, I like to separate my religion from what I'm doing because I like to make the people comfortable to come to me and see how can I help them. And that's --

SPEAKER: What church do you belong to?

MR. GONZALES: Pardon me?

SPEAKER: What church do you belong to?

MR. GONZALES: I'm Catholic. Sam Willis .

SPEAKER: (inaudible) an explanation because --

MR. GONZALES: Sam Willis, yeah.

SPEAKER: -- (inaudible).

MR. GONZALES: That's why I say, you know, the only way you can really make people feel confident is not to impose ways or ideas. Just let them be free and trust you and respect the way they feel. And eventually, you probably see when I mentioned in the movie, it's coming. It's coming. What I was referring to when I said it's coming is the change that we're all going through. And eventually we will adopt one way or the other. Either you can choose to be a Catholic, Baptist, but I don't think it's any congregation's way of helping other people just by bringing them over

to their congregation. Let them choose.

MS. SINGER: Does anybody want to take the media question?

MR. LUBELL: Sure. The media plays an important role in what we do. We have -- starting with Welcoming Tennessee, we have three prongs to our campaigns. One being the local leadership development, which is again developing local people to lead these efforts. Second being public engagement, which is having the direct contact with people, whether it be through dinners like you saw or conversations and presentations and continued interaction. And then the third is communications. Because, you know, communications is such a -- it's such an important filter through which people have their perceptions. And if we're trying to improve people's perceptions about the immigrants who are coming and also educate people on both sides of the media plays an extremely important role.

And personally, you know, I come from a family of media, of newspaper people, journalists. My father, who is in the audience, his mentor was the author -- one of the authors of that book that you -- *The Race Beat* that you talked about. But certainly, the media, you know, any town that you go to you need to -- part of our communication strategy, we change the messages through things. Sometimes we'll put up, you know, billboards with positive messages. Sometimes we'll use social media, radio advertisements, but often, almost always and certainly in Shelbyville,

one of the first meetings you have is with the newspaper and with the editorial board. The newspaper in Shelbyville -- correct me if I'm wrong, Miguel -- has a lot of influence in Shelbyville. That's what people -- I mean, that's what you read. That's everything.

And of course, media is changing a lot, which my dad could tell you. And so it's not just about newspapers in a lot of places, but opinion leaders in general need to be, you know, if you want to change the messages people are hearing you need to talk to the people in the newspapers doing education. You know, we've spoken to a lot of TV stations, you know, finding opportunities to talk to the reporters, but it's an ongoing process and it's a really important piece of any effort to try to -- if you're trying to improve integration by changing the perceptions of the receiving community, then media is a fundamental part of that.

MS. McHUGH: I'll just respond very quickly. As I was watching the scene that you're referring to, I was trying to think if I had anything in common with the people at the table. And I thought, yes, I love pepperoni pizza. That was the only thing I could think of. (Laughter)

So, but I just want to say that the sorts of church-based groups I was speaking about are the ones that actually are contracted to do refugee resettlement and have been doing it for maybe 20+ years, you know, at a huge loss to their organizations financially and the like. So it's very different from the, you know, more place-based dynamics that I think you saw there.

And I just wanted to add on the media side, when I was doing my work in New York, we paid to be part of a cooperative that hired its own producer to produce radio on policy issues that would then go statewide. And so, you know, we had this person part-time. A whole bunch of non-profit organizations that were working on policy issues, particularly in my case it was education reform issues, but we hired this producer so that you could get stories out to local radio because the thought was that newspapers were being read less and less, but that radio was being more relied upon and it was becoming increasingly hard edged and, you know, not truthful. And certainly not providing anything other than the most superficial kneejerk sort of information about issues. And so those cooperatives, you know, in terms of cooperative approaches to trying to get more material available for radio is, I think, a really positive approach that's been happening in a number of states around the country.

MS. SINGER: Before we move to closing remarks, which we'll have in a second, I have a 10-second question and answer. Ten seconds for you guys to answer. It's really just to put the idea out there. Does having a film like this and having an approach that brings these issues to light in the way that *Welcome to Shelbyville* does make a difference for what you do in your work or in your life? Ten seconds each.

MR. GONZALES: Yes. I think we just need to keep working and I think I'm waiting for this film and more people to understand this issue and say how can I help.

MR. LUBELL: It makes an immense difference. I mean, we've been trying to do this work and educate people about why it's important. But, you know, when people see *Welcome to Shelbyville*, we don't have to really say anything else. And, you know, we go from trying to find people who will do this work in different communities. You know, as this film spreads we are anticipating and, you know, working with Active Voice to actively change the dynamics so we're all the time, you know, all the time, every time someone sees it, well, how do you do that in your community. And then eventually they're going to make their way to us. That's extremely exciting and it's a game -- a total game changer for what we're trying to do and really important.

MS. McHUGH: And I would just say I hope -- I think in the right hands it can be a great conversation starter for communities that really need to start having these conversations.

MS. SINGER: Okay. Thank you very much. And I'm going to bring up Rebecca Carson now. Thanks to the panel. (Applause)

Before we close the program and move to the reception, which will be in the room directly across the hallway, I'd like to introduce our final speaker who will offer closing remarks. Rebecca Carson was appointed chief of the Office of Citizenship within U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in the Department of Homeland Security in July 2009. She leads initiatives to promote -- sorry. She leads initiatives to provide federal leadership, tools, and resources to proactively foster

immigrant integration. Her efforts focus on engaging and supporting partners to welcome immigrants, to promote English language learning and education on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and raise awareness of the benefits of U.S. citizenship. Prior to joining USCIS, Ms. Carson managed several national and statewide campaigns. She clerked at the National Immigrant Justice Center in Chicago and taught English in Central America. And she has a J.D. and a B.A. And welcome, Rebecca. (Applause)

MS. CARSON: Thank you, Audrey, so much for the introduction and to the organizers for providing me the opportunity to share some thoughts. It is my pleasure to conclude this rich discussion, but since I stand between you and the reception I will keep it brief. I promise.

The story told of Shelbyville, and in particular Miguel's uplifting journey to citizenship, and your wife's I want to add, will certainly stay with me. One of America's great strengths is our ability to welcome and incorporate newcomers into our communities. Another is our ability to reflect analytically on our country and finds ways to improve this great nation. I think this film allows us to do both.

While such progress is significant and undeniable, it is also uneven. Despite our history of immigration, increasing numbers of recent immigrants are settling in new gateway communities like Shelbyville. These communities don't have the traditions and support structures of

longstanding immigrant hubs, like New York, like Chicago, like Los Angeles. In some instances this lack of capacity presents challenges.

Stories such as those in the film serve as important reminders that immigration relies on efforts made by private individuals reaching out to others and personal exchanges that build lasting impressions and relationships. Welcoming Tennessee -- where are you David? I hope you're still here -- is a great example of this. And also Ms. Lucy I think is just a tremendous inspiration for us all.

Immigration happens as we go about our daily lives. While interpersonal experiences may matter most, they are often shaped by how welcoming and supportive the overall climate in the community is towards newcomers. When we work in isolation our accomplishments are real but limited. But when we partner we can truly build the capacity to continue to make progress as a nation. Strengthening and reinforcing a climate where American communities are thriving and cohesive requires all of society's stakeholders to recognize their role as partners in immigrant integration, and I think that's why we're all here today.

The federal government plays an important role in many areas supporting integration, but often not as the primary actor. We recognize that strength and opportunity stem from our diversity and that our programs play an important role to ensure that all can reap the success of our nation's diverse strength. Federal programs provide well over a billion dollars to support refugee resettlement, English language

learning, workforce training, education on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and civil rights protections among many others. But at the same time, we know that integration depends on local context, guidance, and experience. Our aim as a federal government is to provide needed tools and resources that can support immigrants and communities on the path towards integration.

We look for opportunities to strengthen our coordination across agencies, leverage resources, and address programmatic gaps. Later this week, USCIS -- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services -- will announce the recipients of nearly $8 million in grants for citizenship preparation and additional tools as part of a specifically-purposed immigrant integration appropriation by Congress. This tangible new appropriation is a statement about the importance of citizenship and immigrant integration and their benefits to all of us in a nation of immigrants.

Awareness of the importance of immigrant integration is growing in government and among our partners at all levels as demonstrated here. State and local governments have exhibited significant leadership on these issues as well. Other critical partners were mentioned here, including foundations, libraries, civic organizations, adult educators, parent and teacher associations, policy groups, the media, immigrant serving organizations, and the private sector. It is my hope that innovative initiatives and new partnerships raise visibility to the issues and

build a stronger platform to support immigrant integration so that practices, resources, and models can address uneven integration challenges faced in communities.

I look forward to working with federal partners and stakeholders at all levels to continue celebrating the importance of citizenship to our nation and doing our part to welcome and support aspiring citizens in their adopted home. Thank you. (Applause)

* * * * *

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

/s/Carleton J. Anderson, III

Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia

Commission No. 351998

Expires: November 30, 2012