

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

FOUR MORE YEARS FOR THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF
FAITH-BASED AND NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIPS

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Welcome and Introductions:

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Panel I: Past Work and Future Plans:

JOSHUA DuBOIS
Executive Director
Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships

MAX FINBERG
Senior Policy Advisor
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MARA VANDERSLICE KELLY
Senior Policy Advisor
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BRENDA GIRTON MITCHELL
Director
Department of Education Center for Faith-Based
And Neighborhood Partnerships

Panel II: Priorities for the Next Four Years:

JOHN DILULIO
Frederic Fox Leadership Professor of Politics,
Religion, and Civil Society; Professor of Political Science
University of Pennsylvania

STANLEY CARLSON-THIES
Founder and President
Institutional Religious Freedom Alliance

RICHARD FOLTIN
Director of National and Legislative Affairs
American Jewish Committee (AJC)

NORMAL PIMENTEL
Executive Director
Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. DIONNE: I think this morning all of us are thinking about the slain children and slain adults of Newtown, Connecticut, their families and their community, and it's appropriate I think that at an event where we will be discussing the extraordinarily productive partnerships that are possible between our communities of faith and government to remember our obligations to those who died and our obligations to protect those who still live.

I'm speaking here at the moment only for myself, but I think that no matter what your politics are, no matter where you may have stood before on issues related to guns and gun violence, we might all agree with President Obama, who said last night that surely we can do better than this and that we will have to change. My hope is that leaders of our religious congregations and our religious communities will serve as a prophetic advance guard for putting the utterly failed politics around these issues behind us and allow our country to experience a new birth of freedom from ungodly acts of violence, and may God stand with the people of Newtown, Connecticut, and may he stand with our country.

I'm E.J. Dionne. I'm a Senior Fellow here at Brookings. We are deeply honored to be convening this discussion today. I was talking to my dear friend John Dilulio, from the University of Pennsylvania, and John and I convened our first meeting here at Brookings on this subject 15 years ago this year, and it was a wonderful meeting where folks came to the Brookings Institution who just hadn't been here before. We had people from religious congregations of all kinds, a great many inner-city pastors. One of my favorites was a gentlemen from the Gospel Missions who identified himself by getting up and saying "We're the people who hit you over the head with a Bible and pour soup down your throat." And since then, we have been deeply honored to have in this building

some of the most extraordinary people in our country, people whose lives and work are dedicated to those in need, dedicated to others.

When John and I started this, we had the hope that surely this was an area in which we might have agreement across party lines, that surely this might be an area where there would be less political disagreement than on other questions. This is often true of John and me. We weren't exactly right about that in all respects, although it is true that in the 2000 campaign, both Al Gore and George W. Bush committed themselves to fostering this work and these partnerships in a constitutional way.

And in certain ways I think today's gathering might mark reengagement with the idea that perhaps we can move forward in a way that is at least a little bit free of some of the worst aspects of politics, knowing full well that on any matter involving politics, public policy, and the Constitution of the United States. There will be legitimates and disagreements, and one of the reasons I'm grateful for all of the people who are joining us here today is I think you will get a sense of the range of views on these partnerships, what should and should not happen, what is or might not be constitutional permitted. But I do think we are all joined together in a spirit of solidarity.

Lastly, I want to say that another starting point for this work might be seen as President Obama's speech in Zanesville, Ohio, on July 1, 2008. "You see," the President said, "while these groups are often made up of folks who come together around a common faith, they're usually working to help people of all faiths or no faith at all, and they're particularly well placed to offer help. As I've said many times, I believe that change comes not from the top down but from the bottom up, and few are closer to the people than our churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques."

And so today, four years later, we're here to assess what came of those words. What work was done in response to that commitment? What do the actions of

President Obama have in common with those of President Bush? Where have they differed? And, how do we move forward on this good work?

We are going to have two panels here today; and my good colleague, Melissa Rogers, and I have been working on this almost as long as John Dilulio and I have been working on this, and I am deeply privileged to have Melissa as a colleague and a friend, and she will lay out, later, the plan for our panels.

Here I just want to introduce Joshua DuBois, and I'm very grateful that Reverend DuBois joined us. We just learned that Reverend DuBois will be married in September, and I want to congratulate him on that.

I like the American tradition that you're supposed to congratulate the would-be groom and wish good luck to the bride. (Laughter) Being a man, myself, and familiar with men, I think there is a deep logic to that.

Joshua is Special Assistant to the President of the United States and Executive Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. As Director, he manages the federal government's relationships with face-based and secular nonprofit organizations around the country.

One of President Obama's longest-serving aids, he previously served in then Senator Obama's legislative office and led the Religious Affairs Department for the 2008 Obama presidential campaign.

In the administration, he has been a leader of many of the President's signature programs and initiatives, including the President's Fatherhood and Mentoring Initiative, which helps fathers reconnect with their families; the Together for Tomorrow Challenge, which supports community organizations that help low-performing schools; the congregation-based Jobs Clubs Initiative that helps to put Americans back to work; and President Obama's Interfaith Campus Challenge, which connects students of

different faiths to serve their community.

He's an expert on the intersection of faith in public life. His work has been profiled in just about every media outlet in the world. Before working with President Obama, he was associate pastor at a church in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He received his master's in public affairs from Princeton University's Woodrow School and a bachelor's degree from Boston University. He was raised in Nashville, Tennessee. We are delighted that the Reverend DuBois can help instruct us and also preach to us.

Thank you, Reverend.

MR. DUBOIS: I see my friend, Barry, in the crowd, so I'm not going to do any preaching this morning.

Good morning, everyone, and thank you so much for having me here; and, E.J., thank you for that warm introduction and for your friendship.

You know, I want to echo E.J.'s words about Newtown. I returned very early this morning from Newtown after spending a couple of days with the families there, and our hearts continue to break for them. And, more importantly, if we continue to search our souls and our public policy and everything else to see what we can do to support those families and that community and indeed our entire country. I know I speak for you all in saying that.

And it's also great to be here with E.J. and Melissa. Our team was joking that we are thinking quite seriously about moving this entire faith-based initiative to the Brookings Institute, given how much support and guidance both of them had given us over the years. I don't know to break that to the President, but, you know --

MR. DIONNE: We would welcome you. It would be fund to have you.

(Laughter)

MR. DUBOIS: So, save a little space for us upstairs I guess.

I also want to thank members of our staff at the White House, as well as our center directors and team members from the agency Faith-based Offices who are here. These folks are wonderful. They are dedicated public servants, and so much of what we've accomplished, which I'll share with you, is the fruit of their good work.

And, so, thank you all. In fact, if you wouldn't mind standing so folks can see our staff here.

This is not (inaudible) of faith-based partnerships, but to keep a happy home I want to acknowledge my fiancé, Michele Duff Mitchell here. Good to see you. Thank you.

I'm so honored to be here with some folks who've become good friends: Stanley Carlson-Thies and John Dilulio from the Bush administration Faith-based Office really paved the way for a lot of this work. So, thank you all.

And it's so great to be here with Richard Foltin, as well, who's going to join us on the second panel.

And, finally, I want to thank all of you. You know, there are so many friendly faces in this audience, folks who have been a part of this important work for a very long time. I believe that the work of partnering with faith-based and nonprofit groups and connecting them with government to serve people in need is a high calling, but it's certainly not for the faint of heart. So, I'm grateful for the efforts of those in this room in helping thoughtful consider the role of religion and social service in American public life.

It's in no small measure due to you that we've been able to implement an effective vision for these partnerships. So, thank you all.

You know, as I reflect on our work over the last four years, I'm reminded of how my own journey has been impacted by the kinds of partnerships we'll talk about here today -- a little known fact. I filled out my federal application for financial student aid,

my FAFSA form, in a church basement in Xenia, Ohio. I was an anxious senior in high school ready to break out of the small towns of the south and Midwest where I'd grown up and find my way to types of big cities that I'd only dreamed of. My grades and test scores were where they needed to be, but financially my family needed a little help. So, I made my way to United African Methodist Episcopal Church, and I sat around a folding table with Ms. Blackburn, a voluntary in the education ministry of our church. And Ms. Blackburn handed me a form from the government with FAFSA stamped on the top, and we filled it out together. And the combination of Pell grant and low-interest loans that resulted from that evening at church with Ms. Blackburn sent me to Boston University and then to graduate school and then to a career in public service that bring me here today.

It's a simple moment, really, just filling out a form in a basement of a building with a steeple on the top. But in the background of that story is a beautiful and complex tapestry -- church and government, woven together, to send me to college. An individual, Ms. Blackburn, motivated by her faith, equipped with practical tools from Washington to shape a young man's future.

Years earlier and several hundred miles away from Xenia, Ohio, a similar story played out. Two years after graduating from college, a young man was hired by the Developing Communities project, a faith-based organization in Chicago. The DCP was a church-based program funded by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, and it served people in the areas around inner-city Catholic parishes in the Roseland and Riverdale and West Pullman neighborhoods of the south side of Chicago.

Families in these communities were devastated. They'd lost their jobs and their income, and too often they lost hope as well after the steel plants that employed their mothers and fathers that shut down. The new executive director of this organization -- in fact, it's first executive director, our future President, Barak Obama -- set about

partnering with religious leaders on the south side to organize job training programs; provide college tutoring to young people; and advocate for tenants' rights. This public servant linked arm and arm with the faith community to restore dignity and meet human needs.

Religion and government, faith and public service, a beautiful tapestry but a complex one. There are important rules of engagement and pitfalls if these rules are not followed. But when they are followed, when the two sides come together focused on the common good, the impact can be dazzling. You can send a young man like me to college, you can feed a hungry child, you can even turn around a block or neighborhood, an entire community.

It was with these shared histories in mind after my time in in the Senate and on the campaign that President Obama and I sat down after 2008 to discuss the work of his newly reconstituted federal faith-based and community initiative, the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. We examined previous efforts in faith-based and nonprofit partnerships in both the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations. We looked at what worked well and what could be improved, and we charted a new course for the White House of Office Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships that would seek to create the interwoven tapestries that I had seen in Xenia and the President had seen in Chicago: people of faith partnering with government and with public servants to meet human needs.

And looking back on the first term, I believe we've done just that. We've partnered with dynamic organizations. We've measured our success based on the people we serve rather than the dollars that government disburses. We've shaped entirely new programs in entirely new areas. We've more tightly aligned our work with our laws and our values. We've cast a broad net in terms of the groups that we engage,

and we've brought together a wonderful team across government: public servants in the spirit of that community organizer, Barak Obama, folks who change lives every day.

Today my team and I will share some specific examples of the work of our office and how it's supporting community groups and impacting lives. I'm going to reflect on three overarching themes that have emerged from that work: first, our vision for civic rather than just financial partnerships; second, the new frontiers and innovations in the faith-based initiative; and, third, increased cohesion and communication within our team and with our external partners -- in other words, how we work together and how we work with the world.

First, civic partnerships. You know, coming into this role I knew that there were some important aspects of the previous faith-based initiative that we needed to keep in place. For example, the Bush administration focused squarely on leveling the playing field, ensuring that faith-based groups could compete on an equal footing with other organizations for federal grants. This was a critically important early focus. And in the last four years I believe we have kept that playing field level. We've worked hard to ensure that federal agencies do not favor secular organizations over faith-based groups in the competition for federal dollars and vice versa.

But the focus on a level playing field had one vision in mind for government partnerships with faith-based organizations, and that was largely a financial vision. When the federal government looked at religious nonprofits, it saw recipients of funds, and when a nonprofit looked at government it asked what programs it could apply for to receive federal funds.

When we began this effort, we thought that maintaining a level playing field was centrally important but that dollars and sense alone were too narrow a lens through which faith-based and nonprofit groups should be considered. These

organizations should be our partners, not just our grantees. Some groups may never desire a financial relationship with the federal government. Other might not be equipped to manage a grant while following important rules. But all organizations, whether they receive money or not, should still be able to partner with us on community renewal.

So, we created an entirely new category of programs. We call them civic partnerships, which sets them apart from financial partnerships. We developed clear ways that the Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships could help groups fulfill their mission and impact the most important issues in their communities even if they never received a federal grant. So, our job clubs at the Department of Labor helps over 2000 local congregations set up and expand employment ministries without a federal grant connecting unemployed folks to work and to hope.

Our Together for Tomorrow program at the Department of Education and at the Corporation for National Community Service helps local congregations and nonprofits partner to turn around their local public school without a direct disbursement of federal dollars. Our team at the Federal Management Agency has helped faith and civic groups prepare for and respond to numerous disasters and other incidents, most recently after Hurricane Sandy where we work with congregations to get families back on their feet.

I could go on and on and on from our work on youth violence at the Department of Justice to our efforts at the Small Business Administration to provide access to capital through faith communities; our work at the Department of Housing and Urban Development on foreclosure prevention to our work at the Department of Agriculture to help feed hungry kids in the summertime; our efforts at HHS to connect health systems to congregations to improve public health to our team at EPA helping to green congregations; from the Veterans Administration to the U.S. Agency for

International Development to the Department of Commerce and beyond.

We have helped organizations around the country have a greater impact on their communities without creating new grant programs. These civic partnerships work. They help avoid legal pitfalls. They produce measurable results. And they change lives. My colleague and friend, Reverend Brenda Girton Mitchell is going to provide a few more details about these partnerships on the panel.

Next, I'd like to talk about how we've expanded the faith-based initiatives footprint into new territory and how that's been a signature of our work over the last four years. There's a lot to report on this front.

Under this administration, we've opened a Faith-based Office at the Environmental Protection Agency, and we've held a summit on greening congregations and nonprofits where we awarded the first ever ENERGY STAR certificates to congregations who effectively green their buildings. We've helped the State Department expand its work at the intersection of religion and foreign policy, partnering with State and USAID and the National Security Council on a new interagency working group on religion and global affairs; new courses on religion and foreign policy for our diplomats at the Foreign Service Institute; and new infrastructure across government in this area.

We also created the first ever Presidential Advisory Council of faith-based and nonprofit leaders, and we're on the second round of that counsel now. For the first time, the White House has a formal way to listen to faith-based and community groups rather than just talking to them. The first council produced recommendations in six areas, and we've implemented over 70 percent of those recommendations. The second round of that council is underway, and they're focused on how faith-based and nonprofit groups can impact the issue of human trafficking. We're anxiously awaiting the recommendations. Mara Vanderslice Kelly is going to go into some of these innovations

in more detail.

The third aspect of our work that I'd like to talk just a bit about is how proud I am of the team we brought together and the external partners who make our work worthwhile. The White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships and our agency centers have enjoyed a high level of stability and camaraderie. We've kept our heads down and gotten our work done.

We have 13 faith-based centers across the government, and in those 13 offices, 11 of the folks who started as center directors remain with the initiative to this day; and the two others are dear friends. Through a short conference call every morning and biweekly meetings and regular all-staff gatherings across agencies, our staff are connected to me at the White House and to each other like they've never been before, creating the trust and partnership that define our work. I'm also proud of how we've engaged the world around this.

We've intentionally reached out to all corners of the faith and nonprofit community to make sure our partnerships reflect the great diversity of our nation from building new partnerships with religious minorities in the Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu communities; engaging diversity within America's rich Jewish traditions; leveraging the wisdom and reach of America's great nonprofits from the United Way to Big Brothers Big Sisters and to secular communities as well; and of course expanding our engagement with Evangelical and mainland protestant and Catholic and Orthodox and LGBT and African-American Christians alike. We brought the whole spectrum of America's religious community in civil society into partnership with the White House. And, importantly, so many of these folks -- I don't just consider heads of denominations or organizations; they're dear friends. I see some in the audience today. Max Finberg is going to share a little bit more about the relationships we've been able to foster both inside the initiative

and outside of it as well.

So, we're pleased with our new vision for civic partnerships. It's enabled powerful work around the country. We're excited about the innovations that bring the faith-based initiative into previously uncharted waters. And we're heartened by the spirit of camaraderie that's been cultivated both inside and outside of the initiative. But this office still has so much more work to do. And as I close, I'd like to briefly highlight some of the issues I expect this office to tackle in the next four years.

First, the initiative must receive and then implement recommendations from the Presidential Advisory Council. Again, they're focused on human trafficking. I'm confident that we can do that in partnership with our phenomenal council chair, Susie Stern of the United Jewish Federations and Joint Distribution Committee.

Second, I expect this office to more closely align its work with the administration's existing place-based opportunity programs, like Promise Neighborhoods and Choice Neighborhoods and Strong Cities, Strong Communities in the Youth Violence Forum. These forums are bringing federal resources to bear in very targeted and geographically specific ways around the country, particularly where poverty and lack of opportunity are most acute. While in the past the Faith-based Office has largely operated independent from these existing and larger administration programs, I believe our impact could be deepened if we were to connect to these efforts.

Third, we're going to continue to take steps to improve the legal and constitutional footing of this office by fully implementing the President's November 2010 Executive Order on faith-based and neighborhood partnerships. We've made historic progress on the legal standing of the Faith-based Office. We assembled an advisory council to examine how faith-based groups partner with government. We shepherded that council's recommendations to full conclusion. We drafted an Executive Order on the

basis of those recommendations, and then we developed guidance for federal agencies to implement that Executive Order. But there's so much more work to be done. I expect this office to work with agencies around government to fully implement the provisions of that Executive Order, and as a result I believe the federal government's partnerships with the faith community will be more tightly aligned to our constitutional values and thus more effective than they've ever been before.

One last thing this morning. As I mentioned, I'm a little tired this morning, because I got back around 1 a.m. with the President after spending the last two days in Newtown, Connecticut grieving for some of our fellow Americans who've endured just unfathomable terror in their lives. There's so much about that time with those families and first responders that I will never forget the rest of my life -- their sadness and their courage and the President's leadership both in his public remarks, which I'm assuming many folks saw, and also in his private comfort.

One part stood out to me in stark relief, the fact that religion and government once again intersected for the greater good. Federal and state and local officials joined Red Cross volunteers and community grief counselors, clergy from all traditions, and community members who just wanted to help out. And we wrapped our arms around one another and we drew each other close. My friend, Reverend David Myers from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Faith-based Office, took a Red-Eye flight from L.A. to be there, and he's still there right as we speak, meeting with families and community members. These partnerships that we're talking about today are healing; they're life giving; and they bring glimmers of hope every single day around the country. It's been the honor of my life to serve to create and expand those partnerships with our President and with folks around the country as the head of this office, and I look forward to working so many of you in a thousand new ways in the future.

Thank you so much.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you so much, Joshua, we appreciated those remarks and look forward to digging in in the conversation a little bit later on various parts of your remarks.

My name is Melissa Rogers. I'm a nonresident Senior Fellow with Brookings and also associated with Wake Forest University Divinity School, and it's my pleasure to be here with you this morning and to see so many familiar faces in the crowd.

Let me just say a couple of quick remarks of transition as we make our way to the rest of the panel speakers. I want to say amen to E.J.'s comments and Joshua's about in the wake of the Newtown attacks. I pray that we all will be a part of burying the burdens of the community of Newtown in the wake of this atrocity and that, as President Obama said, we will find ways to come together and address these attacks, to engage in meaningful action regardless of the politics, and I certainly hope and pray that that will be the course that we follow.

My work on these issues began more years ago than I'd like to admit. (Laughter) I think we're all getting in touch with how old we are today. It was more than 15 years ago that I began to work on these issues for the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty. I'm so pleased that Nan Futrell is here this morning representing the Baptist Joint Committee. And the Baptist Joint Committee is dedicated to promoting the religious freedoms that are embodied in our first amendment. And of course this is such an important part of our conversation Joshua has mentioned; E.J. as well. But we need to of course recognize that we put a high premium on serving people in need in our country and doing so effectively. We also put an equally high premium on upholding the precious rights of conscience that are reflected in the First Amendment and other laws and policies in our nation.

So, we have worked over the years to try to ensure that these partnerships do indeed reflect the constitutional guarantees and religious freedom guarantees, and that will be a part of our conversation as well. The First Amendment certainly doesn't prohibit these partnerships, but it does create some guardrails that govern the partnerships, and like Joshua I believe those guardrails actually strengthen the partnerships, make them more effective and certainly more constitutionally compliant. So, I'm looking forward to the discussion of that today.

It was my pleasure several years ago to work with all of these folks through the first advisory council on faith-based and neighborhood partnerships, and we spent a lot of long hours together and did a lot of good work I think, and one of the notable things about that advisory council was its incredible diversity in terms of its membership both on the advisory council itself and on the task forces that did work for the advisory council.

And I just note, today we have with us a little embodiment of that diversity, Stanley Carlson-Thies, as has already been noted, served in the Bush White House Faith-Based Office and served on one of the task forces of the advisory council. The reverend Barry Lynn from Americans United is also with us and served on that same task force, and I did as well, and as you can imagine, we had some good discussions. (Laughter) But we'll of course get to, later today, some of the very important agreement that we found in that setting and also areas of disagreement that deserve to be discussed as well as we move forward.

So, I just want to thank the next three panelists for joining us. As I said, it's my pleasure to have worked with them.

Let me first introduce Max Finberg. Max directs the USDA Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. He previously served with Ambassador

and former Representative Tony Hall. As you know, Tony Hall has long led this nation and been a prophetic on the force on the issues of hunger, and Max has been his right-hand man. Max was special assistant to the ambassador, Tony Hall, at the U.S. Mission to the U.N. Agencies for Food and Agriculture at the hardship post in Rome, Italy. (Laughter) Before that he served as senior legislative assistant covering domestic, hunger, and poverty issues for Representative Hall.

So, so please we can have you with us this morning, Max.

Next we'll hear from Brenda Girton Mitchell, also an old friend of mine I'm pleased to say. Brenda directs the U.S. Department of Education Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. Previously she directed the Washington Office of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Brenda has worked in the past a legislative assistant to the former Senator Birch Bayh and as council to a variety of nonprofit and corporate entities. She has served over the years as a lawyer, a minister, and a teacher, do you can see how those qualifications come together while in her current job.

Mara Vanderslice Kelly is Senior Policy Advisor at the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. Previously she served as the acting director and senior advisor at the Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the Department of Health and Human Services. There she developed strategies to engage grassroots leaders and educating communities on the Affordable Care Act and establish a network of hospitals in order to share best practices in building effective community partnerships to improve health outcomes. As senior advisor at the Department of Health and Human Services she coordinated the first President's Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

So, we welcome all of those speakers, and let me also just note, I see

Holly Holman from the Baptist Joint Committee as well, so I wanted to recognize her. And she serves as general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee. But let's welcome all of our speakers to join us and address these issues.

MR. FINBERG: Well, thank you and good morning. I'm honored to join my friends and colleagues today in representing the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships -- and our great team of people.

So, more than 10 years ago, I had the privilege of working with Dr. John Dilulio, Stanley, Lisa, Jeremy, and others -- is the House of Representatives leads democratic staffer with Congressman Tony Hall in partially passing the Community Solutions Act, the legislative proposal for the initial faith-based initiative. XXX As someone who grew up in a small town of about 700 people near Woodstock, New York, the son of a Jewish father and a Presbyterian and Unitarian mother, it's a privilege to work with President Obama and his amazing team, led by Joshua, in such a time as this.

As Joshua mentioned, the White House office is a small coordinating office within the Domestic Policy Council with offices in a baker's dozen different federal agencies. Four years ago we inherited the structure, and now we've built a team. I get to describe some of our internal cohesion and external cooperation: how we work with each other and how we work with the world.

Allow me to start with a nonexhaustive snapshot of some of our current and former team members: A former Mennonite pastor who used to work with homeless youths; an Orthodox Rabbi who is retiring; a Southern United Methodist who came from Capitol Hill; a former entertainment executive from Texas. We have an attorney and a career civil servant. We have a Catholic social justice advocate who used to hang out with Bono of U-2. We have a former state senator, an army reservist, and Muslim woman and champion of youth engagement; we have an immigrant committed to helping

others in similar situations; we have a Quaker-educated Evangelical, and we have a gang-prevention specialist from Boston all as part of our rich and diverse team.

Our internal processes are such that every weekday morning we have a brief conference call together to share updates and ask for assistance. We learn what's happening at the White House and other agencies. We hear of upcoming travels and are able to connect teammates with friends wherever they may be going. Additionally, the leadership of the centers gathers monthly at the White House to address common concerns, discuss larger issues, and ensure that the teams are all on the same page with our respective efforts.

Last month almost 50 of us gathered for a training meeting at the National Agricultural Library, something that's happened a couple of times in the past few years. We had interns who were just with us for a semester, two career civil servants going on their fourth decade of federal employment. We were able to learn from the centers' successes, commemorating another milestone in the now 12-year history of what's called the faith-based initiative.

But what does this mean? What are these internal processes good for? A concrete example of why this regular and ongoing communication makes a difference happened just last week. The director of the center at the Department of Homeland Security who Joshua mentioned was going to Los Angeles, and he met with a network of Latino pastors there that initially had started as a relationship with the Department of Agriculture. So, on the ground this is revolutionary. To local leaders it means that one set of government officials is talking with another set of government officials about the good work that they're doing in their communities. Now, these calls and meetings are good for us, but they're huge for the people on the ground with whom we work.

All of this cohesion has led to numerous joint initiatives, projects, and

events. When the First Lady wanted to engage the faith and nonprofit communities in her nascent Let's Move Initiative to address child obesity, she turned to Joshua and his team. He brought together the centers at the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services to pull together Let's Move Faith and Communities. They now have almost a thousand denominations, congregations, organizations signed up as partners.

So, last year as a testament to President Obama's commitment to foster interfaith dialog and cooperation, a Let's Move group from the Muslim community participated in the anniversary event with the First Lady at an Evangelical church in Orlando, pastored by Joel Hunter.

As you will hear from my friend and colleague, Brenda Girton Mitchell, her Department of Education team is working with the Corporation for National Service on a number of exciting initiatives. Following the President's lead, the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services have led the efforts to promote responsible fatherhood and enlisted other centers to engage this effort with their various constituencies whether that's businesses or schools or rural Americans or our Armed Forces. Our directors at the Departments of Commerce and SBA have partnered together on economic development outreach for congregations and organizations.

Just this past Friday many of us came together for the White House Conference on Orthodox Christian Engagement, and we've done the same with the Hindu American Save a Foundation; Catholic Charities; Big Brothers Big Sisters; the Jewish Council for Public Affairs; Lutheran Social Services; United Way; and many others. We all worked under Mara's fabulous leadership to create our Partnerships for the Common Good toolkit for faith-based and neighborhood partnerships an easy entry point for working with the federal government. These partnerships for the government

and common good have made an impact.

Allow me to conclude with how this internal cohesion has led to some of the external collaboration through the sharing of friends. By communication channels, we've learned from one another on the tools of our outreach trade, webinars, meetings like this, conference calls, conferences, and much more. The White House hosted a dozen connecting communities for the common good, gatherings around the country reaching thousands of people/ Recognizing that most congregations and nonprofit organizations provide services that cross the silos of more than one federal department, we're always connecting partners with one another.

For example, Islamic Relief was just recognized by FEMA for their work in responding to disasters and, thanks to the work of our center at FEMA, is now part of the national volunteer organizations active in disasters. They've also worked with the Corporation for National Service on their Day of Dignity during Ramadan and with USDA and AID on an IFTAR celebration.

Both the Church of God and Christ and the National Baptist Convention first approached our centers at Veterans Affairs and HUD and at Education that has led to numerous presentations and engagements at national and regional gatherings by many more centers. The National Baptists have gone so far as to appoint liaisons for each of our centers to maximize those partnerships. The National Latino Evangelical Coalition started working with USDA on nutrition programs. One of their member churches hosted a Department of Labor jobs clubs event, and now they're working with FEMA on disaster response to Sandy.

As Joshua noted, we've come together to commemorate diverse religious celebrations from the Abrahamic to the Dharmic traditions. In one week that I'll never forget, last April, in one week that I'll never forget last April we celebrated the

White House Easter Prayer Breakfast, a food and justice Passover Seder and a Muslim group's spring gala within days. This is just a brief overview of how we work together with each other and with the world.

We look forward to four more years of building the team and forming partnerships between government and nonprofit organizations, both faith based and secular, to more effectively serve Americans in need.

Thank you.

MS. MITCHELL: Good morning, everybody.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. MITCHELL: It is indeed an honor to have an opportunity to join in this discussion and to see a lot of old friends in the audience as well. I've spent some of my early days in this work with the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. I know there have been some changes, but if you're here on behalf of NCC and NCC member group, can you just waive your hand so I know you're out there? All right, I see - - oh, right, good, good, good. I know some faces have changed but the work -- the great work is still going on.

I was raised in the Baptist tradition, and almost every Sunday somebody would say, if not these exact words, the exact spirit, "You have come here to worship, but you depart to serve." And so when I came to work for President Obama in Faith-based Office and the Department of Education, I already knew that people in faith-based organizations and community groups really were where the rubber hit the road when it was time to get work done, touching the lives of people who already trusted them, that if the pastor said something needed to be done or here was a safe place to get some work done together, that was already believable, and I just didn't think that anybody would have any questions about whether that worked or not.

But in the past two years I've been privileged to work with President Barak Obama under the leadership of Joshua DuBois in the Faith-based Office, and I recognized that not everybody is in that place, and so our work helps people to understand that your faith is what drives you to do certain kinds of things, and it doesn't prevent you or prohibit you from being civically engaged. It's just the way you put your faith in action, and whether you're doing that through the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and through United Way or through a particular faith tradition, what matters is that we're working together to find solutions to issues that all of us are concerned about, and so I felt like this job description had come from Heaven for me, because it gives me an opportunity to do what I was raised to believe was the right way of just always trying to touch people's lives and make a difference and every day.

So, thank you, Joshua, for inviting me to join the team and for allowing me, all of you, to be a part of such an incredible group of people who believe that what you do does matter.

One of the foundational goals of our work in the Faith-based Office is to connect organizations to government, to be what we call the front door for people who felt like they weren't welcome or hadn't been invited or didn't have access. Our teams then become the way that they know there's a way they can get their phone calls returned, their e-mails answered in a place that we can be equipped to do the work that we want to do together and to design it in such a way that we'll have measurable impact.

All of us have been part of projects, I know, where we weren't sure whether what we did was really making a difference. And so we're an outcomes-based society now. We have to kind of be able to prove to people that what we're doing matters. And until you're on the ground and you hear the stories and you look into the eyes of people who have been impacted, it's sometimes hard to know whether what

we're doing does make a difference. But when you get the storyline and when you see the changes that happen even in us as we work together to help the most vulnerable communities in America, the only answer you can give to the question "does it matter?" is a resounding yes.

We have discovered that we can help people best by having tools and resources available that are easy to be accessed, and we've discovered that our efforts are most effective when people know that we're not coming "We're the government, we're here to solve your problems." We come saying, "We're here to just help connect people together," and the truth of the matter is that sometimes having a government convening is the way people who are already sitting beside each other in the same community often end up coming together to find out they're working toward some of the same shared goals. These civic partnerships, as we call them, are a way to enhance the opportunity for partnerships and communities.

One of my favorite quick stories is that on one of the trips that we took to Michigan we had a person in the audience who was complaining that they were this close to getting what they needed to be a part of a Promise Neighborhood application. They'd done everything but there was a potential partner who had not responded, and the person actually called the person by name and the person was in the room. And so that very day we were able to facilitate a very important connection. (Laughter) And it was all positive. It was all positive.

And so often we say that part of our job is just to help answer the question when people ask us, "Well, how can we help? You've told us all this stuff. What difference can we make? How can we help?" So, if the question is how can you help our veterans and military families, we have some pretty good answers to that as we work with our veterans and those who are returning home and military families represented by

Reverend Terri Lavelle over here, we had helped to reconnect families as they settle into a different daily routine, which presents unique stresses for them. We recognize the importance that that transition can't happen without community support -- and even when veterans have been back a long time.

A personal story with Terri at one of these meetings: She was telling me about the volunteer service that's available working with the D.A. on how to help veterans find out what benefits they were entitled to. I have a brother who's a Vietnam vet who had not been able to get consistent support, and he had some very traumatic things that had happened to him. I was able to call home to Indianapolis and tell them what I heard Terri say about the veterans' volunteer services, and my brother now is doing better than he's ever done. And that's a real personal testimony. So, that work is important. And there were people in place in Indianapolis, that I didn't even know about, through the faith-community that are now helping people in much deeper ways. Sometimes we just need people to be the messengers for the work.

If the question is, "What do we do about feeding hungry kids?" well, we probably know more about that than most groups as faith-based organizations. But we are really excited that in working with the USDA for the summer feeding program, we've been able to increase the number of children who have access to healthy, nutritious means during the summer.

During the school year, over 21 million children receive free and reduced meals through the federal school lunch program, but during the summer many of these same children go hungry. Right now, only about 2.3 million children receive these meals in the summer program. But thanks to the great work of USDA, we were able to answer the question, "How can we help?" by helping faith and community organizations know that they could register to become a part of the summer feeding program. And in the

summer of 2011, 3 million additional meals were served than over the previous summer. (Applause) Thank you. And that is in part, because 1400 additional faith-based and nonprofit institutions responded to the call of the USDA, and they said yes, we will help.

Unemployment is something that's on everybody's mind, so when the question is asked, "How can we help people find jobs?" -- the Department of Labor came up with a very creative approach to -- Ben Siegel, who's sitting here, when we see him we just call him Mr. Job Clubs -- we just gave him a new name -- because we all know somebody who's been impacted by unemployment, and just this weekend, on Saturday I believe, in the *Washington Post* they talked about how networking has become almost the number one way that people are able to connect with others to find opportunities for work. But through the work of the Center at the Department of Labor over the last 18 months, we now have over 2,000 Job Clubs and career ministries that focus their energies much more intentionally in helping people to connect and find opportunities and, even if they don't get a job right away, to know that they're not in this situation alone and to find a way to relieve some of the emotional stress. If anybody in here has ever had to look for a job, stress, and knowing that somebody's helping you and praying with you and walking that journey with you is an invaluable, invaluable asset. And so we appreciate the online community that's also been developed as a part of the Department of Labor's Job Club outreach.

This interagency collaboration that Max referred to, I think we've just taken it to another level. We're talking to the community about connecting the community to work with each other, but we've connected ourselves to work with each other in ways that I think we're very excited about, and we look forward to four more years of doing that kind of work together, and we're trying to practice what we preach when we do it.

Two examples that I'll mention briefly have already been alluded to. One

is the President's interfaith and community service campus challenge. And President Obama challenged college and university presidents to allow their students to come together, across their faith lines or not, to find issues in the community that they could work on together to try to make a difference. And while they were doing that, they were creating relationships with people they might not have ever worked with or reached out to before. The impact has been tremendous.

So, we've already had over 300 colleges and universities participate. We were given permission to go on with year 2 in collaboration with the Department of Education, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and the White House; and it is some of the most exciting work that I've ever done, to be with young people who are willing to talk about their faith and learn about their faith and learn that people who don't acknowledge a faith tradition still have a heart to serve their communities.

One of our exciting examples was from the U.S. Air Force Academy where a group of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish students worked together with a local food bank last year, and over 32,000 needy families were served through the work of these students coming together. They reinforce not only the need to serve, but they fed families and built relationships at the same time.

And last, but not least, we modeled after that kind of working together. Michael Robbins and Ken Bedell, who are from our office -- actually, my whole office is there. This is really terrible, but would you all just wave your hands? They're all back there.

MR. DUBOIS: They're very loyal.

MS. MITCHELL: -- decided that we had to help communities understand how to help schools. So, we do have school improvement grants. We have lot of programs that are going on. We've got Title I. And when people say, "How can we help

in schools?" well, they say we can mentor, we can tutor, but those efforts were not always connected to outcomes that we needed. So under a project or an initiative we called Together for Tomorrow we said here's how you can improve outcomes -- by working on attendance, behavior, course performance, and college access. And if the community groups that come together to help do this in those areas are working on those specific areas as opposed to, well, just sitting at the desk or babysitting or just helping in the cafeteria, which might be (inaudible) behavior, then those outcomes should be much more measurable. We can see some results, because everybody's working toward the same goals. And this is a meaningful way to make a difference in our lowest-performing schools.

The White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, and the Corporation for National Community Service have become just hooked at the hips around these particular programs to improve outcomes in our lowest-performing schools. We had some exciting in October with 24 initiatives that posted their challenges online. One of them was One Church One School of the Christian Methodist, Episcopal Church where they're asking churches in the Churches in the Christian Methodist faith to just adopt one school and help drive results around attendance behavior and (inaudible). Then in Orlando, Florida, this effort resulted in the interfaith school turnaround pilot, which was led by the Heart of Florida United Way, working with Orange County Public Schools and the Orlando mayor (inaudible) Cities of Service Initiative.

And while the pilot launched at four (inaudible), it's now expanding and we expect to see the seeds of this work grow tremendously.

These are just a few examples. All of us could get up and share with you many, many things that have happened as a result of connecting in communities. But through the leadership provided by President Obama and by Joshua, we're continuing to

strive, to build ways, to improve the civic engagement, the civic partnerships that really do make a difference in the lives of people every day. And I believe that no matter what your faith tradition or your value system is driven by, all of our efforts are just designed to help people have a good response to the question, "Why are you doing this?" It's because you believe in the spirit of the spirit of the song that says, "If I can help somebody as I pass along, my living will not be in vain." We hope you'll help us stay connected in the work we're trying to do across America.

MR. DIONNE: As Mara makes her way up, I have to say, Reverend Mitchell, you moved me to a thought as you were talking there.

She said at the beginning that this work was sent by Heaven to her.

Maybe you were sent by Heaven to do this job. I just lay that out. The social scientists would call that the alternative hypothesis.

MS. KELLY: Thank you.

Well, thank you, everyone, this morning. It's great to be here with everybody and to see so many friendly faces of long-time friends and new-found colleagues. I know everyone has said that, but it really is wonderful to see everybody here.

I wanted to focus my comments today on what I think has been one of the most defining and important characteristics of President Obama's version of the Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships initiative, which has been our willingness and ability to move into new territory, new landscapes, and to really see innovation come out of our working relationships with each other and with the community-based groups that we all have engaged.

I think along with everyone here, it's just been an incredible honor to serve alongside Joshua and with all of our colleagues here who truly have become like

an extended family for us, to get to serve in this office and for this President. I remember back to the very first time that we stepped into the Oval Office to stand with the President as he signed the Executive Order to reconstitute our office, and it truly was one of the most ah-inspiring moments of my life.

I remember standing there with Joshua; with John Kelly, the man that I was about to marry two years later, although I may not have known that at the time; and many of the members of the religious community that were to become members of the President's Faith Advisory Council. And there was just this sense of sort of ah and hope and an idea of renewal as the President signed that Executive Order to carry this work on forward. And there was a sense for each of us that the President was blowing new life into this initiative with new excitement and visions of what paths we might be able to bring this kind of incredible work down and what role each of us might play in it. And I really believe that this push to pursue new ground in the initiative to expand our impact instead of contract it is going to be one of the signature legacies that we've seen under Joshua and the President's leadership.

The first thing, obviously, many people have mentioned here today but I do want to expand on a little it is the President's Advisory Council, and this really was a brand new innovative approach that was signed into law by the President's Executive Order as what we call a Federal Advisory Council or Federal Advisory Committee, which is quite a formal process. For those of you that have heard about our meetings or participated in our public open meetings through access on Federal Register, it's been quite an incredible project. But I don't believe that there has been such a diverse bipartisan, multi-ethnic, multi-religious panel of advisors that have advised federal government in the past. It's truly been a landmark to see this kind of diversity come together across religious lines and backgrounds and political lines serve together.

And in our very first inaugural committee, of which Melissa Roger here was our chair -- and we should really thank her for that incredible service -- we brought together --

(Applause) We should -- thank you Melissa. Really helped us guide this brand new process, which was new for us and I think new for the members that participated. But we brought together over 80 faith-based and nonprofit leaders, which I had to coordinate, and if you can imagine all the different thoughts and perspectives. It was quite a task but one that I think has truly been one of the greatest honors of my life to help work with such an amazing wealth of knowledge, of people that came together to help advise the federal government really in a new way. And in that first inaugural committee, there were six different task forces that literally almost spanned the scope of issues that you could think of to bring faith and community groups together to advise government. And they included how we might reform the legal and constitutional footing of our office; how we could better engage faith communities and the government to lift up poverty as a fundamental moral issue and concern of those at the margins as one of the most important things and priorities that the faith-based initiative can put forward. It challenged us to move into thinking about religion I global affairs, interfaith and inter-religious dialog in action. Talk about global poverty and the environment.

That President' advisory council -- the task force on the legal reforms literally provided the blueprint for the President's Executive Order and the guiding of work that has come since that, so it truly made an impact. So, it truly made an impact. As Joshua said, we've implemented about 70 percent of the recommendations, either fully or partially from that group, which I think is a tremendous track record; and, really, some of that early thinking, I think, shaped the direction of the way that our initiative has moved forward.

I wanted to talk in particular -- I think the Council itself is an innovative, new frontier in and of its own, but it also pointed us in directions of two areas that I wanted to specifically share a little bit more about, which I think have been really brand new for our office. And the first is the issue of the environment, stewardship over the environment, and the second piece is on religion and global affairs.

So, first I think everyone in this room knows that America's faith communities have been the forefront of the environmental stewardship movement, or creation care as many of us in the Evangelical church have called it, and it's really been amazing to see the way that Evangelical leaders and faith leaders, by getting behind the concern for creation care, have really brought prominence to this issue.

When we looked around government, we saw we had 12 Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships but realized that there was not a center for engagement at the Environmental Protection Agency. And considering this was such an important issue for our faith and nonprofit leaders, we asked ourselves well, why couldn't we set up a place of engagement there on environmental issues for the faith community and for nonprofits when this is so important. So, really, it's one of my cherished accomplishments, that Joshua and I were able to work with Administrator Jackson to establish the 13th Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the Environmental Protection Agency, which is a brand new area, really, for this initiative.

And we continue to work based on the Council's recommendations, our engagement with other faith leaders, to think through how we could really help bring the partnerships that government had to offer to the faith communities to help them fully implement that cherished value of stewardship. And one of the issues we came down upon was the resource that already exists in the faith community, which is that of houses of worship. There are 370,000 houses of worship across America today from teeny little

storefront churches to huge mega-church campuses, and the EPA estimates that if those houses of worship were to cut their energy use by 10 percent, they could save more than \$315 million to reinvest in their own ministries, and we would be able to save 1.3 million tons of greenhouse gases, which is the equivalent of taking 240,000 cars off the road or planting nearly 300,000 acres of trees.

So, we identified a very specific measure and said what could we do to get houses of worship to be engaged in reducing their own emissions, and we partnered with ENERGY STAR, which was an incredible resource EPA had already come up with and their Greening Congregations Initiative to bring in folks. We even had a major conference at the White House in the fall of this year, one of the most interfaith and diverse conference we've brought together, including Muslim and Hindu and Sikh and Buddhist and Christian and Catholic and Jewish and Evangelical, that all came and spoke about ways that faith and nonprofit communities could live out their concern for the environment by greening their houses of worship and partnership with government.

The next piece I want to just talk about shortly is on religion and global affairs. You know, one of the premises of our work here is that religion matters. The President knows this. Religion matters to us here in America as one of the most religiously active and pluralistic countries in the world. But religion matters to peoples in societies around the globe as well. And when the President first founded our office and first talked with Joshua, he talked to us about what would be ways that we could encourage inter-religious cooperation and engagement with religious leaders, not only here at home but abroad. And we acknowledge that many in our diplomatic corps, both at USAID and the State Department, maybe had not been trained or had been doing all that they could do to engage religious diversity in their diplomatic and development work abroad.

So, this prompted us, along with the Council's recommendations again, to launch the very first ever Interagency Working Group on Religion and Global Affairs. It was chaired by our office, by Joshua DuBois, and the national security staff of the White House. And I'm not sure if that had happened before. Between the Faith-based Office and the national security staff, to look and really do a survey of the entire government's footprint when it came to our international engagement with religious leaders and religious actors. This sort of a survey had never been completed before. We got nine federal agencies to be engaged, and we got reports back from 190 U.S. Embassies reporting to us what their engagement had looked like, with religious leaders and religious actors basically in our foreign affairs. And we saw incredible examples that came back to us, including entrepreneurship workshops, community infrastructure improvement, preservation of cultural sites, interfaith dialogs, celebratory dinners, music events, funding for certain projects in some cases. But through this process, we also learned that many in our diplomatic corps were engaging religious leaders in a sporadic way, and primarily we found that the engagement was around ceremonial events or one off time events. And we really believe that there could be a deeper, more profound, ongoing engagement with religious and faith-based leaders around the world toward our shared diplomatic and development priorities.

So, we've been excited to see the leadership from our USAID office, our Center there. They've implemented incredible training for the staff at USAID. We've seen a brand new training at the Foreign Service Institute, and we're excited to continue to work with our State Department officials, as they are expanding their engagement and work with faith communities at the State Department, and all of these initiatives are new and I really believe were spurred on by the leadership that came out of the White House Faith-based office.

I know I'm running out of time, but there have been numerous other fields that we've reached out to in innovative ways, including hospital and systems. We convened a group of 19 hospital CEO representing more than \$2 billion in assets to share best practices about how they could engage faith and community-based leaders. That health learning group has now grown to 40 hospital CEOs all sharing best practices about how to reduce costs through constructive and proven, effective partnerships with community-based groups that have never really been done before. We'd reach out into schools and into the private sector and many other arenas, helping those not just in government but in large civil society sectors across the spectrum see the value of engaging with faith-based and community-based groups and assets and networks that they bring to the table. And that really is one of the things that I'm the most proud of, of the legacy of this office has moved forward, is the way that we've been innovative. We've moved out into new territory, and I think that will really be one of the things that our office is remembered for thanks to Joshua's leadership.

Thank you.

MR. DUBOIS: If I might, one quick acknowledgment, because I know they have to run, or at least one of them does, there are two folks here who just kind of keep our office moving day to day, keep me sane or when I'm insane calm me down, and that's Michael Weir, my first executive assistant in the Faith-based Office -- good to see you -- who's now working on the Presidential Inauguration Committee (inaudible) together, and Scott Buckouter, current executive assistant. Thank you so much.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you so much. Because we're running a little bit behind, I want to, in a sense, put a couple of background questions on the table, and maybe you could deal with them as we have other questions come up, and I'll turn to Melissa. By the way, it struck me -- 13 is an unlucky number (laughter), and so we may

need another Faith-based --

MR. DUBOIS: We're looking at the Department of Energy.

MR. DIONNE: See, I was thinking of the Securities Exchange Commission or the fed. (Laughter) I think the fed could really use a Faith-based Office.

I really want to put two questions on the table for you to think about as we deal with other questions.

Question one is: In this work, what strikes me all the time is continuity and breaks all at the same time. I mean, we forget that a lot of this work started not under President Bush but in the Clinton administration. And so in one sense we have quite a lot of continuity from Clinton to Bush and Bush to Obama, and while there have been different ways of doing this, we haven't broken from the idea that this is work worth doing through government. Yet there have been enormous controversies around this work -- we'll deal with those more on the second panel -- issues having to do with what does the First Amendment permit one and not permit one to do. And so one of the things I would like you to think about as you answer the other questions is: When you look back -- we'll go just back to the Bush years -- where have the changes in reforms been most pronounced? Where has the continuity been most pronounced.

The other question I want to put in the background -- and this is kind of a mischievous journalist's question -- I was talking to somebody last week who said oh, this must be the Faith-based Office's coming out party. And what the person explained is that a lot of this work by the administration has been done quite quietly, that you haven't chosen to put it up front as a major part of the administration, and, you know, there are interesting questions are on that surrounding the politics of this. If you put it more up front, would you subject yourself to enormous controversy from both the left and the right for this kind of work, and I'd just like that in the back of your head, because I think those

two areas are, at least to me and I think more generally as we look forward, interesting questions.

Melissa, do you want to sort of --

MS. ROGERS: Well, I think those are great questions, and I'd love to weave them into the mix. And just to add on to that a little bit, one of the things that I'd like for all of you to address, if you could, is some of the recommendations that you mentioned, that the office is moving forward, some of the reforms that you've talked about. If you could speak about those specifically, because I don't think those have, as E.J. suggested, gotten much attention and should receive more attention.

Another thing is that this office -- the Bush office had faith-based and community initiatives. This office has faith-based and neighborhood partnerships, and you've all in your comments recognized that you reach out to leaders of secular and nonprofits as well as religious nonprofits. I think that work also sometimes gets lost, and say more-- if you could say more about your work with secular organizations and leaders, how you've reached out to them, the way that those partnerships have worked when you have faith and secular groups working together, what you've and learned about the best ways for civil society as a whole -- because that's what we're really talking about -- working together to help people in need and to accomplish other aims that are appropriate for government to pursue.

MR. DIONNE: And both of us having put these huge questions on the table, I then want to ask everybody to be really, really brief, because we don't want to sort of run too far over on the event.

MR. DUBOIS: So, should we respond to those questions first?

MR. DIONNE: Yeah. Yeah.

MR. DUBOIS: Okay, great.

So, first the reforms, and you know this better than anyone, Melissa, because of the advisory council and the subsequent working groups that we've formed, I think we're fundamentally changing the way the federal government engages religious organizations and changing it for the better in large measure because we're adding more clarity around how people who operate federal grants and engage faith-based organizations work with those organizations. So, over the next year we're going to see increased trainings for folks who are operating grants across federal agencies about how exactly we should work with organizations and what rules faith-based groups must follow.

We also have increased protection for beneficiaries of federal social services so that if organizations object to the religious or nonreligious character of the service that it's being provided they have additional options for receiving services.

We've also clarified that religious groups can maintain their religious character in the provision of social services in some very specific ways as well. So, a lot of the unanswered questions that we've heard over the years we've laid out in both the President's Executive Order and subsequent guidance, and then we'll be spending time over the coming years to make sure the folks across federal agencies are implementing the answers to those questions in the way they engage local groups.

In terms of engaging secular organizations, well, there are just so many that we work with on a regular basis. Big Brothers Big Sisters -- we do tremendous mentoring work with them, including on the corporate mentoring challenge. We help connect employees at large companies to Big Brothers Big Sisters to provide mentors for kids who need them, and we work with United Way local offices around the country, and obviously that's a nonsectarian organization as well. Our doors are wide open to grassroots groups from across the spectrum. There's no religious test to engage the Faith-based Office, as if you want to serve your community, we're going to find a way to

work with you.

MR. DIONNE: Anybody else want to take any of those others, and then we can open it up the audience?

Okay, who -- nobody likes to ask the first question, so this is actually the third question. (Laughter)

Oh, in this crowd, all right.

Let me go to my colleague, Sally Quinn. This is pure bias on my part. Forgive me.

MS. QUINN: Well, Joshua and I have talked a lot about --

Hi, Joshua.

MR. DUBOIS: How are you doing?

MS. QUINN: -- about especially in the beginning when you first started the hiring issue, and it still seems, unless there's something I don't know, that that still remains an issue. I mean, how do you deal with organizations, religious organizations that do not want to hire people outside of their faith and yet still want government funding or want to be part of the White House Faith-based initiative?

MR. DUBOIS: Sure. It's a great question, and much to the chagrin of folks on both sides of this issue, it is entirely unresolved, and I think it's important to acknowledge that our friends, you know, approach these issues from the left or wish that we would sort of existing policy in this area. Folks that take a more conservative approach to this issue wish that we would solidify the existing standing -- the place where this issue is. But we have done either, it's entirely unresolved. But I think it's important to acknowledge clearly and openly.

I would say, though, that there is a range of ways that this office can strengthen its legal and constitutional footing that are as important as that very important

issue. And we've taken a lot of those steps. We've institutionalized them in the President's Executive Order, and we're moving them forward across government. So, there has been progress made on a number of fronts but not on the hiring issue.

MR. DIONNE: Could I just add -- that's a great question, Sally, and I've always had the suspicion that there was an objective here, which is to make sure this issue was discussed through Election Day 2012, because no matter how you decided this, you are going to have a lot of trouble. Given that Election Day has passed, is there any chance this gets resolved in the next four years?

MR. DUBOIS: Well, you know, again it's an issue that is still very much on the table and something that the administration will consider in coalition with partners across the spectrum and so, well, it remains to be seen, E.J.

MR. DIONNE: I take that as no or maybe no. Thank you. (Laughter)

MR. DUBOIS: I would say that I think it's critically important to acknowledge it. The work of partnering with local organizations to feed kids who are hungry, to make sure that young people who don't have adequate schooling have access to education, to strengthen the rules of engagement around how people who are making federal grants work with faith-based organizations. You know, we should not kind of artificially lift one issue above others but really look at the expanse of the way the federal government engages faith-based organizations. And so I think it's important to do that.

MR. DIONNE: Good. I think in fairness to everybody grappling with this question, as some of you know, Melissa did a report right after the 2000 election proposing reforms in this area and also continuing the work, and the one issue we -- Melissa and I agree on a lot of stuff, and the one issue we had the most trouble with talking to each other, not heartened disagreement but just trying to sort out, was this religious (inaudible). It is a very, at least to me, a very hard issue.

This gentleman right here, our friends.

MR. ALTMAN: Hi, I'm Fred Altman, and you have an impressive coherence among all your offices and people that you serve. What is the relationship between the offices and the secretaries and directors of the agencies?

MR. DUBOIS: That's a great question. You know, that wonderful relationship -- actually, I should let some of these folks speak, because they do a lot of work with their individual secretaries, yeah.

MS. MITCHELL: Well, I'm at the U.S. Department of Education, and I just want to say good morning to you on behalf of Secretary Arnie Duncan, who was one of the best people to work for in the administration, the only one I've worked for in an agency, so I can that. (Laughter)

But what he allows us to do is have a seat at the table and to be a part of policy conversations, and he checks in with us about opinions and invites us to check in even if they don't think to include us in some conversations. So, there's a little push and pull sometimes with career staff who had not necessarily had the best relationship with that particular office. But I think our team, not to be bragging, has turned that around, and they see us as an important part of the work. We're the inside-outside game, so we get to do both and let them know what people are thinking in communities and how to shape responses that make people feel like they've been heard and what their opinion is matters.

MR. DUBOIS: I should note, we were in a meeting last week on the interfaith campus challenges with Brenda and Eboo Patel from Interfaith Youth Corps, who many folks know. Secretary Duncan called about a completely unrelated issue but made sure to say tell Brenda I said hi, and so they have a very good and close relationship.

MR. DIONNE: Could I ask right off that maybe to Max or Mara, one of the things that's always been in this field is all the controversy comes when it comes to well, who will get federal money under some circumstances, and yet I think anybody involved in this field has noticed that a lot of the work that's done (a) does not necessarily involve direct federal money and (b) is often not about setting up a new program but using religious organizations as intermediaries with various public organizations. Education's a good example where a lot of churches, synagogues, mosques do a lot of stuff with kids to make them school ready, to tutor them to get them ready for school. Sometimes they serve as catalysts for reform. Churches often are the vouching agent for community development programs where a lot of folks don't deal with the banks and the churches without, again, a dime of federal government money passing through and end up being critical to making things happen. Could you just talk briefly about that, because I think it is so lost when this discussion gets deeply ideological.

MR. FINBERG: Well, I have to politely disagree with my friend and colleague, Brenda. Working with Secretary Tom Vilsack is the best ever.

MR. DIONNE: All right, enough of this. (Laughter) You know, you'll get raises.

MR. FINBERG: As someone who was born in a Catholic orphanage where he was raised by Catholic sisters for the months of his life, this is a deeply personal thing for him. So, our office has had the ability to work with a variety of partners in the task that the Department of Agriculture has in feeding hungry kids especially. And so as has been highlighted, Brenda did a great job. Our outreach, especially on summer feeding, that has been blessed and allowed and encouraged from the very top has seen some of those direct results. I'm excited that as part of the second panel you'll hear Sister Norma Pimentel, one of our partners, talk a little about what that's meant. My

colleague Roxana Bareus have done a targeted job in reaching any partner we can because that idea of a meal going to a hungry kid during the summer doesn't know any politics, as Ronald Reagan said, doesn't know the religious distinctions, and that's one way where that partnership doesn't involve the transfer of a direct grant even though we can provide that meal.

MR. DIONNE: This gentleman over on the left has had his hand up for a while. Right behind -- oh, I'm sorry, Mara, go ahead. I'm sorry.

MS. KELLY: I just wanted to build on something you said quickly, E.J., which is that -- and I'll just speak for myself but I think this has been universal across our enters -- when I was directing our office at HHS, I mean, our office is not involved in the writing of or the evaluating of or the giving of grants. That's just not what our offices do, and so there really has been a misperception out there that somehow our offices have a specific set of grants that somehow we're administrating or influencing, and that just was -- it was a zero part, component of my full-time job there, and I say that exactly as meaning actually zero of my hours went to doing that work.

All of our work was in engaging faith-based and community-based groups toward shared values and shared outcomes per action to help people's lives. And when I was at HHS, I mean, we worked with the Secretary and other key leadership to identify where did we think we could have the biggest impact in the area that they identified for us and that we identified as a value that was shared where we could work together. And almost always it didn't include the transfer of federal grants.

Now, some of these groups are already getting federal grants. That's fabulous. But that wasn't something that flowed through our office.

So, I see Acacia Salatti here. She is our acting director now at HHS and did a tremendous job in reaching out through African-American churches and Hispanic

faith communities to try to lessen health disparities. She's been, like, joined at the hip with our staff that works on health disparities and minority health outreach at HHS, and in fact through a lot of the work that Acacia and others did when we were helping people get information about getting the flu shot -- I know that doesn't sound very sexy -- because of Acacia's work, they literally -- I think they eliminated the disparity with immunizations between low income and minority children for white children because of that work. So, I mean, that was through the engagement of ongoing, existing networks to say hey, look, Walgreen's wants to partner, we want to get the immunization out through these networks and really make a difference. So, that's really the kind of work that we've been doing.

MR. DIONNE: What I want to bring several questions together so we can close. We'll start with the gentleman over here and then let's immediately pass the mic to the lady here on the aisle and then the gentleman over there. We'll take those three -- oh, no, let me get Barry Lynn in also. So, if you could all be brief and then the panel can answer. They can divide it up.

SPEAKER: Thank you all for your great work. It's great to see four years of (off mic), because that means the mind (off mic). (Laughter)

MR. DUBOIS: That we know of.

SPEAKER: (off mic) and that is a lot of the folks, and this discussion has been around poverty and people (off mic) and we look at what captures the headline in driving policy. It's protect the middle class, through the middle class, (off mic). One way to do that would be to get the 46 million poor people from being poor to middle class. What can those of us in the advocacy community do better to help advance so this doesn't have to be as much of a secret? And how can we get more attention at the White House and the media around people need rather than just the middle class?

MR. DIONNE: Thank you. Hold that thought. Whatever you have done unto these, the middle class, you have done unto me. No, that's not what it says.

Go ahead, this -- no, right in front -- Maggie. Yeah.

SALLY: I'm a development consultant working with small organizations in the faith-based community. Two questions: How are you including alternative spiritual groups and then how are you using partnerships with the IRS in disseminating information to those groups that aren't familiar with you all and then using technology, primarily creating modules either by way of YouTube or some other platform to help organizations each of your offices and its (inaudible).

MR. DIONNE: And then if you could pass to that gentleman -- I think you had your hand up -- and then back to Barry Lynn. Right there, Maggie. And then if you could just pass it back to Barry and then you guys can deal with the collection of questions.

Sir.

MR. LOMBARDI: Sure, thank you. My name is Chris Lombardi. I'm with the Secular Coalition for America. I don't want to belabor the secular point too much. It's been well spoken of already. But I wanted to put forward the idea that one thing to help expand the office -- and I'm actually promoting that right now -- the expansion of that office is to have an actual, explicitly secular representative on the advisory council to address the neighborhood partnerships inside of the office's title that can know some of the organizations that you can then partnership at the secular level.

The only other thing I'll say -- a quick acknowledgment as a proud Hoosier that there are two Indiana college graduates on this panel. (Laughter) That doesn't happen all that often in the meeting I've been to. So, thanks.

MR. DIONNE: I like that. Thank you.

And then Reverend Barry Lynn.

MR. LYNN: I just want to follow up on Sally's question.

Joshua, when you said that the matter of hiring was entirely unresolved, my understanding is, although there have been no formal changes, there have been at least nine waivers granted by the Department of Justice to allow what some might call preferential -- I recall discriminatory hiring on the part of religious groups of people of their own backgrounds -- so that there is a policy. It may not be formal but sometimes inaction leads to a policy, and I just wanted you to clarify that if you could.

MR. DUBOIS: Sure.

MR. DIONNE: I knew you'd ask a rubber-meet-the-road question.

Thank you so much.

MR. DUBOIS: Absolutely. So, let's take these in turn. I'd love my colleagues to join in as well.

Thank you for the point about poverty. You know, the President often talks about poverty and ladders to opportunity, how we can get folks who are living under the poverty line up to the middle class. He calls them sort of, you know, aspiring to be in the middle class. And there are some wonderful programs that I think our office can do a better job of connecting to, like Promise Neighborhoods. I'm a huge fan of Promise Neighborhoods. If you're not familiar with it, I'd encourage you to check it out. It looks like you are. But, really, place-based strategies that surround young people with all of the care and support they need to succeed. I think we can do more to leverage religious and community resources and plug them in to programs like Promise Neighborhoods.

We also have the Strong Cities, Strong Communities program, SC2, where we're trying to bring together all federal agencies to really focus their energy on blighted cities and cities that are facing challenges. An alum of the Faith-based Office,

Mark Linton, is the executive director of the SC2 Council, so we're very excited about that program.

In terms of technology and ways that we can use it to reach more constituents, actually, Eugene, I was wondering if you wouldn't mind sharing a little bit about the webinars that you all have done very, very successfully with thousands of people at the Department of Justice.

MR. DIONNE: Maggie, can you bring a -- oh, thank you.

MR. SCHNEEBERG: Sure. I'm Eugene Schneeberg, head of the Center at the Department of Justice. We hosted our first webinar faith- and community-based approaches to prisoner reentry and set a record for number of registrants, over 2200. Just to put that in context, some of the DOJ webinars maybe have 30, 40 people. So, there's incredible interest in demand. We've done five of them now. I know several are brother and sister centers. We do them all the time to get the word out. But I like the idea of using YouTube more effectively.

MR. DUBOIS: Absolutely. And engaging the IRS is something that's -- well, we've done a few calls with them about nonprofit status and so forth, but there's a lot more that can be done there.

To Barry's point and then back to Chris, I think the reality of the situation is while the previous Bush administration policy remains, and that's why you see the waiver that you mention, that has not been solidified, which I think, you know, will be a relief to some of our colleagues and gives anxiety to others. So, that's what I mean by unresolved, meaning it has not landed in one area or another, but it does-- the policy is as it was before. So, just to clarify there.

To Chris, I just acknowledge. I think it's a great point. We do have nonsectarian organizations represented on the advisory council -- hi there, Maria

Negorski, oh, I didn't even see you there before -- advisory council member Maria Negorski is from a wonderful nonsectarian organization. You want to just say a little bit about your work, Maria?

MS. NEGORSKI: I'm Maria Negorski, and I represent Fair Chance, which is a community-based organization here in D.C., working with low-income children, youths, and families. So, I guess I would qualify as a secular representative. (Laughter)

MR. DUBOIS: Thank you. But, you know, it's something that I think we can continue to strengthen in the future.

MR. DIONNE: Any closing thoughts from our panel? Please, you're quite invited to say something before we close here.

MS. MITCHELL: Well, I'd like to mention on the poverty question. Sometimes we don't even use the word "poverty" anymore. But at the Department of Education, trying to implement the President's vision for Cradle to Career and College strategy, recognizing that education is a civil right and that everybody has the playing field for education, that we will improve outcomes and we will be able to help people not have to experience as much poverty as we're experiencing now, because people will have the tools to help provide for themselves economically and to advance in a society that's much more competitive than it's ever been. So, it's always something that's in the back of our mind. Even though we don't always use the language of poverty, we are talking about helping everybody to improve outcomes for their own lives as well.

MR. FINBERG: I would just conclude by saying one of the joys of the work is to see the unity of purpose across broadly religious and secular organizations in our realm of feeding hungry kids especially where you find that in every police scripture I've come across and more that haven't, that we see as a foundation of our work in our robustly pluralistic outreach and desire to make sure that it is getting to anybody and

everybody who, as has been noted here, is interested in helping us serve those in need.

MR. DIONNE: I want to thank our panel, Joshua, for a really good presentation and all the rest of you. I still harbor the hope that John and I had 15 years ago that this work could be, to mangle a John Kennedy metaphor, a beachhead of cooperation and a sea of partisan suspicion. (Laughter) I know there are problems with that, but it would be awfully nice if some of this work could be honored in advance across party lines, and maybe -- maybe -- there is just a shot that we can do that in the next four years. And I want to thank you all.

Melissa's going to run the next panel. We're going to invite the new panelists up, but please thank our panelists.

(Recess)

MS. ROGERS: If I could ask you to go ahead and get seated. We are going to move forward because we want to make sure we have plenty of time for discussion in this second half of our event. Thank you for being with us again.

But before I go much further, I want to say a couple of works of thanks to some people at Brookings who have been instrumental in bringing this event together. Of course, E.J. mentioned his long work on this, and I can't thank him enough for having the foresight to work on this issue before it was actually recognized by the White House in any formal way. And I am very grateful for my partnership with him here.

Also, our partner Bill Galston, and we are grateful for the work that he does on these issues, as well. And we want to especially thank Darrell West for his support of this event and for his support of our efforts, more generally. Bob Brier, as well, and Korin Davis, Ross Tilchen, Anna Goodbaum and Christine Jacobs, who are with us today. Well Korin is not in the room but she is about to deliver a baby, so she has a good

excuse. And we want to thank them all for what they have done to make this event come together today.

By the way, I just can't resist the temptation to say We were talking about government money earlier and the fact that the White House office doesn't, itself, distribute government money, and neither do the senators. Well when I was named to the President's Advisory Council, I came down to the White House and met the President in the Oval Office with the other members of the Council and then came back out and got my Blackberry. And in that short space of time when our names were released, and the time I got back to my Blackberry, I had no fewer than three grant requests of me personally. And I had to quickly develop a form email that said, "Thank you so much for contacting me. I would love to be in touch with you, however, I have no money for you and I won't be giving out grants."

Well we are very fortunate to have a terrific panel of experts with us now to reflect on the first panel's remarks and to offer other thoughts regarding the past and future work of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. Some of them have been following these developments for years from the disciplines of social science, law and public policy, while others have long been involved in the incredibly important work of direct service provision to people in need. And so they will help us fill out the picture of how this office has worked and how it has been perceived and engaged with by many people from many different walks of life.

So in this session we hope to address questions like, "Are these partnerships really working for beneficiaries right now? And if not, if there are defects, how can we fix those?" Because we know too many people in our nation are suffering right now and have been suffering for years. And we need to do our utmost to ensure that they receive the kind of services that they are due and help them to move out of

poverty.

After decades of research, we also want to know what do we know about how these partnerships function and what do we not know about how these partnerships function. What should be the research agenda, moving forward? And I was very intrigued by the first panel thinking about all the possible research papers that could be written by academics and expiring academics on the work that the White House office is doing. It is really a rich area. And I hope that we will see more academic papers comparing and contrasting the Bush and Obama offices and looking at some of the very specific initiatives that are new that were discussed in the last panel.

We will also examine the question of do the policies and practices that are followed in this area comply with constitutional guarantees of religious freedom and church-state separation, another important issue that we have already flagged. And how has the White House office changed since the Bush years and, as E.J. has said, how has it remained the same? What are these areas of continuity and change? And what should the White House office do during the next four years to be the best possible steward of the trust that has been placed in it by not only the White House, but the public generally?

So let me begin by offering a couple of words of brief introduction of our panelists. You have their bios, so I am not going to belabor their many qualifications, but I do want to say a quick word about each of them.

I want to begin by introducing our friend and colleague John Dilulio and welcome him back to Brookings. We are very glad to have him. As most of you know, John directed the first White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives under President George W. Bush, and I am very eager to hear John's reflections at this point in time many years later.

But of course, long before John joined government and became a public servant, he was recognized as a leading social science scholar in this area. He currently serves as Frederick Fox Leadership Professor of Politics, Region and Civil Society at the University of Pennsylvania. Before that, he was at Princeton. He is the author of many books and formerly directed the Brookings Center for Public Management. For John, however, these issues have always been a matter of the head and the heart. He has developed numerous community-serving programs to serve low-income children and youth, including the Amachi program. And I was just getting an update before this event started this morning on John's absolutely crucial work in New Orleans to help the people overcome and the devastation that was Katrina. And I want to thank him personally as a native of New Orleans for his investment in the city of New Orleans, which has been deep and multifaceted and continues.

Next we will hear from Richard Foltin. Richard is also a dear friend and colleague. He is a director of National and Legislative Affairs at American Jewish Committees Office for Government and International Affairs. He has testified before congressional committees. He serves on the governing council, the American Bar Association, section on Individual Rights and Responsibilities and is Co-Chair of that section's First Amendment Rights committee. And I should say that Richard, too, has worked on these issues for many years. In fact, back in 2001, Richard and the American Jewish Committee organized a dialogue among people of diverse views on government-funded services that were offered by faith-based organizations. And actually, Stanley and I were pleased to be a part of that American Jewish Committee project and we produced this document in good faith; A Dialogue on Government Funding and Faith-based Social Services that you can still find on Temple University's website, and I can tell you that we are still talking about many of these issues. So they definitely made a good

contribution with this document and we are very forward-looking about the kinds of problems and issues that we would need to attack.

Next we will hear from Sister Pimentel. I am so glad that she can be with us. She is the executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley where she oversees the charitable branch of the Diocese of Brownsville. She has been a consecrated woman in the order of the Missionaries of Jesus for over 25 years. Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley assist individuals and families in need, regardless of religion. Sister Norma Pimentel holds a masters of arts degree in clinical pastoral counseling and patient counseling from Loyola University of Chicago. And I had the pleasure of looking at the website for the sister's work and was so impressed by what she's done. And I am so grateful that she would take some time from her very valuable work to be with us today and to help us understand how these services are offered on the ground in her neck of the woods in ways in which we all might work together better to serve people in need.

Finally, we will hear from Stanley Carlson-Thies who is the founder and president of a new organization, the Institutional Religious Freedom Alliance. Actually it is not brand-spanking new. It has been around for several years and actually been very influential on a variety of religious freedom issues. But it focuses, as the name implies, on the rights of religious communities and institutions to practice their faith in public life in the United States.

Before founding IRFA, Stanley served as Director of Social Policy Studies. It is at the Center for Public Justice. As I mentioned earlier, he actually served with John in the Bush White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives. But before that, Stanley has also been a scholar of great notice in the academic community working on these issues and he continues to do a lot of scholarly work.

Stanley, as I mentioned earlier, also has been absolutely crucial in efforts to find common ground on the very difficult church-state issues, and I have been very pleased to be his colleague in those efforts for many years and look forward to his comments. So let me invite John to get us started in our conversation, and I will look forward to the dialogue that follows.

(Applause)

MR. DILULIO: Thank you Melissa and thank you E.J. Thank you Brookings. Thank you, Reverend DuBois. And I see a lot of familiar faces here. And I would say it is wonderful to be back in Washington but I try not to lie. But it is wonder to be back in Washington and I -- no, but it is a real honor to be here, especially when you consider 15, 20 years ago when you say faith-based, you would draw blank stares. Now you draw irate stares, but no. But that is okay. That is okay.

So I noticed that Reverend DuBois in his opening remarks said a joke that he might consider moving the White House office to Brookings. But I want to assure him that, during my tenure there, there were those who thought it was run out of Brookings. In fact, we did release the unlevel playing field report here at Brookings in August of 2001, so that maybe have given the suspicion some credence. I don't know. But again, it is an honor to be here, in all seriousness, and it is a special treat to be here with Reverend DuBois, who is incredible, and about whom I will say it more in due course.

So I guess I would begin by saying Presidents Clinton, Bush and Barack Obama have at least one presidential legacy in common, and that is that each of them expanded government's partnerships with diverse community serving religious nonprofit organizations. Each of them worked to support increases in government help for sacred places that served civic purposes and secular purposes, like feeding the hungry, like

sheltering the homeless and like finding jobs for ex prisoners.

President Clinton, to do a two-minute history lesson, President Clinton endorsed Charitable Choice, which was the provision of the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill that permitted religious nonprofits to compete for certain Federal grants on the same basis as all other organizations, provided that they did not proselytize, did not use the funds for sectarian instruction and did not conduct worship services with those funds. He established, really, the first Federal faith-based office at the Department of Housing and Urban Development under then Secretary Andy Cuomo.

President Bush, of course, instituted a faith-based office in the White House. He created a few satellite units at several cabinet agencies and he promulgated administrative rules that put religious nonprofits on a more leveled playing field, so to speak, in the federal grant-making process. He dedicated more than \$100 million for a program to mentor 100,000 children of prisoners and he stimulated dozens of state and local governments to establish faith-based offices of their own. And most of those are still in existence today and many have been added over the last four years.

Four years ago, President Obama affirmed the Clinton/Bush view that religious nonprofit should be welcomed, not walled off in social service delivery programs that were funded in whole or in part by the government. He kept, but as you have heard, I think brilliantly described, recast the Bush office into the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. He appointed Reverend DuBois, which has got to be one of the best appointments of all time, to head that office. And as you have heard, he was able -- the fact that he has an MPA from Princeton shall not be held against him here this morning. I want to say that. He snuck in there after I left, reverend. But he authorized faith-based centers at a dozen cabinet agencies, plus a point of contact at the corporation for national -- so technically, it is 12, E.J. It is not a baker's

dozen. We don't have to worry about that.

MR. DIONNE: (off mic)

MR. DILULIO: Okay. All right. Well duly noted. As candidate Obama had promised in 2008 -- I think part of the problem here for some people, at least, is that this is a pretty clear instance of a candidate doing fully exactly and precisely what he promised to do, which people are like, "No, it can't be." No, it happened here. He promised in 2008 that his faith-based initiative would begin with efforts to clarify and to codify the constitutional rules of church-state engagement. Now that is a big job and that work is not yet fully done, but that mission was accomplished through excellent White House and cabinet center reports by Revenue DuBois and his team, all of which are available online, including partnerships for the common good and many, many others, the tool kits that Max Finberg mentioned and others. So it is all there. I would direct the attention of journalists who want to ask questions about where the money goes or how it is all done or rather the reverend in giving out money to those wonderful reports. It is all there.

During the Obama first term, the Clinton/Bush emphasis, as we have heard, on equal treatment for faith-based groups was retained, but grants and resources became part of a broader initiative, a much broader initiative aimed at forging intergovernmental public/private religious secular civic partnerships -- a term I really love -- initially, at least to advance four goals; economic recovery, maternal and child health, responsible fatherhood and interfaith dialogue and service. And I just want to say, on the interfaith dialogue and service, a special personal note of thanks from my own university and many, many others that I work with, are on the interfaith campus service initiative. It has resulted in tremendous work. It has also resulted in some horrific acronyms, like Catholic and Jewish undergraduates New Orleans service were Cajuns. But that aside, it

has been a great success.

Now there are those who have asserted -- that is the language we use in Washington. There are those who have asserted that this broader approach to faith-based initiatives has rolled back funding for faith-based groups, and that is not so.

While precise estimates await more refined data, since 2008 it appears that, if anything, both the number of grants and the total amount of federal money going to religious nonprofits has trended up, not down. For instance, the Obama faith-based office worked wonders, I think, in getting the religious nonprofit community up to speed and into competition for certain recovery act funding and, to take one example near and dear to my own heart, Catholic charities and Catholic relief organizations. Catholic nonprofit organizations have received records amounts of funding during the administration's first term.

Moreover, the case for faith-based initiatives has become ever more fact-based over the last four years. Sixteen years ago when President Clinton got the ball rolling, there was a good deal of empirical evidence, but just enough to hint, not to prove that the vast majority of urban community-serving religious nonprofits cost effectively supplied scores and scores of social services to people in need, that they did so almost entirely, most of them at least in the urban congregations without proselytizing, that most of them reached out to people of all faith and of no faith, and served people without regard to religion, and that most, in fact, hired staff and volunteers of all faith and of no faith even when they were not receiving government funding. It is that most of them hired or had as volunteers co-religionists even when they weren't receiving a penny of government money.

Today that empirical evidence is closer to being absolutely definitive. A forthcoming four-city study, to mention just one by Ron Kenon, my colleague at Penn and

Partners for Sacred Places researchers finds that the average, what they are calling halo affect, per urban religious non-profit -- that is the monetary value, a net of tax subsidies of its social services and its impact on economic conditions and development -- is far greater. It is in the hundreds of thousands of dollars per congregation on net, far greater than even the early estimates of the replacement value of these congregations had suggested a decade ago.

As my friend and former classmate at Penn, Marc Morial, the former New Orleans Mayor and now the president, of course, of the National Urban League -- as Marc has recently stated, when it comes to appreciating the civic value of these civic partnerships involving faith-based groups, "Most mayors and many, many governors in both parties now really get it --" and I think they do. So increasingly, I think, do federal, state and local public administrators, civil servants or, as some would call them, bureaucrats.

For instance, the United States Department of Agriculture, under the great Max Finberg and with his colleagues, really has done extraordinary work in reaching out with state and local agencies, state education departments, and worked with faith-based groups to get their value added in the expansion from coast to coast of these government summer food and nutrition programs in my city of Philadelphia without the support of USDA, Pennsylvania Department of Education, the City Department of Recs and Parks, the Archdiocese, Nutrition Development Services, we wouldn't be able to provide as many meals as we do. And we think you, from Philadelphia. We thank you for your work in that.

As is also now I think every more widely recognized, you can't tell the story of the post-Katrina human physical and financial recovery process without telling all about the miraculous work of the region's religious nonprofits. We are witnessing the

same story now, I think, in post-Sandy New Jersey, New York and New England. Not surprisingly, therefore, the court of public opinion remains very favorable to faith-based initiatives and partnerships, 70 plus percent in most surveys supporting it. And in courts of law since 2001, faith-based initiatives have withstood pretty much every serious challenge to their integrity.

This all said, it is still the fact -- and we have heard about this and should discuss -- the fact is that the politics of faith-based initiatives are not quite a politics of consensus or Kumbaya. And there are legitimate issues here. There are old issues. You have already heard some involving religious hiring rights. There are new issues about health insurance benefits and mandates, and there are perennial disputes between orthodox sectarians and orthodox sectorists about how and where to draw these lines.

All I can say for myself is that I felt this way 10 years ago, and do now, that I can only pray that these disagreements get resolved, whether by courts or by other means, in ways that reflect the old Jesuit maxim in essentials unity, in non-essentials diversity, in all things charity. It is not only what we decide, but how we come together to decide it and what we assume about each other's good faith and good will.

And I think it is therefore a good moment to meditate on the vast political and Jewish prudential common ground that is defined by church-state neutrality doctrine, ground on which community-serving religious nonprofits can relate to government neither as pure administrative proxies, nor as equal sovereign partners, but sort of as partner proxies or proxy partners. There, I gave you my one academes for the day.

It is more concretely a good moment to imagine what might yet be accomplished over the next four years with this great administration and its great leadership of its office, from Reverend Dubois and others if we all came together, for example, to revive the Federal Government's program for mentoring the children of

prisoners, over two million of them in this country on any given day in concert with thousands of communities of faith. It is a very good season, I think. It is a good time of the year to stoke hopes for expanding faith-based food and nutrition programs even further; elder care programs and job training programs and more, working together where we plainly can while suing each other or casting political brickbats where we feel we must. We can do both at the same time. We can walk and chew gum. We can fight and get things done together.

I have tremendous faith in President Obama. I have tremendous faith in Reverend DuBois and this incredible team that he has assembled, this family, this extended family that he has assembled inside the White House, beyond it and throughout the rest of the federal establishment, state and local governments and the Muriel nonprofit partners, religious and others, throughout the country.

In 2005, then New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, I think, said it best; "But I ask you, who is more likely to go out onto a street and save some poor at-risk child than someone from the community, someone who believes in the divinity of every person? And that is why we need not to have a false division or debate about the role of faith-based institutions, we need to just do it and provide the support that is needed on an ongoing basis." Thank you Reverend and thanks to President Obama for doing this over the last four years. Amen, and God bless you.

(Applause)

MR. FOLTIN: Good morning. It is a privilege and honor to be here. I want to thank E.J. and Melissa for having invited me to be here. There has been a lot of nostalgia about days gone by. And I just want to recall that we are somewhat approaching, I think, the 12th or 13th anniversary when I appeared on a panel with John Dilulio at the Jewish Council on Public Affairs when the faith-based office was in its early

stages. Here we are today. And looking at John and others of my old friends and seeing how none of them seemed to have aged a bit, I feel that maybe that is true for me as well.

So the partnership of civil society and government, including the faith-based part of civil society is really nothing new. We can go back. There is a well-known Supreme Court case from the 19th century that turned on the question of whether and to what extent a faith-based hospital could receive government funds. So why shouldn't the White House, indeed all of us, seek ways and structure to make that partnership work better? And so while I know there were some of us on the church-state separation side that were alarmed when the White House office of Faith-based Community Initiatives was created, partly because it had the words faith-based in the title of the office, I must admit I was not particularly alarmed by that so much as by the question of how that was going to work out and whether it would be done in a fashion that was consistent with concerns about separation of church and state.

So my remarks today are going to focus on what has been done in terms of reforming the way in which that office operates over the last four years, not because this is the be all and end all of the partnership between the government and the public sector, but because -- well I have five to seven minutes to speak, and I want to stress at the beginning that I value the mission and the work that has been stretching from John Dilulio to Joshua DuBois. It seems that you have to have a D-U of some kind in your name in order to head that office. And you shouldn't underestimate my value of that work, even as I talk about some of the issues that have to do with maintaining, I think, what Joshua called the guardrails of religious liberty.

I also want to say that these remarks are my own, but I have the good future to draw upon submissions that have been prepared by the Coalition against

Religious Discrimination of which AJC is a part and which has been operating these days under the leadership of Maggie Garrett.

So the Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, formerly the Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives; I guess my initial concern and question is, has that reference to community initiatives or to neighborhood partnerships in fact been giving equal attention to the secular side of the equation as it were? Has that in fact been a real and deep part of the way in which that office has operated or has the reference to the community or to the neighborhood been window dressing to avoid folks like us getting too upset? And it is, to some extent, an open question. I was pleased to hear some of the statements that were made this morning by Reverend DuBois and by others. And the recent draft on sexual trafficking that came out of the advisory council has done a pretty good job of invoking other parts of civil society besides the religious community. But it is an open question, is what I want to say. How does the program actually operate? Are, in fact, steps being taken to find messaging in ways to reach out to non-faith groups that don't represent the faith community as well as the faith community. I think this is still a work in progress. And it is my hope that as this goes forward and as the office continues to find its way working together with the Advisory Council, that that more and more becomes part of the way in which it operates, the need to understand that there is nothing wrong with reaching out to the faith-based community. It is important to do so, but that should be part of an overall outreach to civil society, at large.

Look back at the important reforms that were recommended by the Advisory Council that were adopted in Executive Order 1350.559, I also want to say that the Executive Order itself, building on the report of the Advisory Council was a huge step forward in protecting religious freedom, especially for beneficiaries of services, helping to

ensure that individuals in need are not faced with a choice between essential services and constitutional and civil rights protections.

Among the things that the Executive Order did working off of the Advisory Council's recommendations that were so crucial was, of course, a principle that went back to the Bush Administration, that no organization receiving government grants should be allowed to discriminate against current or prospective program beneficiaries on the basis of religion. In addition, organizations that engage in explicitly religious activities have to perform those activities and offer their religious services outside of directly funded, federally funded programs in a time or location that is separate from the funded services. In addition, it has to be made available to any beneficial referral to an alternative provider that is not religious in nature and there has to be proper notice of that. So all of these were part of the Executive Order. All of that is a very good, good thing.

Having said that, the Order did not implement a recommendation that came out of the Advisory Council, mainly, that it was a good idea, at the very least, and it should be required I think for a 501(c)(3) to be setup separately from the religious organization to receive the funds within which it is going to provide that funded service, and that this should be done -- a bare majority I will have to admit -- but a majority of the Advisory Council said that setting up that 501(c)(3) as a requirement was for the good of both church and state, serving the goals of church-state separation, church autonomy, accountability and transparency and insulation from liability. But that particular recommendation was not part of the Executive Order that was adopted by the President, and that is something, at least in my view, at least, should've been the case.

Similarly, as between the Executive Order and the interagency working group report, which you heard earlier this morning, which was issued in April 2012, there

are inconsistencies in its recommendations, or at least a lack of sufficient clarity and detail. Some examples: the report acknowledges the mandate to provide beneficiaries of a government-funded program with an alternative to religious provider, but its model regulatory language has softening language that suggest that this alternative need only be provided when available or that all that is needed in this area are reasonable efforts, even by the government agency with ultimate responsibility.

Similarly, the Executive Order properly calls for clear and uniformed guidance regarding the constitutional bar on funding, explicitly religious activity and the need to separate privately funded religious activity from programs paid for by tax payer funding. The report uses the term explicitly religious but does not provide clear guidance on what constitutes such activities.

While there is some discussion about the distinction between direct and indirect aid -- that is to say grants versus voucher kinds of programs -- the Executive Order charged the working group with setting up a structure that defines and clarifies that distinction, but the model language stops short of a full explanation of that distinction, in particular, what constitutes true private choice absent which a program cannot be considered to be the subject of indirect aid, as opposed to direct aid. Finally, it should be clearer that transparency as to all documents relevant to federal funding should be a requirement, not just a goal.

As already been said this morning, the issue of employment within government-funded projects is still very much unresolved. In 2008, then candidate and Senator Barack Obama famously asserted that federal grant money could not be used to discriminate or should not be used to discriminate on the basis of religion in hiring decisions within federally funded programs. No concrete steps have been taken to implement that standard. Soon after the administration took office, officials began to say

that issues of hiring discrimination would be decided on a case-by-case basis. That issue, of course, was not given to the Advisory Council to consider and has, instead, been unresolved and undecided. I am sure there are many conversations taking place on this issue within the administration but it has not moved forward, as we have already heard.

The formulation of case-by-case adjudication initially left much unresolved. Was that on each individual case-by-case? Was it going to be case-by-case for organizations, which was seeking grants? What standard was a case-by-case adjudication or determination, I should say, going to be made by the administration? This very June, the Department of Justice submitted to the House Judiciary Committee responses to questions earlier put by the committee to Attorney General Holder presented some insight as to how this is being processed. Referring back to a 2007 Office of Legal Counsel opinion that allowed World Vision an exemption under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act from antidiscrimination provisions so as to prefer co-religionists, DOJ advised it has setup a policy for case-by-case review of the applicants, that is to say the organizations, seeking a similar exemption. The response, at least, based on the sparse response that was provided to the committee -- but to be sure, more information that we had before -- seems to suggest that the exemption will be provided based on a self certification by the funding organization that having to abandon religious hiring practices in order to receive federal funding, which substantially burdened the organization's religious exercise. And given that it is based on self certification, although it is identified as a case-by-case method of decision, it really appears to be a *carte blanche* for organizations that portray themselves in that fashion as being able to have the benefit of that exemption.

For many of us, this really is the outstanding issue of gravest concern, in

terms of the operation of the faith-based initiative or charitable choice, which is to say the notion that one can receive a government grant to operate a program and yet, nevertheless, be able to make determinations on who you are going to hire to work within that -- I should say that project, because programs sometimes doesn't know the meaning -- but within the particular project that was being funded by the Federal Government. It ought to be the case that you could not for that particular project be able to say, "No Baptist need apply; no Jews need apply; no Catholics need apply --" whoever it is you're trying to exclude at any particular moment. But that is still very much an issue to be resolved. No information was provided, by the way, by DOJ as to whether other agencies have set up similar case-by-case processes, so yet another mystery for us to delve into.

The faith-based office, as we have heard today, has several roles, outreach to social service providers regarding programs the government wants to promote and also seeking input on government policy. In playing this role, which as I have already said is a very worthwhile one, insofar as religious organizations are involved, they -- and we have to be mindful of the constitution -- and that should be true for outreach as well. The first the Advisory Council included members with expertise in the area of church-state relations with varying views, to be sure. But the current iteration of the Advisory Council, I have to say, not so much. At the very least, input of organizations like AJC and other coalition members, as well as those with whom we may disagree, should be actively sought out.

A recent op-ed has been concerned about the role of the faith-based office saying that its role is not to promote government programs where it was previously about the leveled playing field for smaller organizations. I am not sure that that is absolutely correct. But as far as that goes, one should not be surprised, I think, if a

democratic office sounds more democratic, while under a republican administration it sounded more republican. So one may like one more than the other, but that is what elections are about. The question is whether the dollars and other benefits are being allocated in a political way or whether the office is being used to lobby on legislative initiatives as opposed to seeking input.

And finally, the final point I just want to finish with is, again, to come back to the point of the need for neutrality in outreach to neighborhoods or communities. Is the secular civil society at the table being reached out to among non-governmental partners that the current office is cultivating? We have been told that there has been a move away, or at least a turning of attention to non-monetary forms of relationship between the government and civil society. That is a good thing. But even if it is the case, there is more attention to non-monetary partnerships. There may be some more leeway then in what that relationship may look like, but it is not without limit.

Certainly is the matter of policy, if not of constitutional law, there ought to be attention to what the nature of the relationship is to ensure, for instance, that people are not being referred to programs within which proselytizing is taking place or other things inappropriate for the government to be directing people to, even if it is being done on a non-monetary basis.

And, of course, there are still being grants. The grants may not be being made by Melissa or by folks in the White House or other community faith-based offices, but there are still being grants made by other federal state and local agencies. So we still need to be sure that these funds are not used for religious purposes, as well as that they are set up in a fashion that protects the religious institutions from government intrusion. Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. DIONNE: Thank you, Richard. I just can't get out of my head the idea that you have to have a certain kind of name to run this office. I was thinking, perhaps, we can look forward to the day when Robert De Niro will be head of the faith-based office or perhaps a basketball player, Dave DeBusschere or some member of the DuPont family. But thank you Richard for a great presentation. Sister?

MS. PIMENTEL: Thank you. I will go ahead and speak from here. Good morning. I am Sister Norma Pimentel and it is an honor to be here representing the many people that we serve and help in our communities.

I would like to say that I am an example of the success and work with government and faith-based because we definitely -- as Max said, we have a unity of shared values and shared outcomes. It is truly a success that I come here to share with you and let you know.

I would like to begin by saying that, where I come from, I come from an area that is very far from here. It is the Rio Grande Valley. It is in South Texas. If you continue on on the expressway, you will probably end up in Mexico, okay? So that is where we are. And it is a stretch along the border between the United States and Mexico. It is about 150 miles along the Rio Grande Valley and it is one of the poorest areas in the United States.

We definitely have a great need in our area. Many folks there are in great need, especially of food. You know. It is amazing how we can hear a child from what we call colonies, which is the remote little neighborhoods outside the main towns, and telling you that one of the things they want for Christmas is food, you know. And that is sad. And so we have families that call us on a day-to-day basis, hundreds of families coming to our doors asking for help, help for food, mostly. Increasingly our staff is asking me, "Sister, we need more food. We need to give people food. We need to give gift

cards so they can go and get something to feed their kids." And so that is one of my major tasks, to collaborate and work and partner with the other agencies locally in our area so that we can, together, respond to the need in our communities and also to partner with the government, and make it possible to reach as many folks as we can and not have to turn away anybody and be able to have something to offer them.

And so, the Rio Grande Valley is very close to the border, so we have a great immigrant population, many who pass by and who come to us for help because, obviously, there are families that have left very torn situations back home and find themselves in our land and they are in need of help, humanitarian help, because they may be hurting from the abuse that others have taken advantage of them. And we try to do our best to offer them something to heal them from all the wounds that they have encountered along their traveling, and so our job is to offer them what we can. And also, many others remain in the area because they can't go beyond. And so they find themselves with children and families trying to see how they can survive and how to make it while they are here, and work with whatever they can to feed their families and to move forward and legalize their status in our country. So the Rio Grande Valley is definitely a very key position to try to do our best to help as many as we can.

I recall just last winter that we are fortunate to have received some gift cards from Wal-Mart from some funded that just called me one day and said, "Sister, do you think you can use these gift cards?" And so I said, "Of course." And I don't know if somebody gave him my name and said that I would make sure that it got to the right people. And I was able to distribute those to families that actually didn't have anything. And one lady calls and tells me, "It is cold this weekend and it is very cold and we don't have any Central air, no way to warm our houses." And so I said, "I will take you a heater." And so I went to Wal-Mart and I brought her a heater and took it to her

personally. And when I got there she lived in a very little shack, and small little place and had a baby in her arms, another one running around. And she had about five children and I gave her the heater. And I had extra cards with me, and so I said, "I am going to go ahead and give you \$250 worth of Wal-Mart cards." She didn't even know what a gift card was and how to use it. So I explained to her, "This is money. You just have to go there and tell them and they'll deduct whatever you use."

She was so overwhelmed with joy that she got this money. She said she felt like she had just won the lottery, you know, like a million dollars. For her, it was like a million dollars. I had just given her \$250. And it made a world of a difference to her to have gotten these cards. And she was able to go buy food, milk for the child and things like that that she needed just to go on. And she made \$50 a week. That is how much she makes to clean the house or whatever she did. You know? So she actually got the salary for a couple of weeks that she would have gotten on her own.

So this is the Rio Grande Valley and we have cases like this always. And my job is to try to see how I can bring about funding that will help provide the services that our people need. And so I oversee the Catholic charities, branches in our area. But I work very closely with every other denomination because whatever problem or task that we have before us, we have to work together. We can't do it alone. And so we collaborate in every other, any type of a need that may surface, whether it is disaster relief or helping military families or helping the homeless or helping people, feed them or whatever it is. We all know each other and we collaborate and work together because that is the only way to do it, and so I am very happy to have met Max.

I think that our funding comes in part from the Catholic Church, but also through the government, local, state and also Federal Government. And when we approached the idea of applying for some food program money through USDA, the

application was like very intimidating. And so we thought, like, there's no way we could actually get approved or successfully complete this. It was a big application that my staff would say, "Where do I start?" But thankfully, through the help of our partnering with folks like Max, we were able to get connected with other people that can help assist us to make sure that we successfully accomplish and begin our food program. We already did the second year, and we have -- the first year we had close to 50 sites, fed over 50 thousand meals to children during the summer. And then we did the program during the year.

(Applause)

MS. PIMENTEL: Thank you. Yes. It was wonderful. The second year, we increased that to over 66 sites and much more meals, and so it was quite a success. It still is, and still growing. And it is not just to one denomination. We actually had a closure to our summer program and our bishop who I asked him to come and honor those that actually worked at every site in the work the volunteers did. He was so impressed how this was interdenominational. It was not just Catholic. It was everybody who wanted to be part of this. And we were honoring and recognizing the good work that they did to serve so many kids during the summer, and we continue to do that during the year. And this is all because of the partnership that we have with people and folks from, for example, the faith-based initiatives like Max and people like him. So I am very pleased to be here to be able to recognize that and realize that it does work, and we are very happy for that.

(Applause)

MS. PIMENTEL: So I think that, being the fact that we are right at the Rio Grande Valley where Latino is really the number one population in the area, if not the only population. But now it is almost 90 percent of who we are, Latino. And so it is really

that outreach to the Latino population and making sure that they get the service that they qualify for and encouraging them. Because one of the things, the fact that we are the church, it is that we are the middle person that makes it easy for people to trust and know them, us, to connect them with those resources that they qualify for and they can benefit from. And so I think it all works good for everybody, so it is good. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

MS. ROGERS: Thanks so much. Now we will hear from Stanley Carlson-Thies. We appreciate your comments, Sister.

MR. CARLSON-THIES: Well I want to thank E.J. and Melissa and all of you in the audience for sticking with us.

You know, really it is amazing, a federal initiative at the intersection of religion and politics moving on to 16 years and spanning three administrations, republican/democrat, democrat/republican/democrat. This is remarkable continuity, despite changes and differences in a very partisan and politically polarized time. So I think that says something about all the preparatory work that was done, and discussions and so on.

I am honored to be part of this panel and to reflect backward and to think forward. As somebody who helped design and then was on the early staff of the Bush White House faith-based office, I want to express up front my strong thank you to President Obama for his commitment to maintain a faith-based initiative, to maintain the church-state rules that were developed in the previous administrations, and to maintain -- this is controversial for some -- against extremely strongly pressure at the freedom of faith-based organizations to consider religion in hiring, even when federal dollars are involved. As you have heard, that is somewhat controversial.

Well it wouldn't be right if I only cheer this morning, so I do want to make

some criticisms and a recommendation at the end, a challenge. But the context is my own great appreciation for what the administration is doing and what it has protected.

I think this Brookings event is notable, among other things, because President Obama's initiative has suffered from not having enough publicity. What would you know about the initiative if you had to rely on the mass media? You know, not a whole lot. So at the end of my remarks, I will suggest how the administration might generate more publicity for its White House office in the 13 agency centers and their important work.

Well discussions like this morning are vital because, in their absence, the most amazing stories get passed around as gospel truth, if I can use that phrase in connection with a federal initiative. Here is one of my own experiences. After I left the Bush faith-based office, I was asked to address a large group of clergy, and in that case it was a large group of African-American pastors. All of their churches were dedicated to community service. It was a poor area. They had a lot of needs. They needed additional resources. So after the fine lunch, my host introduced me as a person from Washington who would tell the pastors how they could obtain additional funding for their programs.

The congressman -- that was my host -- explained that the White House faith-based office skimmed 10 percent from every grant and then decided which worthy faith-based organizations would get the skimmed money. And he said to the audience that I would teach them how to obtain those faith-based grants. So I had an uncomfortable time telling those pastors that --

MALE SPEAKER: You didn't tell them, did you, Stan?

MR. CARLSON-THIES: Well, no matter how great their --

MALE SPEAKER: They didn't realize it was actually 20 percent.

(Laughter)

MR. CARLSON-THIES: So I had an uncomfortable time telling them, no matter their needs and how worthy their causes. There was no such skimming operation and no designated faith-based funds, or at least I had never been invited to the back room, John, to any of those decisions.

Well seriously, in its first four years, besides maintaining the historical status quo on religious hiring, President Obama's faith-based initiative carefully reviewed and then ratified the fundamental principles that governed federal funding that is awarded to faith-based service organizations. With just a few changes, the administration accepted the charitable choice principles that go back to the Clinton years and the equal treatment principles from the Bush years, and put that into Executive Order, as Richard reminded us. And the administration has pushed the faith-based initiative forward in a number of ways, in particular with its extensive work to promote nonfinancial or civic partnerships which goes beyond the stress, or at least the apparent stress of the Bush initiative on government funding. And I have been glad to learn more about those important civic partnerships that the media didn't tell me about.

The Bush administration worked hard to push into government operations a new energy and direction. The flow ought to be bottom-up rather than top-down in the relationship between government and the private organizations that provide assistance to distressed and poor families in communities. The Federal Government should assist the good work already being accomplished by civil society organizations and not see them simply as cheaper tools to do what the government itself wants to do. I think that civic partnership idea helps to forward that goal of a bottom-up approach to make the government the helping partner of civil society. And that other big innovation -- the President's Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships is also,

I think, an expression of that idea.

The Federal Government does not know everything, so it should listen to the views offered by America's diverse, religious and secular communities, so those are important again. But to this phrase, I want to add a worry.

From what I see as an outside observer, I worry that the initiatives outreach to community and faith-based organizations and leaders sometimes is more top-down than bottom-up. In the consultations and conference calls and meetings, it seems to me often how can your organization come along side the Federal Government and support its policies and programs, and sometimes not enough, how can the Federal Government support you in carrying out the projects and priorities that you have discovered to be most necessary?

I think there is also another troubling trend, so I don't want to say it dominates at all, but a troubling trend. I would call it Federal Government atrophy. That is not accurate but I will call it that. Without constant countervailing pressure, in my view, the government's funding and partnership practices default to bigger and more secular; a preference for bigger grants, bigger partners for state and local government agencies rather than private groups; for secularism rather than the sometime complexity of working with faith-based organizations.

The Bush initiative worked actively against that atrophy. The fight was carried on by a wide range of public efforts to educate federal, state and local government officials by public events to welcome grassroots and faith-based organizations to consider federal partnerships by making some grants smaller and less prescriptive, and by prominently placing on the faith-based office websites the church-state rules and a clear explanation of those rules.

I am worried that somehow, despite the Obama administration's stress

on expanding partnerships and listening to society, it is no longer clear from many websites and publications what those leveled playing field rules are and what they mean. So I am glad to hear there is going to be additional training in the new year. I think that is really important. But I think, at the moment, you may have to search pretty hard sometimes to find, for example, a charitable choice and equal treatment rules, and even simply to find President Obama's Executive Order setting out his fundamental principles for these partnerships.

You know, letting those rules and principles sink from sight allows the default government practice to slip back to prominence working with bigger organizations, more secular, more governmental, and that is not good for robust faith-based and neighborhood partnerships.

Well let me end with a look into the future, or rather a recommendation, and I will tie it to the problem of insufficient public attention for the Obama faith-based initiative.

One way that President Bush fostered media attention to his faith-based initiative was by traveling to exemplary organizations to hold a public event celebrating their good works and the initiative out in some town or neighborhood away from the White House. Because along with the president would come local and national reporters and photographers who wanted to pay attention to the good works, and then heard about the initiative as well. And maybe even more effective in drawing the media attention was for President Bush to do something that most of the media considered outrageous, such as stating publicly his support for religious hiring by federal grantees. Even though, in my view, his position is supported by the Civil Rights Act of '64, by the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and by multiple court cases, most reporters considered it an outlandish and immoral and patently illegal policy, and they gave President Bush and his faith-based

initiative plenty of publicity.

So I would like to recommend those two media strategies to Joshua and his colleagues. First of all, schedule the President to travel, to travel again to an inner-city neighborhood, to visit a dedicated Latino or black congregation that is poor on resources but great on compassion and service, or a faith-based health clinic that is also doing exemplary work. Lift them up and celebrate them. The media will come to those events.

And I would also like to recommend that President Obama do that other thing that President Bush did, generate some controversy. Seriously. For reasons of good principle and policy, I think President Obama should more often stand up for the religious freedom of faith-based organizations, even if most reporters may consider such actions to be crazy. For example, the President now supports gay marriage. Now everyone knows that redefining marriage will result in a long list of religious freedom conflicts. So the President, I suggest, might speak up for practical solutions to those likely conflicts that otherwise may hamper a whole series of faith-based organizations that do good work, including foster care and adoption agencies. Similarly, the President could draw plenty of media attention if he changed course on the HHS contraceptives mandate by broadening the religious employer exemption to cover all religious organizations, not only churches but also faith-based service organizations that are turned outward to provide material help to the community and not only to fellow believers. I think these are good policies. They will certainly draw a lot of attention.

In the same way, the White House faith-based office and the agency faith-based centers would get abundant publicity and also do much good for the flourishing of faith-based services if they made it a top priority to fight inside the government and to the public to strength religious freedom rights whenever the

administration pushes ahead to advance reproductive LGBT and other freedoms. Whatever you think about those advances, surely it is the case that to make progress in addressing poverty, sickness and injustice in our own society and around the world, the government has to collaborate with faith-based as well as secular organizations. And that means, in the second four years of the Obama faith-based initiative, in my view, special attention needs to be paid to appropriately protecting the religious freedom of faith-based services. Thank you.

(Applause)

MS. ROGERS: Thank you so much. Well, I think you can already see that on this panel we have created some diverse forum here, diverse points of view, so it will be great to hear everybody interact. We want to bring you in as well. I am just going to mention a couple of issues, because time is short, that I hope people will put on the table, but first I want to give John Dilulio a chance to recognize a few folks in the crowd.

MR. DILULIO: Well thank you, and thank you Stan. And there are a couple of other members of the former White House office and the Bush White House here with us. Lisa Trevino Cummins I see, and Jeremy White. I thank you both for being here.

(Applause)

MR. DILULIO: That congressman who thought we were skimming money, I think he was acknowledging that, like the President's administration faith-based operation, we too were a family but he thought were the Corleone family, which was not correct.

MS. ROGERS: Well we are pleased to further burnish our bipartisan credentials, although not the later got burned; the crime family. Okay. What I want to do is just mention a few issues, give E.J. a chance to put a few things on the table. But

rather than ask you guys to answer those questions right now, I want to then bring in more people from the audience. And then, if you guys could just keep good notes and react to the questions and issues that have been put on the table. Sister Pimentel, thank you so much for your presentation. It was suggested to me through your remarks that perhaps it was the first time you had applied for federal funding under the Obama administration, but that may not be correct. And if it is correct, however, I would love to know what prompted you to apply for funding from the Federal Government, from the Obama administration for the first time, if that is indeed true. And I will ask you just to save your answer, if you wouldn't mind, while I put a few other things on the table.

The other things I wanted to mention, Rich, I appreciated so much you raising the work of the Coalition against Religions Discrimination. I see Dena Share and Maggie Garrett who has already been recognized, Ariel Gringo and others are here from that coalition. And I wondered if you could talk a little bit more about that organization's work through the years.

And also, you raised the issue about nonfinancial partnerships that we've talked a lot about this morning. And while there are fewer constitutional issues raised in those partnerships, which is a great thing that you noted, Richard appropriately noted that there are still some things that have to be attended to from a church-state perspective. And I wonder if we actually might think about, for future work of advisory councils or task forces, spelling out when there are these nonfinancial partnerships, what are the responsibilities of the government to appropriately respect the First Amendment guarantees in those contexts. That might be a fruitful and a place of great common ground for us to consider.

And let's see. Stanley, I just am interested in -- and I appreciate your perspective on the church-state reforms. I would note that the church-state reforms that

Stanley mentioned, he sees them as tweaks to the Bush rules. Other people see them differently and put more prominence on them, and we can talk about that a little bit more. Also this whole issue of employment, I hope we will get to that. I think that part of the history that we haven't discussed this morning has been some executive orders going back all the way from Franklin Delano Roosevelt and other presidents that talked about equal opportunity and government-funded employment. And I think that is why the Bush change to those old executive orders occasioned such great controversy. So we have got some different traditions that we are dealing with here, and that is what causes some of the flashpoint. I hope we can explore that more. E.J., did you want to --

MR. DIONNE: Yeah. I just want to be real quick. First observation is thanks to Sister Norma for eloquently reminding us that the whole purpose of all this is to comfort the afflicted and empower the needy. That was really eloquent. And I thank you second -- Joshua has spent four years staying out of trouble and Stanley came here today to tell him his job is to make trouble his business. So I really want to see the follow-up conversations between Stanley and Joshua.

MR. DUBOIS: I am going to give him my therapist's card after this.

MR. DIONNE: And I actually wanted to particularly commend Stanley for a very irenic open and warm presentation, because I know you have had some differences on some of these issues.

I just want to put one issue in the back of people's head. And I do not want to begin a big argument about the HHS contraceptives mandate. We can do that another time. We could spend hours on that. But it did strike me listening this morning that, for the last year, you would imagine that the most important issue confronting us is the right of religious organizations not to provide contraceptives, and not meals for poor kids, not funding for big brothers, not tutoring students, not helping ex-offenders find jobs.

And just listening to all of this reminded me that there is a very strange quality to the way we talk about these issues, and that we saw here today that there are areas of difference and there are principles. But there is a great common ground in this area, and yet we have spent the last year acting as if one particular thing is the most important issue facing the country.

And I was critical of the initial HHS rules more so than my liberal friends. I welcomed the President's compromise more than my conservative friends. I understand why people are arguing about that, but I just want to put that on the table to keep it in the back of people's heads.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you so much, E.J. I hope you guys have been able to get those down. And in the interest of time, what I am going to do now is welcome a couple of questions and then turn to our speakers to scoop up some of the issues we have put in the tables and the questions that have come from the audience. I see Galen in the back and -- yes, hi.

MR. CAREY: Hi. Galen Carey with NAE. Just a comment on Richard's comment about -- my friend Richard talking about the hiring rights question and the question of who would be excluded. And I think another way of looking at this is to think about the whole range of civil society. We have very vibrant civil society, as hopeful as mentioned, and we see that that is important to our strength. And so having all the organizations, whether they are secular or faith-based, be able to have people carrying out their mission who fully support that mission -- that seems to be important. And if you lose that, then are we not losing what makes all these different organizations unique and the ability to offer those unique contributions.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you. And let me collect a few more comments, if I can, right now. Yes?

MS. KRAMER: Thanks. Rikki Kramer.

MS. ROGERS: Hey, Rikki?

MS. KRAMER: Hi.

MALE SPEAKER: Who has done some of the very best research in this area, everyone. So bless you for being here.

MS. ROGERS: Absolutely, at the Urban Institute reports really helpful.

MS. KRAMER: Well I propose -- not the complement, but the comment. One of the frustrations that those of us who have done some evaluations or looked at all the evaluations that have been done on this is the sparse evidence of how faith-based or, in fact, other grassroots -- and I want to thank you, Melissa, for your comment. That is really grassroots organizations is really the agenda question, I think -- how they are comparatively effective, both organizationally and in terms of the religious component, for the religious ones, and how you -- for interventions -- and how you use that and how you use it certainly across religions and across to secular applications.

And the question I guess I would have is whether evaluation has in fact taken a back seat in a sense in the conversations that I certainly have heard this morning, or whether evaluations are happening at other places as opposed to the faith-based offices. Where is this happening? How does the sort of new agenda address this?

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Ricky. I appreciate that very much. Let's go back here.

MS. THOMPSON: Hi. Katie Thompson with the Center for Public Justice. I have a question related to immigration. What role has, and especially in the next four years, should the faith-based base office have in immigration reform efforts and immigrant services, as well as what makes the faith-based offices approach distinctive in

relation to other groups working on this?

MS. ROGERS: Great question. Great question. Yeah. And the gentleman in the back, and then we'll go to our panelist for a round.

MS. STELLOY: Good morning. Amy Stelloy from Baltimore, Maryland. We have talked a lot of lofty goals and aspirations being part of the religious communities, and education is part of the parcel of the development of religious progress in this country. But in spite of all this lofty talks that you are doing, we still have kids who graduate from high school and could not read in English, very poor in reading comprehension. And we are talking here of the English language. We are not talking here of any other language like French, German, Swahili, or whatever language. Basic English language they cannot read and write. They cannot understand. It is the religious sector doing actively, at least on the English side, and how much more if we go to science and math when all of this are all English-based. How can they understand basic concepts in biology and chemistry and physics when, in the first place, they have a very poor comprehension of the English language? Thank you so much.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you so much. Okay. I am going to let our panelists -- let me start with Stanley and we will work our way down. You get to choose a bit here, so we will leave it up to you.

MR. CARLSON-THIES: Well let me just say one thing about E.J.'s comment about, you know, despite all the common ground, why so much controversy about a few things. Well, you know, you don't fight over the things that you all agree on, but important things in which there are some disagreement -- and I think that is unfortunate because then it does make it seem that somehow for everybody, for example, the most important thing is fighting about some benefit in their employment policy, and that is not what they spend more of their time doing. But if these issues get

put on the table, I guess people need to take a stand and fight for what they think is legitimate freedom. And that is why it is preoccupied. But I think it is really important for the public to see in these partnerships all the things that are going on and all the things that go right, and not just think about the isolated things that are controversial. Thank you.

MS. ROGERS: Sister?

MS. PIMENTEL: Well I would like to say that, we approached applying for funds from the USDA because of the need that we saw in our area. And we definitely needed to go beyond what we were already doing and secure additional funding that could respond to what was needed. And so that is why we did this, and with great success.

MS. ROGERS: Great.

MS. PIMENTEL: Thank you. I also would like to say with the question of immigration. We certainly need comprehensive immigration reform because we are really seeing the need there in our area and how, with this last President Obama on the Dreamers, we have so many kids that have lived a long our area for so many years since they were little, and yet they could not go beyond. They may have gotten scholarships to study beyond in some other college and could not have done that. And now, because of this, they were able to travel and apply to their homes. And so there definitely is a great need for a comprehensive immigration reform that respects the dignity of these people that are here in our country.

MS. ROGERS: And one of the great things is there is so much unity within the religious community about comprehensive immigration reform. It is not without debate, but there are great coalitions already formed that have very bipartisan diverse ideologically and very much support comprehensive immigration reform. So that may be

a great opportunity for all of us in the coming years. Rich?

MR. FOLTIN: Well just to go through several of these but as quickly as possible, as asked about card. I am not sure when the coalition actually formerly got constituted, but I do remember being in a meeting of several fellow travelers with Gene Sperling in the Clinton White House talking about the faith-based initiative, and Melissa was there. So we have been around with a pretty steady cast of characters, I think, for a while. It is religious groups, civil rights groups, some social service providers who have been very concerned about eroding credentialing requirements when you get government grants, which I haven't heard much about that issue lately. Maybe we solved that, I don't know.

So I guess religious discrimination was the marquee issue and, hence, the name of the coalition. The fact is there were a great many issues having to do with the faith-based initiative/charitable choice that the coalition was organized around. And as I have said, while there is at least a couple of very important issues still out there, we have seen enormous progress through the years on great many of the issues that we have been advocating on. And, you know, there is a Jewish phrase or Hebrew phrase, (Hebrew phrase), you know, recognizing the good that has been done. So I want to recognize the good that has been done within both administrations now, moving along towards some of the issues that we have been concerned about, even though there are others that are still out there.

Where do we go on nonfinancial partnerships? And I pointed to the issue of proselytizing within programs is also the issue of making sure the government is referring somebody to a program, that it is nondiscriminatory with respect to recipients of the services, whether or not that is constitutionally required. Who is to say what the Constitution requires these days. But certainly, in terms of what is good policy, there is

much to be discussed there. And maybe it is time for in good faith part 2 to discuss some of those issues.

Vis-a-vis, the issue that has been raised by my friend Galen and also by Stanley about the issue of hiring, I do agree that we need to be very careful in this area. That is to say -- if I am not telling tales out of school -- within the coalition we have some very interesting discussions about where exactly sometimes the parameters should be. I think there are those that would love to see nondiscrimination prohibitions extend to an entire organization that is receiving funding, which may be one reason to create a separate 501(c)(3) so that you are able to do that. Others of us feel that you have to be very careful to limit it more so that is extended specifically to the government-funded project as opposed to the whole institution so that we are able to create an environment in which religious institutions are still able to make decisions on the basis of religion when they are hiring outside the government funds. But I think the government funds makes a difference, and we just can't get away from that.

Again, whether it makes a constitutional difference, you know, to be continued. But certainly, for me, it makes a policy difference that we should not be countenancing government funds being used in a very direct way to pay for employment positions where there is discrimination going on.

And in terms of getting the administration to more forcefully, and for the record, act in this area, I just want to note for Stanley that just in the last year or so, some of us were very surprised when the administration took a very narrow view of the ministerial exemption and the extent to which we were going to safeguard the religious liberties of religious institutions in being able to decide who they were going to have as a minister. So that being the case, sometimes you should be careful about what you ask for because you may get it, in terms of what the actual result would be once the

administration moves beyond that office of legal counsel determination.

And finally, what should the faith-based office to about immigration? Let me just say that we, AJC, is a part of an interfaith immigration coalition that has been working in this area assiduously. We interact -- I think there is a meeting with the White House this very week of the coalition on these issues. So we are pleased to interact with whatever part of the White House the White House sees fit to have us interact with. And if there is a role for the faith-based office on that, I am all for it.

MS. ROGERS: Thanks Rich. John?

MR. DILULIO: Well these are so many wonderful questions and so many important issues raised, I hesitate to grab on to any of them, but I will grab on to just a couple as quickly as possible.

The first one -- and I think it came up across a number of the different questions -- is, I really should beckon us to get a little reality therapy. And the reality therapy we need to get is that what would happen tomorrow morning if all of the religious community serving nonprofits disappear? Just start there. In Philadelphia, what that would mean is that a third of the daycare would go -- and maybe it is not the best daycare in the world. Or maybe it is not daycare that has been researched to the bottom. I love it because we have this government by proxy system. We give out over \$3 trillion a year. And I can count on my fingers and toes -- and I have only got 20 of those -- the number of independent audits that have been given. But one Church of God in Christ group in Germantown gets a \$25,000 grant. And now we need independent audits, measured by -- "Okay fine. What's good for the goose ought to be good for the gander." But, you know, let's be honest. We don't have a whole lot of independent research or anything else on any of the areas of what is \$7 trillion a year in total government federal, state and local spending. Okay? So, you know, just because a grantee dresses sort of in religious

drag doesn't mean that it suddenly should have to bear all the weight of our interest in their performance. But I am for that.

But the primary point is, you couldn't administer the USDAs a summer food nutrition program in Philadelphia if the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, through the nutrition developments, they supply over half the meals with the city Department of Recs and Parks. If those two entities go away, there is no summer food and nutrition program with that federal entitlement program.

So I wish that we could get not only greater baseline evidence and research -- and I think the stuff that the Urban Institute has done in particular is spectacular. I mean I think that, to the extent that anybody has been out there really trying to make contact on this issue for years, the last decade, it really has been the Urban Institute, among others. But I just want us to understand that this is not -- you know, this train has already left the station. And what this White House office has been doing is acknowledging this reality.

In my opinion, what the civic partnerships has been about is recognizing where we already are. There's lots to fight about. How do we expand the borders? Where can we go from here? You know, where are the constitutional lines blurry? All of that is on the table. But that we have these partnerships and that they are civic assets and do a great deal of good that we couldn't do without in daycare, in welfare-to-work training, in after school programs, in jobs for prisoners, in public housing. You know.

And just to quickly hit on the mandate question, you know, I got a lot of calls from reporters, none of which -- and I am sorry if you are in the room -- none of which I answered, which was, you know, "What do you think about this Catholic mandate thing?" Well my response to the couple who I did speak to was, "What I think is we ought to look at the fact that the Catholic Church has continued to get tremendous amounts of

support from government and is doing wonderful things with it, even as we have this controversy."

So if you are going to talk about the controversy -- and we should. It is important. There are lots of issues there. There are multiple and competing values at stake. It is important to resolve maybe through the courts, maybe through other means, peaceful means. But let's not forget that while this is going on, there are still relief services. There are still sister doing her work, and that is not to be forgotten. That is not to be forgotten. And then, frankly, what this panel reminds me of and this event reminds me of is that sometimes here in Washington, there's a little bit of a disconnect. Oh, and thank you for inviting me.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, John. I want to thank everyone for being here this morning. I particularly want to extend a great debt of gratitude to Joshua DuBois and to his staff for joining us.

(Applause)

MS. ROGERS: We had a tremendous representation from his colleagues, and not only on the panel but in the audience. I have been in many settings with them where their ears are wide open, and I know they were today. And I appreciated that because I think this will help us all to improve the work of the office. And I know we all care about that work from many different ways.

I just would close by also thanking people at Brookings and E.J. and also our panelists here for their tremendous contributions to the conversation. It has really been enriched by each of the concerns that you all had put on the table. And to say in closing that, yes, I think there's been less publicity of these efforts over the last few years. But I do think that we are having a better conversation, a better public conversation about these issues. And I have seen that happen. That improve over the course of my career,

a recognition that these faith-based organizations and secular organizations across the country had been doing this work for decades and decades and decades without any publicity whatsoever, for the most part. But we do need to recognize that as a reality and also grapple with the important questions as their efforts get lifted up in a very high profile way. So I am grateful for the better conversation that we are having.

I feel encouraged about the ways that we can move forward and find more common ground while continuing to fight each other and sue when necessary. I agree with John that we can walk and chew gum at the same time, and I look forward to doing so with all of you.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you. I just want to quote John Dilulio. At an event here many years ago, he said, "In America, if no one is suing you, you're not doing any important." And all I could say is, Amen to what Melissa said. Thank you to our panelists, all who participated, and thank you all for coming.

(Applause)

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