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Intersections:

Priorities for the Trump administration: Mayors speak on trade, immigration, and economic opportunity

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(music)

PITA: Welcome to another episode of Intersections, the podcast where we discuss the different angles on policy issues, part of the Brookings Podcast Network. I'm your host, Adrianna Pita. Donald Trump's upset victory on November 8<sup>th</sup> means significant policy changes to the US, not only the federal level but also the local level as states and municipalities adapt to the policy environment. In this episode, Amy Liu, the vice president and director of the Metropolitan Policy Program will lead a conversation with two former Mayors. Michael Nutter, of Philadelphia Pennsylvania and Scott Smith from Mesa Arizona. On issues of trade immigration and economic opportunity both what they expect from the new administration and what policy specifics they have yet to hear about it. I'd like to remind our listeners that they can now stay up to date with Intersections, The Brookings Cafeteria, and the rest of the Brookings Podcast Network by following us on Twitter @policypodcasts. Now here's Amy Lou with Mayors Nutter and Smith.

LIU: Mayor Scott Smith and Mayor Michael Nutter. Thank you for joining me at Brookings. Today we're going to talk about the implications of a Trump presidency for cities and local governments. And we believe you both are well-suited to this conversation for several reasons. You bring diverse perspectives. Mayor Smith you're a Republican who represented the city of Mesa Arizona while Mayor Nutter. You're a Democrat who presided over the city of Philadelphia. You both served as presidents of the U.S. Conference of Mayors during President Obama's time in office. And last but not least you're also both nonresident senior fellows at Brookings in the Metropolitan Policy Program which I direct. So it's a real honor to be with you today and I look forward to

this discussion. So Donald Trump's victory follows one of the most divisive presidential elections in history and the cities you represent reflect that political divide. Maricopa County in Arizona which includes the cities of Mesa and Phoenix voted for Donald Trump and has been at the Center of Immigration and the border debate. And meanwhile Philadelphia went strongly for Hillary Clinton after hosting the Democratic National Convention, and Clinton's final rally with President Obama the night before the election. So Mayor Nutter Let's start with you. What animated voters in Philadelphia in this election and what is what is the mood today?

NUTTER: Well I think on the animation side Hillary Clinton has always done particularly well in Philadelphia as of course has President Obama. Hillary won Pennsylvania in the primaries in 2008 and also won the Pennsylvania primaries of 2016. The city did particularly well in supporting her candidacy. There were some challenges in the suburbs and other parts of Pennsylvania. So and I mean President Obama is certainly well loved in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania. Nonetheless Donald Trump did win Pennsylvania notwithstanding the efforts in Philly in some other places. I think as his own folks would say on many occasions this was the most unconventional candidate and campaign. I think that any of us have seen in modern times and my recollection is that I don't ever remember hearing Donald Trump specifically say anything about cities or policies for cities. He made references to inner cities but that was often in a negative context. Actually talking about African-Americans and he was not in cities when he made those kinds of statements So it's this is the great unknown in this campaign. Actually what he will do what he won't do does he mean many of the things that he has said and I think that's what's cause a lot of consternation all across the country. I mean

we've got 25 some cities with pretty much daily protests going on and people trying to figure out just where is America going.

LIU: Can I ask you a follow up question which is it seemed that African Americans and others didn't come out in large numbers for her and didn't come out as much as expected. Why did that happen.

NUTTER: Well I mean I I'd certainly like to address that so in Philadelphia at least which I can talk about, President Obama in 2012 had a margin of 468,000 out of Philadelphia the highest ever. Philadelphia has a significant African-American population, very progressive city. And you know whites Latinos Asians and many many others. Secretary Clinton last week on Election Day received the four hundred fifty-five thousand vote margin. You know not significantly different than what we saw. And I mean everyone knew that she was not necessarily going to drive as out as many African-Americans as President Obama. They're different people. He's African-American. She's not. But I mean that was a significant effort nonetheless. I think overall the real issue for or for Secretary Clinton was the majority vote of women that went to Donald Trump and that educated white women she received 51 percent nationwide of their votes. I mean that's a problem. And that's a problem that clearly needs to be addressed and solved and there'll be all kinds of pundits and books and case studies written about this. But I don't think it was lack of turnout from minority communities and communities of color. There are a lot of other things going on in this election.

LIU: Mayor Smith Why did you talk about. What were the issues that animated the voters in Mesa and Phoenix area.

SMITH: Well this as as Mayor Nutter said was just strange all the way around and no more so than here in Maricopa County Arizona a very red state trying to turn purple with its influx and growth of especially Latino voters but still hanging onto Red in Maricopa County is, Republicans have a very large registration majority. Donald Trump won without the support of most of the establishment as a matter of fact. You know John McCain had to live through the famous insult that Trump threw at him and Jeff Flake our other senator actually came out and attacked and said it was one of the few in the Senate said I will not vote for him in spite of that Donald Trump wins Maricopa County. He would say well that's understandable because Maricopa County is where the immigration war is really front center and yet the face of immigration and the war if you want to call it that. Sheriff Joe Arpaio gets deposed by double digits by the same electorate that elected Donald Trump the Republican county elections director gets deposed to a Democrat to an unknown Democrat by the same electorate. And I think in both cases they've been in office a long time. And while there isn't one particular message you know this is overused but it still holds true. It's awfully hard to continue on after a while, you do wear out your welcome and change is always prevalent in voters' minds. And in Maricopa County, the two prominent Republicans were put out of office by the same voters that also voted for Donald Trump overwhelmingly. And I don't know if there's any one or two reasons I think there's a myriad of reasons that played into this some of those numbers that Mayor Nutter was talking about and we'll be debating forever as to what it really meant. But I think there's five or six or seven reasons why Donald Trump won and Hillary Clinton lost. But I think one of the big things is if you look at it time and time again it's hard to continue a legacy. It's hard to continue in office.

Voters are itchy and vote for change even if that change may seem crazy or weird or is unknown sometimes they'll do that.

LIU: You know Mayor Nutter talked a lot about the fact that that we are seeing a lot of protests in cities. Folks are still trying to manage the anger and frustration from this election. What's the mood in Mesa in Phoenix right now.

SMITH: There's a lot of the same tension. You know those who have invested heavily in to Hillary Clinton's candidacy are of course upset in a different way. And I think part of it is because I don't know if anybody who was truly honest with himself says that this they expected this outcome. And whenever you have that sense of confidence that sense of inevitability although that's I don't mean that in a negative sense. But you're planning the party and all of a sudden at the last second it's ripped out from from in front of you there's no doubt that it becomes emotional when you couple that with all of the people that Donald Trump did offend during the election, there's a lot of raw wounds and that have been the emotions have been heightened. And that's no difference even here I think Trump supporters some of them you know you always have the fringe idiots some of them are off the charts strange and we've heard reports that most of the Trump supporters here are just like they're almost in awe, he really won. Most of the Hillary supporters are just in shock saying how did we lose this and what does it mean. Like I said I think that's the one thing that's unusual about this election is that usually there is a choice between two well-defined philosophies or programs. In this one. nobody can tell you really what Donald Trump's programs are other than some of the main things he said. So I think part of the consternation is what did we just get. We know what we've heard. Is that going to be the president that we get is that going to be

what happens so the mood here I don't think is a whole lot different than it is in a lot of different other places.

NUTTER: And Scott I would add on to that with that frustration. And I don't know if all the folks in the street were Hillary Clinton supporters or not or they could be some Sanders supporters , could be black lives matter. I mean it doesn't matter. They're out there on the street. But I think it's not just because Hillary lost it's also because as you were pointing out the great unknowns here and that Scott if you or I said one or two of some of or took action took one or two actions of some of the most egregious things that Donald Trump did in the course of a 15 to 18-month old campaign we would be toast. Stick a fork in him. You know whatever analogy you want. I mean we just would not have survived and so I think part of the you know what to bring up am old term, the shock and awe. Here is how did this happen? I mean no one believed that someone who said so many things offended so many people did so many you know every day it was what outrageous thing will he say today especially you know during the primaries with the 17 candidates. And no one really took this seriously and ultimately said well we're better than that. That's not going to happen. This has been interesting it's been fun. It's been a sideshow but there's no way in the world that he's actually going to be president of the United States of America. And I think that is also driving much of the anger fear doubt anguish anxiety across his cities of America.

SMITH: And people forget. Remember people sort of forget how rough the Democratic primary was. There was a lot of consternation on both sides.

NUTTER: Oh yeah.

SMITH: And it set the stage for this kind of what you're talking about. There's one thing I'd like to point out that I think we're sort of missing.

LIU: Yes. And I do want to move on to other topics.

SMITH: OK and I'll just make this one point because it's interesting I don't think people fully understand that why people would look beyond the things that Don Trump said and that is among much of our nation the anti-PC the same. They actually in a weird way Mike celebrated the fact that Donald Trump said some of these things because it was it was basically a we're sick and tired of being told what to say. And I also don't think people

NUTTER: But many of those things of course are offensive to many people.

SMITH: Oh totally offensive, it's totally weird. But this shows you how strong they're feeling is and there's one other thing that I think people when looking back I don't think people understand how damaging not the Comey report or anything but when Hillary's basket of deplorable that was that was on par if not more so than Mitt Romney's 47 percent. And what that did is it that that raised the ire of many Americans who said I'm tired of being looked down I'm tired of PC. I'm going to look beyond everything because Donald Trump even though he offends me he's still my hero because he right. He's the anti-everything. And you know I think that was a very powerful player in this in this election.

LIU: So let's move on to issues and I know as you both said there still remains a lot of uncertainty but there are some emerging policy priorities coming out of the Trump administration in transition. And I want to talk about what those emerging priorities mean for localities. So these include immigration trade what Trump calls the quote the



inner cities and infrastructure. So let's start with immigration. And I want to direct this first question to you Mayor Smith. Now since being elected Trump has pledged to immediately deport 2 to 3 million undocumented immigrants with criminal records. This policy has huge bearing on Maricopa County. The Migration Policy Institute estimates that a hundred and seventy-two thousand undocumented immigrants live in your county. Three quarters of those of all of those in Arizona. So Mayor Smith is there widespread support for Trump's statements on immigration in Mesa. And –

SMITH: Yes and no.

NUTTER: Good answer.

LIU: Go ahead.

SMITH: I think this is the this is both the challenge and the reality of the debate on immigration. If Donald Trump or anybody says I'm going to deport X number of criminals, and when I say criminals I mean people who have served prison time and we have plenty of stories here in Arizona you will get broad based support on both sides of the aisle Democrat even among Latinos. Yes. Nobody who's here has a criminal record as illegal should stay here, deport them. If you say I'm going to go out and deport illegals once again both sides of the majority of Republicans in Maricopa County would say no you've gone too far. So yeah I think we're more than mincing words here. How these policies are implemented will either will either bring this not widespread support at least support among many people because they're tired of the, and we have a lot of stories unfortunately here in Maricopa County, of the teenager that was killed by a drunk driver who was an illegal who had been out of jail three times for four DUI and was never deported. You have too many of those stories and both sides get offended by

that. If there is simply let's split up families. That's one of the things that defeated your pile an icon among the anti-illegal. So you know this is really a nuanced discussion and unfortunately we never get down to the true talk because it gets derailed by you know hysterics on both sides. And I it'll just be interesting to see how he was going to implement that they implement a policy like that because if he truly goes after the element he'll get support if he doesn't he'll get condemnation from both sides and from all levels.

LIU: And so Mayor Smith what you're saying is there is support for some pathway to legal residency for the remainder of the illegal immigrants that are here. A, Is that true. And B, what's how do you see the role of a federal government in working with localities on these issues?

SMITH: Well the first question is easy. Poll after poll. And as I said even with you show our PIO shows that even conservative Republicans don't believe in mass deportation and they want some kind of they want some kind of rational approach to immigration which would mean allowing those who have been here the right to earn just to stay here whether through a fine or something. There's a program that you find widespread support about looking the other way and this is where cities are really careful because the idea of sanctuary cities and those things create a lot of consternation and I don't think you can go all the way one way or all the way the other way. There is a common sense approach and the federal government has to be very careful. Even under President Trump as to how they address that both with the cities and not declare war on cities but to sit down and have a rational discussion. I think the Cayla the gal in San Francisco. You know I talked to Mary Edley of San Francisco after

she was gunned down by an illegal who was who was a criminal who was out in San Francisco and they wouldn't do anything about it even he would admit that was a hard hard situation for rock solid Democratic politician to justify why he was allowed to roam free and he ended up killing an innocent person. On the other hand Republican lawmakers who want to go in and literally do the rip families apart are going to find it there they're perceived as support among conservatives is going to vanish pretty quickly. So it begs for record for a rational discussion something we've been unable to have on immigration.

SMITH: Mayor Nutter do you want to jump in on this. Your observations about what are some of Trump's crackdown language has on a city like Philadelphia Muslims or other groups?

NUTTER: Well some may recall last year while I was still in office in 2015 Donald Trump said when he announced his ban proposed ban on Muslims in a 24 hour sequence of his statement and another action. Someone in Philadelphia dropped a severed head of a pig at the doorstep of one of our mosque, Al-Aqsa. I had a press conference the next day to address both issues I brought together the Muslim community the Christian community the Jewish community and many many leaders faith leaders across the city of Philadelphia to address both of those issues. This is still the United States of America. I think it's in the first amendment that we will not establish a religion and basically not have a religion test that there are members of the military who are Muslim. And this was last year so it was before at least I ever knew of the cons and of course their tragic family story. And you know literally people were saying that military members might not be able to come back to the United States because they

were Muslim, I mean it was the most insane kind of thing Scott and I are in full agreement. Criminals, I don't want them. And what I've said back in Philly is when I was in office I don't want homegrown criminals. I don't want folks who just got here last week or last month wherever they came from, out of here. Violent criminals, you have no refuge in Philadelphia. At the same time, some mom some dad driving their car documentation issues whatever the case may be possibly get pulled over and the next thing you know looks like you know President Trump would want that family a part of the family deported, for what? Right. So first of all cities are not in any way shape or form in a position to do the job of the federal authorities. Secondly that's not a family that you should basically waste any resources on trying to deport. There are plenty enough criminals to chase after. And what we need is a rational reformed immigration policy for all 50 states and territories that is a pathway to citizenship. Folks came here for a particular reason mostly to become citizens. They work hard take care of the family start businesses employ others in some instances and are not the problem. And so whether it's 11 million, 16 million, two or three million, it is virtually impossible. And he knows Mr. Trump knows that that is not something that is immediately doable. We've gone from we're going to build a wall. Mexico is going to pay for it. We're going to build a wall to now it's well maybe is part of it's going to be a fence. And Scott knows this better than I do I'm not anywhere near the southern border. There's already a war down there. What are you talking about?

LIU: Yes, and it does sound like both of you want a reasonable approach to an issue with mayors. Let's talk about that let's talk about trade next. And so Trump has said he'll reject the Trans-Pacific Partnership. He wants to renegotiate NAFTA. And he

suggested that he'll put up barriers to trade. And this election has indeed sparked a pushback on trade due to its negative impact on many communities in the United States. And yet as all of you know exports have also been a crucial driver of economic growth in our cities. And so let me start with you Mayor Smith. You know Phoenix has a trade office in Mexico City, Arizona State University has a partnership with tech to Monterrey which is Latin America's largest university to study clean energy solutions and the U.S. Conference of Mayors have been a champion for Metropolitan export plans and trade agreements like the TPP. So what is your approach to trade as a mayor and what should the Trump administration keep in mind as it navigates global trade policy?

SMITH: Well as a mayor your greatest wish is for safety and prosperity and there's no way you attain prosperity without trade. We're in a world economy. Whether we will whether you like it or not. The last post-World War economy has grown to be an interdependent world economy and I think one of the things that the president Trump we'll find out is that reality will run head on with rhetoric. And I think maybe I'm thinking very optimistically here but I think that when he gets in and finds out how difficult it will be to actually change some of the things or rollback or how much damage it will do if he does some of the things he's saying I think you'll find quickly a way to not only soften but to maybe repackage the trade and try and get some wins. I thought it was interesting the other day that both the prime minister of Canada and the president of Mexico said you want to reopen NAFTA negotiations, we'll do it. I guess there's some things they'd like to change in that I think the one thing that is most pressing and I will say is the TPP because that you know that that has some issues that go far beyond

trade relationship with China. Our position over there and I'll be that will be a bellwether because he pretty much staked put a stake in the grasses. Yes or no. And it's obviously not that not that simple. So I'll be really interested to see when he gets in there and starts listening not only to those who sided with him in the campaign which let's face it were certainly not the ordinary economist's business leaders and others they were the ones that had an ideological bent. And he really deals with the reality of what he's talked about in the trade. I think it will be very interesting to see whether he follows his natural instincts which at the end of the day Donald Trump is a deal maker and he's a pragmatic person. That's how he's made his money that's how he succeeded. I have no idea whether that pragmatic side will play out whether the deal maker side will play out or not. But I think that's one of the most essential things that we'll have to see is how will he react to that. Because there's no way that his rhetoric will match the reality of our economy our economic prosperity or the world economy we live in.

NUTTER: I think that was, I fully agree with Scott. I think that was all campaign talk. And if he. I do not know him but I mean if he could sit still long enough to actually listen to people who are experts on these issues you can be you can debate you know until the cows come home. You know whether a deal is the best whether it's perfect. I always say you know when I see the next perfect bill I'll know that I'm in heaven. There are no perfect bills. Right. You get the best you can at the moment so TPP. You want to open it up re-argue it. Whatever the case may be but it is better to be at that table. Helping to design the rules rather than have someone else design the rules and be subject to them. Right. So we always need to be in the game. So again these ideas about how we're going to turn away from the rest of the world we're going to turn insular

we're not going to be a world player. I mean that's a bunch of nonsense. When the Teamsters drive their trucks with goods down to the Philly dock for the longshoremen to unload them onto ships that go wherever it is they're going. People in Philadelphia are benefiting from international activity. When the company gets to ship their goods halfway around the world they keep the workforce working in what had been downtimes in some industries because of the different seasons and climates. On the other side of the world you know. So that's good stuff. All the details are that a. Above my pay grade. You get the right people in the room though you know kind of figure it out. So I just think that Mr. Trump does not have at the moment a really good non-campaign fundamental understanding of how government works.

LIU: So let me ask you both. Can I ask you both the flip side question to this which is how do we then keep manufacturing other jobs here in the United States and even here he seems to have a punitive approach which is about penalizing companies for putting jobs offshore. You both talk to a lot of work around job creation you do a lot of work about how to keep your firms competitive. What's the one piece of advice. Briefly on what a true manufacturing job creation strategy should look like?

NUTTER: Well the first thing I would say is my motto always was you can't ask someone to do what you're not prepared to do yourself. Somewhere in the midst of the transition period Mr. Trump should announce that he's bringing back all manufacturing of all goods and services related to his own companies. They want to be us. That's the first thing. Right. Because I mean otherwise you're hypocritical. The second is the continued emphasis that you know goods and services can be made and made well in the United States of America. And third and Scott knows this, that people around the

world actually look for the Made in America stamp on goods. I mean we have a value added brand. Right. Called the United States of America. So I just think hopefully you know it takes time. Scott's run, I've run, that transition from candidate to whatever your offices elect mayor elect Governor elect president elect to you know inauguration day is a mental It's a transformative process. And he's got to go through that and get a much better understanding of how the world really works not in theory not in campaign rhetoric but in the day to day reality of governing.

SMITH: And what we have to do as Americans is to is to pick and choose what we can manufacture. The reality is there certain things trinkets will never be able to be manufactured here profit profitably high tech automobiles things like we've proven that we can we can build very nice cars and be competitive with the world market. We've proven we can certainly build certain types of equipment and other things and be very competitive in the world market. So I think part of it is is defining manufacturing and there are some things that we do better than anyone in the world or can do as well. There's other things that I think part of the problem is we want to we want to recreate the economy of the 50s and 60s. And that's not the economy we live in. That doesn't mean that you just toss it aside and give up. That means that you redirect and there are some places that are doing a very good job at that. There are other places that are not because they're trying to hold onto what they used to be as opposed to what we can be and do.

NUTTER: And we're doing some other new things. That I mean we just have to help people reorient themselves. Right. On the one hand notwithstanding the campaign rhetoric you know Mr. Trump is going to bring about these jobs and they are going to do



coal and you know you're not doing any of that right. But there are a whole bunch of jobs in the United States of America that are unfilled today because the people that we need to fill those jobs don't necessarily have the skill sets for that. So we still have this mismatch between jobs available and skill sets and we really have a massive campaign to help people understand. You can take some of the skills you have with additional training and get a really good manufacturing job and it's probably not going to be the plant of your grandpa. They're not old dusty smoky grimy hands kind of places. Actually many of them are very clean. They have to be. And you have to you know read and understand complex equipment and all that. But they pay very very well. Or you can be a machinist right. I was in my classroom actually when one of my students said what's a machinist. Right. So but high paying jobs of the past that are still necessary today we still make stuff.

SMITH: One of the frustrating one of the most frustrating things I had as mayor is to be in the depth of the recession and have local businesses who use machinists and said I can't find people right. And I think that the statistic that always just comes out brings me back to old memories. Even during the you know double digit unemployment we had over three million machinist jobs unfilled in the U.S. because we couldn't find qualified people which gets back to more basic discussion of how do we train them and how do we bring things together. And that's something that we just started on since the recession really addressing both the national and the local level. And we'll have to continue on with that because there is opportunity. It's just that the rhetoric gets in way of the reality.

LIU: Yeah and there is indeed a lot of workers out there that feel underemployed, unemployed in this economy so we do need to figure out how to close that mismatch. I want to turn now to the topic of distressed urban areas. This is for Michael Nutter. You know on the campaign trail you mentioned this Donald Trump called our nation's inner cities quote a disaster and pledged to fix them. In his acceptance speech. So you Mayor made disconnected youth, my brother's keeper, criminal justice issues your priority as mayor of Philadelphia. What's your reaction to all this language?

NUTTER: Well again you know I think at the moment it is just language. I mean there were never any ideas proposals prescriptions any kind of policy dissertation and I would say fairly for both candidates in the entire campaign. There was very little discussion quite frankly about cities and policies and the day to day things that you know keep the trains running and buses moving and picking up trash and filling potholes. Not that the president really has anything to do with that. But you know cities are the lifeblood of the United States of America and the whole campaign was really devoid of any discussion about us. But having said that look. I'm glad that he said it. I don't know what it means and I am hopeful that at a minimum a President Trump would have the same level of appreciation for mayors and cities that Scott and I and many many others experience with President Obama and his administration. I mean they had us and they listened to us they talked to us and we saw some benefit come as a result of that. And I have no idea at the moment just what they've been thinking about in that regard.

LIU: You know he has talked. Can I just mention this he did talk about the desire to create a task force on violent crime that he wants to create a plan for black

Americans. What's your experience though at the local level. Are the issues that would really matter to make our inner cities or urban areas safe places with opportunity.

NUTTER: Right. I think it is a challenge based on law and practicality. I mean I think it's hard to know especially at the federal level to specifically design programs for black people. I mean. And what about Latinos or what about Asians or what about you know. I mean that just doesn't you know I mean governing you know to some extent it is in many ways it is more about the rising tide lifts all the boats. I mean if everybody you know in a neighborhood is working you're creating economic vitality. There are thousands and thousands of jobs then some black people will get some, some white people will get some, some Asians some Latinos and Lithuanians and whatever. So I don't even know how you do it now if you want to talk about minority participation and contracting and you know some other things. But I mean it's about education it's about a job it's about literacy and if you fund those programs, right then the funding will get where it needs to go. You said that when I was in office Scott was in office if you send it to us we will spend it properly. Again I don't know if they understood this because we understand that.

LIU: Mayor Smith you wanted to jump in.

SMITH: Well you know one of the big mysteries for me at least is that we have a Republican who is really you know from day one is an urban guy now. Now granted he's a he's a fifth avenue urban guy but he's spent his life in the end know the most significant of the most significant cities in the world and he knows both the highs and lows of urban. How that translates into policy, I think he's hinted that he gets it whether he can get that through Republican Party which frankly has not been urban friendly. And

it's not going to get any better. What Mike talked about was money coming from Washington one of our big challenges when we got money from Washington is all too often it was filtered through the state capitol. And I think one of the real challenges for cities is the fact that it's been talked about but not a whole lot is that Republicans dominate state legislatures and the governorship. Now while Democrats dominate mayorship in the top 100 cities. And that creates a conflict not only between parties but with more of a suburban rural feel as opposed to an urban and if Washington sending their money through the state capitals. My guess is that the inner city is not going to be the first place that a Republican legislature and that Republican governor looks to. That's just not the normal base. And that's not how they think. Heck, you have Republican mayors fighting with Republican legislatures. It's going to be a real challenge to see how that interaction and that relationship plays out. Now that you have such a drastic difference in who controls the state houses and who controls the big city mayor's offices.

NUTTER: And again the question will be you know does the president elect president and his team do they understand the nuance of all of that.

LIU: I think that's why there's a lot of interest in figuring out how to create more incentives and war rewards programs that go directly to cities and metropolitan areas to tackle a lot of these complex issues more directly. Let me –

SMITH But one of the challenges one of the challenges we have and a member of the Obama White House was very very clear to us and was honest when we were when we were asking for that direct money to the cities and he finally said listen you know I have 20000 cities I have 50 governors. I mean you know just a tad just a mere

challenge of coordinating among cities is perceived as being much more difficult than working through the states. And so that's something I think we have to look at very carefully to see if we can get out of that and really start putting resources directly to the places where they will be spent in a way that has been proven to work. And that's directly to metro areas directly to cities.

LIU: Let me let me close with infrastructure as a policy issue. And I think this is also one area that is very emblematic of the issue you talk about which is a lot of at least through the DOJ a lot of infrastructure funds and highway funds flow through the states and then end up mostly in rural counties. But both candidates including the president elect has made rebuilding and investing in infrastructure also a top priority. And this is something I think both of you very much care about. Mayor Smith More recently you I think are running a regional transit agency. There's still some hesitancy about the extent to which there will be big infrastructure investment plan. It will require support and action from Congress. If there was one or two things that you would like to see moved on infrastructure reform or investments what would that be? Let's start with you Mayor Nutter.

NUTTER: for me it's you know I mean the Congress did just recently and I mean we pushed hard on this when either of us were presidents or just members of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, that there would be this you know this idea of a longer term transportation bill. We've gone years and years and years with continuing resolutions which I mean you can't make any plans on that. So they finally pass a multiyear transportation bill. But I think the next big step for the federal government is to adopt like every other government in the United States of America which is a full capital budget

plan. Right. That is, you know five or six years that you can see where the projects are that you know the funding is going to be there. That's when you're really getting some stuff done because I mean as Scott certainly says too many times you know you have a long term plans on short term money. Right. So if we actually had a capital program and plan for the federal government, then you could you know work with the feds this project like to move that up that one maybe can go back a little bit. But you know the funding is there and that you're not playing games. Infrastructure did not was not in the past a partisan issue. You know Democrats Republicans Independents use those roads Democrats Republicans Independents get those jobs depending on jurisdiction and all that other kind of stuff. But don't I mean I want to ask you your voter registration. You know when when are you going to work on the worksite. So for me it would be a capital budget for the feds especially if it is infrastructure.

LIU: Great, mayor Smith?

SMITH: And I would agree with them a hundred percent. And the thing that we have to do in order to get there is to change the conversation at the national level on infrastructure. Historically the reason why it was nonpartisan is that we looked at it as infrastructure as a generational investment. We looked at it as a way to a better future. We looked at it as a way to create long term economic opportunity. Somehow it morphed into a debate over short term. Short term financing, short term what do you want to call stimulus or whatever. And that will never get us to the point that that Mayor Nutter talked about. If we get back to the days when we talked about these things whether it be how we talked about the interstate highway system or one of my favorite stories is it in the depth of the Civil War. I mean when the when the very threads of the

Republic were revealed we didn't know if we were going to last. Abraham Lincoln signed the Transcontinental Railroad act. That was not a short term investment. At the end of believe me the largest public private partnerships ever if not in a very aggressive bill because it was generational and if we can get that kind of conversation and talk about why it's so important then we can be thinking long term and I think if we think long term and get committed to long term then the funding and the plans will become more long term which is absolutely what we need to do.

LIU: So let me, I have two final questions and so hopefully we can get to them real quickly. You know I think one of the big tensions coming out of this election is that people just don't trust Washington and don't trust establishment Washington. And so there's a real opportunity to have a federal partnership with local communities and in his in his in the past. Republicans have been very supportive of smaller government devolving to local decision making. If that mood and opportunity struck here with this new administration what would be the one or two characteristics of a good federal partnership power meant to cities? Mayor Smith?

SMITH: Well I think let's get back to what Mayor Nutter talked about. We have one program that has over the years it's been a few glitches but over the years has proven to be incredibly successful and that's the community development block grant program where money is sent to the cities and it creates a true partnership between the federal government and local initiatives that are tailored to the individual communities that can be measured that can be leveraged. And that's sort of has gotten lost as to as to the kind of partnership that local communities can have with the federal government. I think if we look for more opportunities to expand that and let the cities and local

communities decide how best to allocate resources and then challenge them to leverage those resources. You'll find you'll find number one a level of cooperation and confidence increase but trust will go up trust goes up when their success when people can touch and feel and experience success from government they soon trust government. I think one of the problems is that many of the so-called successes of government they can't really experience and if they have experience it's maybe been negative. That's what I would want to do is let's redefine and expand upon that. That partnership which empowers communities because it's worked, it's proven that it works.

NUTTER: Yeah I think it's critically important that not just the president but certainly the president but also leaders you know we're going to have a Republican House Republican Senate that Speaker Ryan nominated by the GOP that they assume Senator McConnell is going to be the leader that the three of them on some of these issues working with whoever their respective Democratic leaders are. They make a very strong statement a commitment about support for cities that you know they again acknowledged a true understanding of what cities. We need a new partnership between and among cities metro areas the federal government and the various political leaders. You know two days a year. You know we can be as political as we want but the other 363 or four you know it really should be about getting stuff done making things happen and whether there's gridlock in Washington or not as mayors we have to get stuff done every day. All right. So people do what they do in D.C. but that has nothing to do with whether I pick up your trash or to fill a pothole police officer or firefighter shows up at your door. If you dial 911. And so you know if Mr. Trump is a consummate deal maker



and put people together and all that. You know let's go through all that but let's get a good deal for America.

LIU: I'd like to close by talking about healing because I think there are still a lot of need for that. And one of the things I've come to really appreciate about working with mayors is that mayors often have to govern all walks of life rich and poor white and people of color Democrats Republicans young and old. And you will have to navigate social racial and economic divisions every day. So what, can our nation learn from mayors about how to unify our country? Mayor Nutter?

NUTTER: Well you know I often talk about the you know if you look at the oath of office that the president takes us Senate takes the House of Representatives takes and I've never seen the oath of office for you know Mesa Arizona. But you know when all is down there pretty much the same trying to convey the same message. And for me it's the last line of growth is you know that I will discharge the duties of my office with fidelity and I think if you know again a couple days a year where political elections and were kind of at each other and all that but it is really you all have to take a step back especially after this election. You've got people demonstrating in the streets you got folks crying you've got kids and parents confused about what's proper behavior and how you express yourself you got citizens at times few instances attacking each other. Swastikas marches all kinds of stuff going on so A you know we all probably need to step back and as we might say in Philly at least kind of chill a little bit take a deep breath and try to move forward. But it's really about how do you bring the country together. And so President elect Trump and you know soon to be president. He has a large role to play in that and that's I think an extra challenge and burden some of which comes as a

result of the things that he's said or did. But you know be that as it may if we could as electives remember why we came into this business in the first place and what are we trying to get done to try to improve the lives of people and I think that's what most of us want to do. A lot of the partisanship the debates back and forth you know great oratory is at 2:00 a.m. in the morning. I mean that's not doing anything. That's no kid is going to read as a result of that no road is going to get paved. No bridge is going to get built. So I think we've got to get back to business.

LIU: Mayor Smith?

SMITH: And getting back to business means remembering all this even sounds hokey or trite but it's not. This isn't just a six week or a 16-month phenomenon. This goes back really 15 years. I remember when George W. Bush was president. How divisive it became and some of the just awful rhetoric that came out against President Bush from the other side and then President Obama became president we have such a good feeling and then all of a sudden it just resorted right back to that. And you couldn't just disagree more. You had to be ugly. So we've had a lot of practice at doing that. And I don't believe that anyone can honestly say that that approach has gotten us in a better place either individually as cities or as a country. I didn't vote for Barack Obama but he was my president and I wanted him I needed him to succeed. We've heard this a lot. Donald Trump is everyone's president. We need him to succeed. Yes, a lot of the burden. And I would agree with that with Mayor Nutter, is on him because he set the stage and in many ways he's poisoned the well and he has he has a lot of work to be done to try and undo that. But it can be done. And I just hope that as Americans we as Mike said chill a little bit. And let's see what happens. We'll have plenty of time to

debate actions and activities and things like that. But let's do the best we can to remember that we all have a stake in this success and America has had a lot of crazy characters in office. They've had more than a few scoundrels as president and we somehow have not only survived, we've thrived and it's been tough sometimes but we have we have we have survived and thrived so I'm pretty confident we'll make it through this time too.

LIU: Well Mayor Smith and Mayor Nutter I think you both have demonstrated to everyone how it's possible to have a civil discourse across party lines during what has been a very raw period for many people. Thank you so much for your time. We are certainly lucky to have you both in public service.

NUTTER: Thank you for what you do. Thank you and Brookings.

SMITH: Thank you Amy.

PITA: Thanks to Amy Lou. Mayor Michael Nutter and Mayor Scott Smith for being with us today. For more from Brookings Metropolitan Policy. Follow them on Twitter @Brookingsmetro and you can also follow our guests @Michael\_Nutter and @Scott\_SmithAZ

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