



Conference/Seminar Summary

City of Watsonville
275 Main Street, Suite 400
Watsonville, CA 95076
831.768.3008

To: The Honorable Mayor & City Council
Council Meeting Date: 4/11/2023

City Council Member: Vanessa Quiroz- Carter
Conference/Seminar: NLC: Congressional City Conference
Location: Washington D.C.
Dates of Travel: 3/25/2023 to 3/28/2023

Please provide a brief report on the conference, seminar, or meeting you attended.

I attended the NLC Congressional City Conference in Washington, D.C. from March 25th to March 28th. On March 25th we arrived after panels and general sessions had concluded. On March 26 I attended 3 panels and a general session. The first panel hosted by the Council on Youth Education and Family. In this panel, the panelists focused on the intersection of physical and human infrastructure; for example, old lead pipes leading to low water quality and how it affects the cognitive functioning of children. The panelists urged attendees to think about the data of inequity and how we use that data to drive funding to make an positive impact in the lives of residents. Some federal updates presented were the proposal of universal preschool, increases to headstart and early education, the Congress Farm Bill (a bipartisan bill for nutrition and conservation including SNAP benefits, and groundsoil and water conservation), and the CHIPS and science Act (which strengthens commerce in the U.S.). These bills are important because they contain economic development as well as human and physical infrastructure. The second panel I attended was "Workforce Investments for the infrastructure boom: Federal and local partnerships." This workshop focused on how local governments can work with the federal governments to apply for workforce funding, as well as how to create local jobs. Firstly, the need is great to have more staff to actually apply for and manage grants. There is also a need for soft skills that have been cut from public school programs. Local governments can create programs that positively

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expose youth to jobs at places like airports and fire stations to get them interested and excited about joining the workforce. Another way to get youth excited about the workforce is to utilize technology, for example, flight simulator video games that can be used as a tool to teach employable skills. Locally, there is a need to maintain strong relationships with labor (for apprenticeships and PLAs). The third panel I attended was "Federal Clean Energy Funding". This panel focused on Climate Pollution Reduction Grants, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). One important note is that through the IRA municipalities can now get tax credits; for example, a city that buys an electric vehicle would be eligible for these tax credits). The panel also spoke about Environmental Justice Grants funding which is available through the IRA. The general session included many speakers; one notable speaker was Shalanda Young, who is the Director of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. Director Young spoke about some proposals to bring down costs, healthcare tax credits, capping insulin at \$35/month, increasing the affordable housing supply, a proposal for national paid leave, the child tax credit, Title 1 funding for schools, protecting and strengthening social security and healthcare, and the Inflation Reduction Act. During the evening, I attended the League of California Cities reception where I met with elected officials from across California. On March 27th, the general session had several panels before the main event of a speech by Dr. Jill Biden. Among these panels, one of the main focuses was on public safety. We heard from Hugh T. Clements, the Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, who spoke about the rampant issues of addiction, the need for mental health services, and gun violence. He advocated and reiterated that public safety must be open to and for the public. We also heard from several Mayors of different cities on the issues in their communities and how they are working on public safety. Some suggestions were violence intervention programs; a school based violence intervention program for at risk kids, and a workforce focused intervention program that targets at risk adults to create a job training programs that those at risk can participate in. Finally, we heard from Dr. Jill Biden on the importance of education, namely, affordable education, in shaping our country and providing opportunities. e

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