

Transcript: Lunch keynotes: Perspectives on Governance

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Speakers:

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The Hon. Kendrick Meek, U.S. Representative from Florida

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MS. ALYS CAMPAIGNE: From 1998 to 2000 he served as senior vice president of community development at the Midtown Atlanta Chamber of Commerce. He's a co-founder and director of United America Bank, where he serves as chairman of the marketing committee, and he serves on a number of other corporate boards as well. He clearly has a lot of interest and experience in harnessing innovation too. And we're proud to have here.

SENATOR ZAMARRIPA: It's no mistake that they would give the siesta hour speech to a Mexican American. Congressman, by the time I'm finished, you'll have some snoring jokes to go along. Thank you very much.

I'm very grateful to the Center for having me here today. I was really looking forward to speaking with you openly and candidly. I left the Senate last night. They're still in session today. But when I arrived, I was both delighted and also concerned to see some of my most influential

constituents here. Reverend McDonald who has spoken earlier. My friend Jim Gardner, who is an active constituent and neighbor. And then, of course, one of the leading political journalists with the Atlanta Journal Constitution Tom Baxter is here. So instead of the remarks that I was going to give you, you need to come by my room later on and I'll give those to you.

My topic on the agenda is defined as governance, and not I'm quite sure what I'm going to speak about. I'm going to depart a little bit and speak a little bit about the future and the future that exists both in business and politics, and hopefully leave you with two or three categories to consider as we in both parties try to understand what will define the governance structures, the political structures and the business structures that we will work in in the future.

The future is -- talking about the future is a little bit like talking about art. And as an investment banker, which I do when I'm not in the

Senate, I am investing in the future. I'm always investing in potential and concepts and ideas. So it's something that's important to me and something that I spend a fair amount of time thinking about, not only as a business person but as a political person.

Some of you know that in the last few weeks Christo, the very well-known artist, unveiled his latest work in Central Park, which is the Door Series, which like all of Christo's works, has been received with great controversy. And of course, Christo is not one person, Christo is two people. The interesting thing about the Christo work is that it is disorienting. It raises more questions than it answers. And it leaves a lot of people in an area that they haven't previously been in.

And frankly that is what a dialogue about the future is about. It is disorienting. It disorients the organization that we live and work in. It disorients the strategies that were claimed to be trusted and proven. It wins races and it loses races. So a conversation about the future is very important because you're entering into a domain, a linguistic turf, a territory that will ultimately have varied on how we govern.

With that said, I have attended the conference since last night, and I was taken with a couple of comments that I think need to be restated, and they were good examples, I think, of linguistic turns that can give you a better feeling for how we use the future as a baseline for thinking about governance. One was a comment by Governor Easley on this concept of

low wealth. Now he said it twice.

He did not say it once, he said it twice.

So I took that to mean that it was a calculated term. And on reflection I thought, well, perhaps it's the Governor's way of saying that all of us are endowed with God's gifts, that we all have potential, that we all have merit, but some of us just don't have any money.

Now, I'm not sure if that's what he meant, but it's an interesting turn of phrase, and I -- at least when a Governor speaks, I always listen pretty carefully. But the other one was by Mudcat, which was the concept of feeding the naked. And now, I'm an urban person and I've often wondered what people do in rural America. I just want to state that what the idea of feeding the naked lacks in clarity it more than makes up for in imagination.

I think those are good examples of the disorienting nature of the future. And there are four aspects of the future that I want to very quickly ask you to consider and weigh as disorienting.

Number one is the concept of globalization, which is in the new now. It is in today's future. It is already here. Now, I'm wearing a tie that has a Chinese saying on it. It says, a friend from afar is a friend indeed. Now, China and globalization go hand in hand and all of you -- the difference between me and you today is that most of you are wearing clothes that were made in China. I'm wearing a tie that was made by a Mexican who was very clever about the fact that the Chinese are taking over the globe.

Ultimately, globalization is about multinational corporations taking over global brands with increased efficiency and the ability to swap information and currency at rates that have never existed on the planet and at rates that will continue to improve.

There is no reversing globalization. No party will reverse it, no union will reverse it. It will not be stopped. It has already taken place. And I encourage you to consider the opportunities that exist in globalization for your own political interests. I was taken by a remark yesterday about a general constitution of Mike -- Mike Easterly who is I guess -- sorry -- chairman of UPS, who for the second time in recent -- in my recent memory, is beginning to speak about the inadequacy, the poor performance of global leaders, of chairmen and the boards of directors in addressing the merits of globalization.

Now, let me tell you what he's really saying here, is that there is a message, there is a benefit to it and no one has captured it yet. And they're not going back the other way. UPS recently was given five air rights to China. Three of them announced that two days ago they've recently purchased the largest logistics company in China. They have 21 flights every day. It is not going the other way.

Globalization is a disorienting aspect of the future that has already arrived. It is not when will it come. It is when will we respond to it in a way that works for us? That's what.

Another aspect of the future that has already arrived is the multiethnic identity and linguistics transformation that we exist in. It is interesting to come to a gathering, a big tick gathering of people, to talk about the politics of the past and to hear the concepts of racial black-white historic issues which are fundamental to the parties that we embrace. But the party of the future is being made today in the OB/GYN pregnancy clinics of America, and children that are being born there are multiethnic.

Your sons and daughters are marrying East Asians, Indians, Mexicans. They're marrying people from Indonesia from Jakarta. They're marrying Cubans, God forbid, but it has happened and it will happen to you. My wife asked me if Osama Barak was speaking. I said do you mean, Barak Obama? Get used to it. The tongue has stuck. Sam Zamarripa in the state Senate in Georgia? Mudcat was here just a minute ago.

So get used to the multiethnic identity of the fabric of the new global structure or the fabric of the new political structure. Get accustomed to speaking about it, to embracing it, to demonstrating your love for it. It is not something that is going to happen. It has already happened.

The next thing that has already happened as a part of globalization is that this intermediation and decentralization of the world. To those people that came from Washington, you're not as important as you used to be.

(Applause.)

And the reason you're not as important as you used to be is because global internet connected organizations can control you from wherever they want. Mudcat can be feeding the naked and controlling you.

There was a vote yesterday on the Senate floor, Congressman, on a secrecy act in Georgia. It divided initially around ideological lines, but towards the end, towards the moment the vote was to transpire, one of the most, I would call, extreme members of the Senate decided not to vote for the bill. And the reason is that 300 of his constituents had hit him instantly and said no. It didn't matter what the debate was. The decentralized global economy had spoken from Smyrna, Georgia and the Senator knew that his election, reelection was at stake. So the decentralization of our information systems and power systems has already arrived.

There's a second kind of future, that is the future that we will create. It's kind of what I would call a work in progress. Biosciences will roll out. The full integration of the knowledge economy will continue to expand. Let me just ask you to reflect on this a moment. Just if you can, ask yourself, what is the most important thing you learned in high school? Just what is the most important thing that you learned in high school that has bearing on what you do today?

Now, there's some engineers in the room, not many I'm sure, where you learned math on a slide rule, but I'll tell you what the most important thing I learned in high school was, and I

graduated more than 35 years ago. It was to type. The information economy will continue to expand, and even though this bubble -- this so-called bubble has burst, it really hasn't burst. It's just morphed. It's morphing into a different kind of knowledge economy that's very, very promising for all parties and for all individuals.

And you can expect to see globalization localized as a result of the knowledge economy. There will be people that live in small towns, people that live in Summer Hill, Reverend McDonald, that will be a part of the global economy and all they will have is a DSL line and a computer. That is all they will have.

The future that's also a work in progress is what Tom Stanley and William Danko, who wrote the book *The Millionaire Next Door*. Everybody knows that book? It's called the Mundane 500. And those are the people that own bug businesses, ambulance services, cafeterias, funeral homes, mobile home parks. These are the people that quietly are amassing great wealth in mundane businesses. They're not real new age businesses, but they're going to be in the future in a big way. And they're going to be an important part of a political base.

The next part of that is what Richard Florida calls the rise of the creative class. How many of you have taken a look at Richard Florida's work on the rise of the creative class? There's a corollary book that's coming out in the next few weeks. It's an important book to read, by Daniel King, called A

Whole New Mind, Moving From the Information Age to the Conceptual Age. This is a book that addresses the concept of the end of right brain thinking -- excuse me -- of left brain thinking.

Everyone's concerned about outsourcing to Asia. But let me tell you, all the technology in Asia is left brain thinking. It's the brains, the digital thinking, it's the logical thinking. Wait till the right brain people take over the economy. Those are the artists, those are the creative people, those are the people that are thinking way, way, way outside of the box. And you know what? A lot of them are C students. And they didn't do well on the SAT but they blow away the SCT, which is the Scholastic Creative Test.

These are the kids that are breaking the mold right now that will not conform. You know, if -- and it's not anything that's bound by the traditional boundaries of labor or of teaching or of the public school movement or the charter movement or all of the stuff that we're so tired of hearing about in the litany of political stuff we have to listen to. These kids are taking over now. And their heroes are Usher. Did you see Usher at the Grammys? I want to be Usher. If you don't want to be Usher, you're missing the point.

Now, there's a future -- and this is the third part, and this is the future that's creating itself. It works without us. It's part of the somewhere-over-the-rainbow kind of thinking. And that's a future that's serendipitous. It's the future of one

individual right now who's that sort of awkward little individual that didn't do so well in school, that dropped out and all of a sudden becomes Bill Gates. It's the kid who right now is out there that just -- it's the daughter of the woman who made your bed last night who's right now in public school, barely, because she's an illegal alien's daughter and she's going to be the next Senator from whatever state we're in here.

That's the serendipitous future that is creating itself right in front of us. It's a confluence of calamities, it's world disaster, it's discovery of life on another planet. How close are we to knowing? And what will Pat Robertson say?

It's the breakthrough economy. It's the economy of the inspired, of the lawless, of the reckless, of the ones who don't follow the order. They're not here in this meeting, and they're making their future right now. And you know what? And this is what I'll end on. This is the fourth part of the future. It's the continuation of humanity. It's the continuation of fear, lust and greed. It's the continuation of our imperfect form with our great hope for a transformed future. And if you speak to that as a political leader and if you speak to that as a party, and if you break a few rules, you'll help create a future for America. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MS. ALYS CAMPAIGNE: I knew we'd cover a lot of ground but I was not expecting to hit other planets. Next I'd like to introduce

Congressman Kendrick Meek, who's also no stranger to government and a very talented legislator who served eight years in the House and Senate in Florida before being elected in 2002 to represent the Florida 17th Congressional District, which is the Northern Miami-Dade, Southern Broward part of the state. He serves on the powerful House Committee on Armed Services, and he's been a very outspoken supporter for troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. He also served on the House Select Committee on Homeland Security and in fact was the first freshman member of the house elected to serve on that committee. And he's one of the youngest ranking members in the 109th Congress. He's a young, rising, very talented leader. He comes from a family of firsts. He's the son of former Congresswoman Carrie Meek who was the first black woman lawmaker to represent Florida since Reconstruction.

Congressman Meek has been a leader in Congress on a number of issues. On job training, on affordable housing, health-care and in particular on education, introducing an initiative to reduce class sizes in the state of Florida. He's also traveled the country extensively encouraging young people to be part of the political process, and he sets a fine example himself. We're lucky to have him here today to talk to us, and I welcome Congressman Meek.

CONGRESSMAN MEEK: I'm sitting here and I'm saying, where's my wife and my mother when I'm being introduced like that, because I need you on Monday and Thursday

mornings when it's time to take the garbage out. So ask with great dignity and respect.

It's great being here. It's my first time here in this town outside of catching a flight going somewhere else, transferring to another flight. And I just want to say, so many friends -- I received my briefing information last night, and there's so many friends. I had lunch with Commissioner Caster yesterday in Tampa, in Ybor City, which was known for its fine cigars which I wasn't able to get. And also I have a lot of friends here, but I have to definitely say hello to David Price, who's my friend -- and he's an appropriator -- and he's a wonderful man. You know, David, I want to let you know, I got to the airport and I saw some people, and I told them that you were a great man. There's not enough that I can do for you. And if you ever need anything, I'll be there for you. And I know my Mayor Martinez, who's a mayor in my district.

The Senator spoke of affluent people here and people of power and great wisdom and Mayor -- Mayor Martinez. I wanted to mess with him. Mayor Raul Martinez who's a long-time family friend of my family. And a very passionate man that I have had an opportunity to serve with now. And I represent his city too. I can go on and on and on. Tim McFeeley, who's a friend of mine over at the Center for Policy Alternatives, I served on his board. And Reverend, hello, Brett, hello. I just want to say hello to everyone. Because if I go down this list of people who I know well, please excuse me.

Let me just say, being here in North Carolina is definitely something nice. I used to be a state trooper in Florida, and I served for Lawton Chiles and also Buddy McKay who was once a member of Congress. And I was just thinking of the South, even though I'm from Miami, Broward County they say in Florida the further north you are, you're actually further South in experience.

But Alan Boyd, who's a member of the House from Florida, represents Tallahassee, Monticello, some of those other areas along the Alabama state line, was a state House of Representatives freshman when I worked for Lawton Chiles and Buddy McKay. I was the captain of the highway patrol and security gate, slash, driver. And they wanted to go on -- he wanted to go on a little tour.

So we, the Lieutenant Governor and I took off in the car. And I was talking to the sheriff in Gilchrist County which is Trenton, Florida. I just want to just frame it this way. There's not a lot of card carrying NAACP members in Trenton, Florida. But we were talking on the phone all week about the Lieutenant Governor going to come in and, yes, we're going to have a town hall meeting and, yes, Captain we'll be ready for you, and drive through Trenton Florida riding in a couple of sedans.

And I'm sitting in the front seat, driving, and the Lieutenant Governor's on this side. All of the stores have the sign flipped around saying closed. And I was like, wow, this is a big deal. We pull up in front

of this thing, it looks like a long wooden church. I guess it was their -- it looked like their civic center or something. And the band playing, high school band, music's blaring. And the sheriff comes walking up with his hat on, all these stars on his shoulder. He leaned down in the car, he said, son, I'm looking for Captain Meek.

And so I looked over to Lieutenant Governor, and he looked down in his lap. And I said -- I got out of the car and I stood up. And I had on a suit and everything. And I said, I'm Captain Meek, looking square in his eyes. And he said, you sound taller over the phone. And I have a great appreciation for the South. And I said, if he could tell that one, then I need to suck it up and just go along with it.

But I can tell you in talking about governance, certainly in Congress, it's a great honor. I can tell you that being in the 109th Congress, being a part of the Congress and being in there when you have the highest deficit in the history of the republic is not such a great honor.

And we talk about governance, we talk about being rewarded for bad behavior. And it's very unfortunate that this has happened in our country.

And I will put the blame not only on Republicans, but also on Democrats. We allowed it to happen.

Independents allowed it to happen. Young people allowed this to happen.

Elderly, seniors, everyone allowed it to happen. Everything can't be the fact that the terrorists made us do it or 9/11 made it happen. We allowed this

to happen.

Now, I'm going to tell you, my kids, they're going to be okay. I have a seven-year-old son that's going on 40, if you ask him. I have a ten-year-old daughter, and they're going to be okay.

The reason why they're going to be okay is that they're my children. They're going to get the best education. They're going to get to do things that other kids are not going to have an opportunity to do because of the position that I hold. They're different. They're not like the others.

But the real -- when you look at -- when you reflect on the reason why they have that opportunity, my constituency did not elect me to have better health-care than what they have.

They didn't say, well, you know, Kendrick, I think, boy, we sure want you and your family to have good health-care, let's go ahead and send you to Congress. You know, we'll take care of you. Don't worry, you know, like, you know, the old movie, don't, you know, leave without me. It's not worth those things. They're like, please take me.

You know, but this has now happened and we're being rewarded for bad behavior. You look at this last election. And you look at all of the issues, and I mean there were so many issues it was, you know, very apparent.

You could have a mile radius on the mouth of a river, and it would be a log jam because there's so many issues that were there. And there were issues that liberals cared about and issues that conservatives cared about. But this election was about theme politics.

It was about, I have a better theme

than you. Need it be a congressional race, need it be a city race, a US Senate race, I have a better theme than what you have.

So the American people have rewarded bad behavior. And when you talk about governance, I come from achievement, and it was so good to hear the Senator. I felt very educated when he sat down because I said, I'm glad you're talking about some of the issues of the future instead of describing -- and we talked about this earlier -- what has happened or what we need to do, talking about the future issues that we all should be focused on, and we have to focus on.

But when you think about rewarding bad behavior and the Congress, you know, I come from the chamber, where, you know, in the House where we really need parental guidance. All due respect. I mean of course, Representative Price is a wonderful man. He's on my Kwanzaa list. It gets better, you know. My mother was an appropriator and served with him. And she always told me, she said, Kendrick, whenever there's an appropriator in the room, just make as many fine references as you can to them. You will need them.

But we need parental guidance, and I'm glad that we have a Senate, and I'm glad that in that Senate we have some folks that are willing to defend this country. And I'm not talking about this for Democrats. I'm talking about the American people and the American way of life. And what we have to do, ladies and gentlemen, is break through just saying we're playing

a game by the same rules or we're governing by the rules of whatever chamber it may be. County commission, city council, need be the state legislatures or the US Congress.

Within the rules, the rules are set by the majority. And that majority will set the rules at the end of the game regardless of whatever the rules may say, they will win. They'll stop the clock. They'll take a need. They'll do whatever they have to do to win under their rules.

So the only way we go out of that box when we talk about governance and responsibility of governance is not only doing common things uncommonly well, but willing to go beyond. Because right now in many areas in this country -- and I will tell you there are a lot of good Republicans out there. I mean some of my best friends are Republicans. Some of my best friends are Republicans. Some of my best friends are Democrats. But it's the philosophy of being rewarded for bad behavior.

My good friend Charlie Rangel, I want to mention him here, he said once in a caucus meeting, you know, members, I just want to let you know if there's -- if a voter goes into the booth and he has a choice of voting for a Republican or a Republican, he's going to vote for a Republican. And you know, some people may say, wait a minute, that doesn't make a lot of sense. But there was a day that in the Republican caucus someone would say, well, if they have an opportunity to vote for a Democrat or a Democrat, they will vote for a

Democrat.

Why I'm saying that it's -- it's being rewarded for bad behavior. So people are doing things that they didn't necessarily go to Congress to do. They're doing things -- I'm not talking about Republicans. I'm talking about elected officials. And we have the responsibility constitutionally, whether it be the US Constitution or the State Constitution or a county charter, you know, or the city charter to make the right decisions and use that document not as a rough draft, but as guiding principles, the yellow brick road to a sound democracy, to a more perfect union.

But we're being diverted from that. And it's not that we have electors that are selling out. They're drawn out. They're drawn out on bad behavior and bad theme politics and -- what did some of our friends on the radio say? And how I need to reshape myself, reform myself to adjust to that bad environment. The reason why we've been around for some 200 plus years is the fact that we've used this Constitution as our guiding principle.

So I would like to say to many of the groups here and to many of you, I've worked with you over the years, and you know, I've only been in the business now going on 11 years, but I'll tell you, my mother was in the business for 20 years prior to that. I had an opportunity to go to a lot of different conferences and a conference here and a conference there, and, you know, running around in the hall and, you know, being disruptive, you know, things like that. But I enjoyed it because I had an

opportunity to really overhear some of the great conversations and how -- and the level of responsibility that electors had once upon a time.

And I can tell you right now, when I fly to Washington, my friend Mr. Price and I fly to Washington, we're going to go up there and we're going to vote to designate at least three post offices on Tuesday. We're not going to do all the things that we should be doing. And whenever you have an America, as far as I'm concerned -- and I'm speaking as an American, I'm not speaking as a partisan even though I play one on television -- I just want to let you know, okay, that when you have 45 million Americans that know that they don't have health-care and they work every day -- the Senator spoke of the individual that's popping the sheets in this hotel -- and they still vote politics over principle, it's something that we as need it be appointed, selected, Reverend anointed, elected leaders, something that we're not doing.

I have a district, I will be back, if God's willing, and many of my constituents feel that I'm an okay guy, I will be back in the next Congress. But even though I have that kind of district it's important that I educate those individuals in that district on the issues such as Social Security, on the issues such as Medicare and the issues such as Medicaid, issues such as economic development and the deficit.

The deficit is an issue. It's an American issue. It's not a Republican issue or a Democratic issue. It's an American issue. We talk about China,

goodness, gracious. If China says, hey, I'm no longer buying your debt, we're down on our knees, ladies and gentlemen, bottom line, period. We have men and women in Iraq, some 130,000 individuals that are fighting, we have another 20,000 in Afghanistan, and I will tell you right now, all of that fighting going on -- you know, China over here could say, we're no longer buying your debt, as a matter of fact we want to cash in, we're in trouble.

And no one's going to care about a Democrat or Republican. They're going to say, who were the individuals that were leading when all of this was going on?

Right now we're living in what I call a cake-and-ice-cream period in American history. Sure, I love the troops and I'm in the Armed Services. Let me tell you something. You can't even go beyond -- I mean everyone knows -- I haven't ran into anyone -- I don't know if you have -- I'm going to close here in a minute, I'm not going to be a Baptist preacher -- I don't know if you have. I haven't ran into an individual yet who said, you know something? I'm against the troops. I don't like 'em.

I mean you should hear about armed services on both sides of the aisle. No, I love the troops. No, I love the troops. No, I love the troops because I have got two bills to support the troops. I have a resolution. No, I have a resolution on top of a resolution. I've got a Senate companion over in the Senate and I am -- I love the troops on this left shoulder here. I mean it's on and on

and on and on and on, on theme politics.

Because folks are picking up the paper and saying, oh, wow, they passed a resolution saying they loved the troops for the 45th time. Boy, I'm so glad that Congress is supporting the troops. I mean that's good, but meanwhile back at the ranch, ladies and gentlemen, on a fiscal standpoint, we're a disaster. We can't even resolve some of the issues that have come to the forefront.

Prescription drugs, I can't tell you how much I care about that issue. I'm from Florida so I must care about it. I mean. And if you don't, I mean you're looking for an early retirement. You know? And you look at it and you say, okay, all right. It's going to cost, okay, 200 and some million -- okay, billion, I mean. It's going to cost 300 and some -- oh, okay. New numbers. And then just before we left, it's up to like 435 billion. Oh, we miscalculated for the third time.

You know, I'm making fun of it, but this is -- this is a lot of money, ladies and gentlemen. And what's going to happen eventually, and I don't want it to happen because if I was a true Congressman, I would say let's continue -- can we buy some more rope? Let's just continue to give them the rope, give them the rope. What's going to happen, ladies and gentlemen, Americans are going to be turned off once they figure out coming back to -- we're talking about Southern Strategies -- very quietly, as we started talking about devolution of taxation, that was kind of like, well, devolution of, yeah, taxation, and we

were talking about some four or five years ago, not only is it alive and well, it's institutionalized.

The Senator spoke in a very -- in a very profound and correct reality that if you're from Washington, hey, you're no longer important. You're 110 percent right. That was the part of the strategy. You know, I'm not a black man with a conspiracy theory, but I'm here to tell you -- it's okay. You can laugh -- I'm here to tell you -- you should have seen the expression on some of those faces -- some people lean over, is it okay? It's okay. You can laugh. I said I'm not. I don't want you to walk away, the Congressman has a conspiracy theory.

But I just want to tell you that he's 110 percent right. We have said under the flag of states' rights, bold decisions -- we don't want to say states' rights. We say local decisions. Let the locals make decisions. Let the states make decisions. They know best. They're closer to the people.

Medicaid, you know, all these issues. We're cutting taxes up here, but we're making local governments at the end of the track raise taxes. There are more bond referendums in the South than anywhere else in the Union. I was in Alabama when the Governor of Alabama said, hey, you know something?

I've never asked for a tax increase, but we've got to do it on behalf of education and being able to take care of the people that elected me to make sure that we take care of them and that we have a way of life here in Alabama that we don't end up, you

know, becoming a third world country or whatever the case may be. And the voters rejected him on theme politics even though he was a responsible Governor, they faced the music.

And more of that is going to be happening, and we're going to get to the end of the rope on cake and ice cream and we're going to have to do it. And everyone's going to be upset and it's going -- and we're not rewarded for good behavior. And I'm looking at Mr. Price and I'm going to tell you this on a serious note. I mean this is serious. People like him and others paid the price for making the right decision when we balanced the budget. I wasn't there. But there were only about two or three votes on the other side of the aisle, a handful of them, to balance the budget. They balanced the budget. We had surpluses, and on theme politics, individuals lost their seats for doing the right thing.

And that's where we are right now, ladies and gentlemen. There will be -- the winds will change, but unfortunately in America, America will be brought to its knees. And Constitutionally things will be changed, and Supreme Court wise there will be an institutionalized thinking that will hold the country in that posture for a long period of time.

So I'm not giving you a locker room speech, and I'm not describing what has happened. I'm just -- I just want to challenge you on thinking out of the box and in being reinvigorated, of going back to wherever you came from with a new energy of saying, okay, whatever set of rules that we're

playing by, we need to draw a new play book or pick out one of those old play books from all the different workshops and retreats we've had.

I'm not going to stereotype, but I think it's important that we start to move on that. What I'm excited about right now is that we are having a healthy debate on Social Security. I'm glad that some individuals have showed their hand, talking about governance, on their true feelings towards Social Security. This is one of these issues that I go on the floor -- I'm on the 30-something hour that we have a special order when we're just talking with one another and maybe you're watching, maybe you're not. We're talking about real issues, Social Security.

You pick up the paper, you read Social Security plan. What plan? Where? You mean a philosophy? You mean folks flying around here burning all kind of federal jet fuel, having speeches and just talking about philosophy and not a plan?

When we have Social Security that is going to be -- that will be there for the next 80 years and beyond that because Ronald Regan and Tip O'Neil made the right decision in 1986 to make sure that Social Security will be there. This is not a silver hair issue. 17 percent of the benefit -- individuals that benefit from Social Security are survivors. They're receiving survivor benefit, and they're young people and they're putting them through school right here in Chapel Hill.

So I think it's important, ladies and gentlemen, that we remember that and

folks say, well, you know, good, it's good to be the individual that raised the objection. No, it's not the individuals that raise the objection. It's the individuals that are saying that we're willing to move forth in the American way because, guess what, in the way we break it down like this -- and I'm really -- I am really working hard to destroy partisan politics under the dome. Don't get me wrong. I mean I joke around a lot and, you know, I tell you I play a partisan on television. But you check us out when we're doing our 30-something hour on Tuesday nights.

As a matter of fact, it's up on Tuesday, and you will hear us talk more about and rewarding those individuals on the majority side who have said no to saying that there's a crisis in Social Security when there's not a crisis. That I'm willing to be an American of individuals and represent individuals that have elected me to lead. So I think it's important, ladies and gentlemen, that we look at that. And if you walk away from this conversation saying, well, we thought we would hear a lot about the inner workings of government at the governance luncheon or workshop and that guy, especially that last speaker, spoke too long.

But I want you to walk away understanding that's what governance has broken down to be in Washington. It's no longer saying, I'm going to educate myself and I'm going to be sharp on the issues. It's no longer a value to say that I have to be accurate. That's not a value anymore. It's what I can say that can move this country towards a philosophy, not

what's right, but what's going to build on to what we have. So I leave you with that.

I look forward to maybe the one question that we may have time for, and I wanted to apologize not only for me but my Senate colleague that spoke for five minutes. And I look forward to walking around the conference and learning a little bit more about what we should be doing in Washington, what we can be doing as Americans. And I'm excited and I'll say hello to my friends that I did not recognize at the top of it. Thank you so very much.

(Applause.)

MS. ALYS CAMPAIGNE: You didn't go on so long we didn't have time to engage the audience here and I want to go ahead and open it up. It looks like there are already some hands. There's some microphones in the audience here. If you will give your name.

MR. MICHAEL TIEMANN: I'm Michael Tiemann. I live in Chapel Hill. And my question is, how can the Congress that passed Sarbanes-Oxley to hold business accountable to a number be the same Congress where no two people in either house in any party agree on any one number?

REPRESENTATIVE MEEK: That sounds like one of those McLaughlin Group questions. You know, I recently attended a conference where they were talking about how do you flip the conversation. I'm trying to think of what I could say.

MR. MICHAEL TIEMANN: That was meant as a friendly question.

REPRESENTATIVE MEEK: No. It's interesting because, once again, I go back to being a member of the House. You know, I'm -- I'm just a small-town Congressman, but the decisions are not made by individuals especially as it relates to a piece of legislation. It's not -- it's made by, you know, a few people. And they can't agree on the numbers. And when they can't agree, then they send their lieutenants out there with a message, it's called a whip team, to continue the debate about the numbers. And that's a conversation that's high above my pay grade, you know, as it relates to how it's going to be resolved. I mean it's just -- I don't know if it's going to happen. I mean we can't pass a transportation bill, authorization bill. We're going for a third time. So we're hoping that we can agree on some of those numbers.

I'm sorry I couldn't be more informative, but being in the minority, and being where I am, it's not like I'm invited to the meeting.

MR. SCOTT DOUGLAS: My name is Scott Douglas. I'm from Birmingham, Alabama. And in looking towards the future -- and I hate to be part of the fear mob -- when the people get angry and find out what's really been done to them, economics and socially and education and stuff, don't you think there will be some politicians who will use that moment to make them fearful and name people for them to fear? People of color, women in the workforce, gays, young people?

My point is, they won't blame the people in charge, they won't blame the people who made those decisions. They'll blame the people who are pointed at.

SENATOR ZAMARRIPA: I think the question is really about the strategy for managing the -- both the downside, the bad side of globalization, and I would say also the upside. And the bad side has been clearly articulated. And I think there are -- there are those who have proposed what I would call some very limited Band-Aid kind of solutions, which are really designed for political purposes.

My message to you is that, whether we want to or not, we need to define our own role in globalization. We need to define ourselves inside of it. And once you open that question -- it's not a question that's against anybody. I want you to understand that. It's not a question to say that we're against, let's say, a union who wants to negotiate a WTO on textiles. But it does provide you the opportunity to then begin to explore what are the opportunities for us? And I would suggest to you that there are a lot.

MR. TERRY GRIFFIN: My name is Terry Griffin. I'm from Tennessee. In Tennessee we have a bill on the house floor right now. Supposedly it's a selective process. It's to give those that were federally incarcerated back their voting privileges, which is another form of disenfranchisement, especially when you consider African Americans make up 30 percent of the population but they make up 75

percent or more of the federal prison population. So I'm wondering, is there any kind of legislation in the national scene that works on giving those people back their rights to vote?

REPRESENTATIVE MEEK: So many states, and especially here in the South, we account for a number of those issues -- I mean a number of those states that still have archaic laws as relates to voting rights. I will say that there are a couple of bills in the Congress, but they're not going to see the light of day because the individuals that it would help can't vote anyway. So even for those who can vote in many cases, we don't pay much attention, you know, in some aspects. But I would say that it's important that states move forward.

Now, it's interesting in Florida we've had a couple of Republicans that are senior Republicans, one in the Senate and one in the House, have asked Governor Bush to move on doing away with Florida's prohibition to vote by ex-felons. And I will share this with you. A lot of folks, even though it's a disproportionate share of people of color that are on that list, a number of those individuals -- 80 percent of those individuals are Anglo Floridians in my state. And many of them had -- they didn't go out and, you know, like rob a Piggly Wiggly, you know -- we don't even have those in Florida but I know in your state we do -- but it's interesting that I don't think, and it's a party -- and the argument is it deters crime or weak on crime. But I will tell you in Texas, you get your rights back upon release or completion of parole. And I'm going to tell you in Texas they -- I mean it's

not like they're known for being soft on crime, but it's important that we allow that to happen. So I think that hopefully we'll be moving on that issue, and I want to commend the groups, some of you in this room that I won't identify, for taking a stance on this whole issue of restoration of rights. It's important. It's a democracy issue. It's an American issue. And we should move forward on allowing those individuals to vote. Thank you.

MR. AJAMU DILLAHUNT: Ajamu Dillahunt from the North Carolina Justice Center. This question kind of bridges these two talks with the earlier panel this morning. I mean I appreciate the Senator's futuristic vision of what our South is in terms of diversity. It's really important and we've got to grasp it. But then we need to think about how do we reconcile that with what we heard in the first panel about narrowing our focus on white working class men and just looking at these common economic issues and not talking about Civil Rights and race and not looking at the question of unions.

I see we've got a big problem in reconciling these two things and we need to talk about it.

(Applause.)

SENATOR ZAMARRIPA: I think that's a great question. And I will tell you that I love everybody. And I really think -- I genuinely encourage all of you to reframe that issue. It is -- I could be cynical, I could even be funny, but I will tell you, people will follow great human beings who have

great ideas for humanity. And I just think at the end of the day, the segregating or dissecting of that strategy is really a consultant's find. And I really think that those aren't -- the problem with a lot of consultants is they -- they're not elected officials. So they don't have to deal with appropriations, Chairmen Price -- back now to the important thing here.

I just don't think -- I think you need to be cognizant of it, but you've just got to open your eyes at the Dairy Queen and see who's serving you. And when you do, you're seeing the real America. And it's everybody. It's not one group, and it's frankly -- let me just say this for the NASCAR crowd -- I happen to be a guitar player. All right? I belong to one of the biggest unions in the world. Ask Captain BMI. All right? Those are the unions of the future.

The communications people who go into this new conceptual age will have a union too. But it won't be framed around industrial language. It will be framed around a bigger picture. And I will tell you that great leaders are born every minute and what makes them great is that they love everybody.

REPRESENTATIVE MEEK: I'm sorry. I just -- this is one of these I could have done, brought lots of popcorn. But let me say this and I think that is real strong issue. Remember when I talked about the devolution of taxation? We talked about states' rights, and that has been allowed to move on and focus states' rights, though very quietly, we want the power, we want the states to have more rights. Some people have said

that and stopped. You know, I'm not one of those individuals. I love states' rights as relates to doing good things, but I think in some of the cases are bad things. And it's been code in the South as relates to, well, we go back to the good old days. And that's not what I subscribe to, but I think it's going to be an end to that, hopefully that philosophy in the future, and I'm going to tell you the reason why. Because it's bleeding over to the everyday Southerner.

Once they start figuring out, what happened to the feeding program? What do you mean you're no longer doing it? And it's too much to explain from that city council individual to say, well, the state cut our funding, they cut the funding, they made the pool of funding for the discretionary spending for the department of children and families or the department of do-gooders or what have you because the federal government no longer gave dollars to the state government. And so it goes on and on and on. And hopefully individuals will figure out, we're all in this thing together.

I mean the Contract on America -- I mean for America that took place a couple of days ago -- a couple of years ago, everyone was cool with it until the veterans said, wait a minute, the Governor shut down -- you mean to tell me my check is going to be 15 days delayed? We thought you were talking about those Puerto Rican pregnant women. I mean that's what's going to happen. And so once we figure out -- one theologian once said that -- if you're on a plane and he's in first-class and you're in coach, if the

plane's going down, we're going down together. And soon that's going to be on the frontline of thinking in America.

That we're not just talking about black folk and Hispanic folks and the folks that we're trying to keep out of the country and, you know, God bless America, apple pie and I support the troops. No longer -- I always put that in there -- no longer -- I mean people are going to figure that out. More sooner than later. That's why I said amongst the individuals in this room and others, we have to be able to share with individuals outside of our comfort zone. I love to be challenged. I know the Senator does. I mean I love to be challenged. I like that some individuals in some corners of my district the why come question. You know, why come -- why do you think this or why did you say that?

And you know we need to allow our leaders to be able to step out on issues that have been identified by a, quote, unquote, other side, and be a part of that discussion. I represent the largest Haitian American -- I'm representing the largest -- I represent the largest Haitian American population in the country in Miami.

And you know when Aristide and all this, and he took off in the white plane and folks were all concerned. And I went over and I met with the new prime minister that was appointed, you know, this kind of government that's not elected, it's kind of a strange area -- strange period in Haiti's history. I went over to meet with him. I got back, and I got off the plane, and I'm thinking that folks were

saying, we're so glad you went over there, Congressman.

No. It was like, why would you go and talk to an individual that's not the constitutional prime minister of Haiti and president of Haiti? I said, what, am I supposed to leave that up to the other side to talk to them? I represent you. So if you're not going to allow me to represent you, you want me to sit back because some folks say, well, you shouldn't be talking to them -- goodness, we talk to North Korea.

You mean to tell me that I can't go talk to the prime minister of Haiti who doesn't have any nuclear weapons? You know, a party that was selected, I went over there to talk about how do we get to elections as soon as possible. So there are people out there, like I said, they're serving up soft ice cream out front and all they have is chocolate. And if you want vanilla, then you've got to work towards a day that you can put enough pressure on them and start serving vanilla ice cream.

So we have to be at the table. We have to talk about those issues. We have to talk about globalization, and we have to talk about, you know, military spending. We have to talk about many of those issues that people care about.

Apparently the individuals that are in charge right now -- and many of them are good, okay, don't get me wrong -- we have to talk about those issues because those are the issues of the day. And they have a bully pulpit. And if we're not a part of those discussions, we have just forfeited the

flag and the game before we even hit the field. So I wasn't here for the earlier discussion but I heard about it.

I think we need talk about it. Because that's the reason why you have a conference, to talk about it. Not on your way back to the airport, not when you get back, say, I can't believe what X said. You talk about it now.

MS. ALYS CAMPAIGNE: I think we have time for one or two more questions.

MS. ALANA SHAPIRO: Hello. I'm Alana Shapiro. I'm a glass roots activist down the street in Durham, North Carolina. The Senator had said people will follow great people with great ideas for humanity, and I think that's true. My fear is that people also follow people with big ideas that aren't good for humanity. And what I feel is happening in this climate that we're living in is that it feels a lot to me like fascism and like we're moving towards what was happening in Nazi Germany.

And I think -- I'm not sure if that's sort of what the gentleman was getting at on the other side of the room a little bit ago, thinking about, you know, what are we going to think later on? How are we going to feel about who is responsible, who is leading in these times and who's going to get blamed for it and this kind of scapegoating that is happening.

And I think that what's, in terms of us, you know, our rights being taken away from us in this society has a lot to do with why this is a right-to-work state. It's all part of the same thing. Our rights to organize and our rights to

speak out are being taken away day by day. So I guess I want to ask, plead, for you to do what we can to make this not a partisan issue. I mean I really applaud the Representative in his interests of not -- of trying to get away from what's right for -- not what's good for the party but what's good for humanity. To me, civil liberties just seem to -- I don't see it why they're a partisan issue. It seems like we should all be working to increase our rights and our freedoms in this country so I'll stop there.

MS. ALYS CAMPAIGNE: Last closing question?

MR. MICHAEL HOFFMAN: I'm Michael Hoffman from UNC Law, and with our Chapter of the American Constitution Society. And I want to sort of express my idea and get your thought on it. And I tell you I had a teacher in high school who I thought was a brick wall because no matter what you said you couldn't move her. She had her way and she was pretty effective. But I'm kind of shocked to see in the past two years what I feel like this administration is a brick wall. No matter what you say, you can't move them. You know, we say, behind that wall there are no weapons of mass destruction. Fox News says, look what a great wall that is. You can't get beyond that.

I don't know how you can govern in that kind of environment. And how do we -- how did we get there to where I feel like where we can't even talk about the issues with the other side because they frame the debate and they've sort of cut it into these little areas without talking about what

the real issues are. They want to bring up Swift Boat Veterans for Truth when we want to talk about what's the current status of foreign policy in this country. How did we get there and how do we move beyond that?

REPRESENTATIVE MEEK: You know, it's interesting, you know, Senator and I just met about a few minutes ago. And he seems to hand these questions to me. Do you have any globalization questions? I mean it goes back to what I said. We're being rewarded for bad behavior. I mean you've got to look at it. I mean I -- I'm not necessarily on the holiday list -- I do get a card from -- they do give a holiday card from the White House. Let me just take that back. I don't get one from the Governor's mansion in Florida, some of my friends know.

And I will tell you that that's what it's based upon. And in this last election -- I always grab the national publications and also my state publications, newspapers, and the first copy of the magazine after the election, Time, Newsweek, other magazines. That -- because individuals start to talk about what they did during the campaign to help them win it. And as it relates to not only the president but individuals that were successful in the campaign and said, well, you know, we did something untraditional. We hired marketing firms to go out and help us frame not only opinion, and what we knew about the other campaign, Kerry campaign, we knew if we threw a rabbit out there, that they would run after the rabbit. And that it was like a pushback kind -- it wasn't a pushback -- it was a pushback thing for the

other campaign, but it was setting the agenda.

So they would say something, the president would say something one day, and they knew it would be a response that same day. And they would continue to talk about the issues that the marketers told them to talk about. The fear of Americans. The fact that we haven't had a terrorist attack, a major one, on US soil. We have had it foreignwise, but we haven't had it on US soil since 9/11. And I will tell you that that played towards the hearts in the field. And you start talking about faith, you start talking about the issues, you know, such as, you know, gay marriages. This thing really worked with Americans, and so that's what happened. And you might as well look forward to more of that. Because it worked. Okay?

And even though, including myself, voted in the state legislature when I was in the House of Representatives some six years ago for the sanctity of marriage, I voted for that, and it passed overwhelmingly on the floor. The Senator can tell you in Georgia, I mean they just recently had a constitutional amendment on gay marriages. I mean it is just an issue to where that -- the Congress and many legislatures have already spoke on it. But it seems to be this constitution amending for the first time against a population of people in this country that's politically attractive.

You know, so now I'm having my constituents question me about why did you vote against the constitutional amendment? And I told them that

I'm just not in the business of amending the US constitution just because I disagree with someone's freedom of doing what they want to do in this country. That's just what it is.

I mean I'm a hunter and I used to be a state trooper and all this, and I can understand why people would want to buy -- another hot issue right here in this state and in my state -- want to buy 15 guns in one day. I don't understand the philosophy of that, but still they have the freedom to do that, and I don't want to limit that freedom. I want them to have that freedom. And so when we look at it, I don't know how we're going to change -- Congressman Alcee Hastings that served from Florida too once said, we cannot legislate morals and character.

And that's just something that has -- that we're taught and something that we're presented with. And in closing, I just want to say -- I guess I've been closing for about 10 minutes. In closing, I just want to make sure that individuals, everyone here understands that this is a -- some people see this period in our country's history as a renaissance period, other people, some folks, think, other folks on the other side may think that it's the most horrible time or the worst time in American history. And I will tell you both sides are wrong.

It's time to be able to come together as Americans and do what we have to do and continue to do -- talk to people that can bring about the kind of change and the steadiness we need in this country to continue on as a democracy. I'm not saying democracy

is at stake, but the way of life as we see it as Americans. And guess what?

Terrorism doesn't have a lot to do with it. A lot of people hide behind that. All they have to say, Attorney General Ashcroft questioned Democrat and Republican senators, you're either with us or you're with the terrorists. That's dangerous. So think of that. And I look forward -- and thank you so very much to inviting me, and I look forward to being around for the rest of the day.

MS. ALYS CAMPAIGNE: Well, please join me in thanking our terrific (inaudible) --

(A break was taken.)