

SouthNow Update  
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Program on Southern Politics, Media, and Public Life  
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**The Future of the South Lecture: Sen. Bob Graham**

[U.S. Sen. Bob Graham](#) of Florida delivered the first annual “Future of the South” lecture on the campus of UNC-Chapel Hill in February. Graham spoke before an audience of scholars, students, elected officials and public leaders, as well as the Advisory Board of the [Center for the Study of the American South](#).

Sen. Graham focused his remarks on how demographic and political changes in the South have created a need for new kinds of leaders. He also discussed how the South’s increasing economic clout has expanded the region’s political power.

Excerpts from Sen. Graham’s remarks follow. Thanks to Sen. Graham’s Washington office for providing the Program on Southern Politics, Media and Public Life with a copy of his working text.

**Demographic Trends**

“The South has undergone a massive transformation in the last 30 years. Our population has changed dramatically. In 1970, just four percent of those in the South were Hispanic. By 2000, we saw a three-fold increase, with 12 percent of our population identifying themselves as Hispanic.

“And after several decades of out-migration, African-Americans are also coming back to the South. Florida, Texas, and North Carolina are among the states that saw the highest levels of African-American population increases in the 1990’s.

“This change in demographics can be attributed not only to economic growth in our region, but also to a changed dynamic in the South. There is a Southern renaissance in progress – a new climate that promotes diversity and rewards hard work.”

**Leadership Challenges**

“While this dramatic shift has given our region the opportunity to benefit from the innovation and drive of these newcomers, it also presents a host of new challenges to conquer. This new terrain requires creative thinking, flexibility, and solid leadership. These new leaders must be capable of recognizing the diversity of the new South and meeting these new challenges.

“Many of you here today are part of that group and deserve credit for helping to harness the new strength and energy of our region. But, as much as we would like, we will not be here forever. We have an obligation to train a new generation of leaders who can spearhead the progress of both the South and this nation.

“It will take a two-pronged approach: Cultivating the wisdom of those who have served, and creating opportunities to shape tomorrow’s leaders. Both of these actions are necessary in order for the South to compete and succeed. This is one of the things I plan to focus on in 2005, when my term in the Senate concludes and I begin my next career.

“Last year, the Southern Growth Policies Board put out a report called “Reinventing the Wheel,” which focused on leadership development. The bottom line of this report is one I strongly endorse – we must cultivate the intellectual power of the South in order to ensure that the momentum we have built as a region continues to multiply.”

### Politics

“We have already come a long way. The new South has experienced an increase in political clout over the past 20 years. Three of the last five presidents were not only governors, but they were Southern governors.

“We can further increase our political influence by developing the next generation of Southern leaders that can compete in – and win – national elections.”

### The Future

“This is an exciting time for the South. The region is on an upward tilting path, and we must continue to harness the strength that comes from our culture, our diversity, and our economic potential.

“ ‘Leadership and learning are indispensable to one another’ – these words were written for President John F. Kennedy to deliver on that fateful November day in 1963. Although he never uttered them, they ring true today. Those who lead our communities, our states, and even our nation must incorporate learning in their careers in order to remain leaders.

“We have a responsibility as today’s leaders to provide the incubator for tomorrow’s leaders.”

### Articles of Interest

Joshua Green. “Second Coming.” *The Atlantic Monthly*, April 2004.

(<http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2004/04/green.htm>)

\* A discussion of Ralph Reed’s involvement with Southern politics.

Pamela Prah. “Job Creation Vexes States in a Weak Economy.” *Stateline.org*, March 23, 2004.

(<http://www.stateline.org/stateline/?pa=story&sa=showStoryInfo&id=359124>)

\* An analysis of the challenges job creation poses to state governments.

### News from the Program on Southern Politics, Media and Public Life

The February 2004 issue of *SouthNow* has been published. This issue profiles the journalistic resources devoted to state politics in each Southern state. To view the issue, go to <http://www.southnow.org/publications/southnow/SouthNow6.pdf>