



Mayors' launch "Service" effort to mobilize Americans in time of need

By **Baltimore Independent Examiner**, Hassan Giordano



Mayor Bloomberg(NY) and Mayor Dixon(Balt.) Courtesy: NYSun

Baltimore's Mayor Sheila Dixon joins a national bi-partisan coalition for "Change".

As tensions remain high throughout America, citizens continuously battling an 'economic tsunami', others are eyeing a possibility of real change, through a mobilized effort of service. New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, along

with Baltimore's Chief Executive, Sheila Dixon and others, joined in New York City this week for the launch of the new effort to mobilize Americans, known as **Cities of Service**. This bi-partisan coalition of 17 mayors, representing major cities throughout this country, possibly effecting more than 20 million Americans, plan to work together to engage millions of volunteers, in a sincere effort of dedicated service, to begin to address each city's most pressing challenges. The "Founding Mayors" met for a half-day summit at Gracie Mansion, where they signed a Declaration of Service to find new ways to tap the power of volunteerism and share best used strategies on how best to engage citizens at the local level. This structured organization of local leaders may also provide a platform for the mayors to make their voices heard and their priorities known, to the big whigs, in Washington.

Utilizing support from the Rockefeller Foundation for technical assistance, this innovative coalition seems poised to take on the responsibility of leadership, when addressing ailing communities across this country, according to Mayor Dixon who was on record with the following statement: "It is an honor to stand with Mayors from other cities to promote community service, volunteerism, and being caring neighbors to one another," said Mayor Dixon. "American families are facing pivotal times in our county"

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s history, and reinforcing services of support for those most vulnerable is critical. I applaud Mayor Bloomberg for his leadership in pulling together a diverse coalition of leaders with a common focus.”

The Cities of Service coalition will lead a multi-year effort to engage other mayors from across the country by:

- ? Developing a comprehensive service plan and a coordinated strategy focused on matching volunteers and established community partners to the areas of greatest local need;

- ? Working with other mayors and elected officials to advance strategies and best practices that accelerate the service movement and produce measurable results;

- ? Encouraging other mayors to join this national effort to engage our citizens; and

- ? Ensuring that the voice of cities is heard in federal legislative, policy, and program discussions related to service, which will help the country achieve the ambitious goals of the Serve America Act.

The bipartisan coalition will be open to other mayors who sign onto the Declaration of Service; they can do so by visiting www.citiesofservice.org. The coalition is also supported by the U.S. Conference of Mayors and a number of nonprofit and advocacy organizations including Service Nation, HandsOn Network, and the American

Association of Retired Persons.

Representatives from each organization have been assisting the Cities of Service coalition and were present at the summit.

The founding members of the Cities of Service coalition are **Atlanta, GA** Mayor Shirley Franklin; **Baltimore, MD** Mayor Sheila Dixon; **Chicago, IL** Mayor Richard Daley; **Dublin, OH** Mayor Marilee Chinnici-Zuercher; **Jacksonville, FL** Mayor John Peyton; **Los Angeles, CA** Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa; **Nashville, TN** Mayor Karl Dean; **Newark, NJ** Mayor Cory Booker; **Phoenix, AZ** Mayor Phil Gordon; **Pittsburgh, PA** Mayor Luke Ravenstahl; **Providence, RI** Mayor David Cicilline; **Sacramento, CA** Mayor Kevin Johnson; **Trenton, NJ** Mayor Douglas Palmer; **Vicksburg, MS** Mayor Paul Winfield; **Washington, DC** Mayor Adrian Fenty; **West Palm Beach, FL** Mayor Lois Frankel and **New York** Mayor Bloomberg.

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