

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Yale SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

CEO CAUCUS

Yale Mayors College

The Strategic Opportunities and Challenges of Trump 2.0:

Business Leadership Lessons from Trump 1.0

Washington, DC | March 10, 2025



Yale SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

Chief Executive Leadership Institute



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Welcome & Introduction

Overview

The 11th Yale Mayors College, held in Washington, DC on March 10, 2025, brought together about 50 mayors from across the United States. The Yale Mayors College was led by Jeffrey Sonnenfeld, Senior Associate Dean of the Yale School of Management.



Jeffrey Sonnenfeld, Senior Associate Dean, Yale School of Management

The theme was *The Strategic Opportunities and Challenges of Trump 2.0: Business Leadership Lessons from Trump 1.0*. Sessions focused on navigating in Washington, DC; economic wellbeing; fortifying your city's health and public infrastructure; ensuring the safety of residents; and reflecting on the inspiration and mentors that fueled each mayor's ambition.

Along with the 50 mayors, including Washington, DC's mayor, each session included experts in the topic being discussed including current and former

members of Congress, economic experts from both political parties, public health experts, and law enforcement leaders.

Context

In introducing themselves, each mayor briefly summarized where they are from, how long they have been in office, what they find most rewarding about serving as mayor, and the most significant challenges they are facing.

Key Takeaways

The Yale Mayors College brings together a tremendous diversity of mayors.



Greg Fischer, Former Mayor, Louisville, KY; Maria Rivera, Mayor, Central Falls, RI

The mayors at the 2025 Yale Mayors College represent diversity in terms of gender, race, age, religion, political affiliation, size of city, length of service, professional background, and more.

There were mayors from the east and west coasts, from the northern and southern borders, and from all points in between. The mayors represent large cities and small towns, and hail from

red and blue states. However, it is virtually impossible to know the political party of any mayor, as mayors tend to be apolitical problem solvers.

Some mayors are in their first year in office and this is their first Yale Mayors College, while others have served multiple terms and are in their last year in office. One mayor has been in office for 28 years. Also among the attendees were several former mayors, who shared lessons from their diverse experiences.



Kevin Hartke, Mayor, Chandler, AZ

"I see our job is to create stability in the midst of instability and to create certainty where nothing is certain."

Despite many positive accomplishments, most mayors are feeling anxiety and headwinds.

During introductions, several mayors recounted accomplishments and shared good news. Among the positives were job growth, economic growth, decreased crime, and progress in building infrastructure.



Rex Richardson, Mayor, Long Beach, CA

"Even though we have some hard headwinds coming our way, in general, things are going well. Crime is down, housing is up. So things are good."

But for most mayors, recent accomplishments were overshadowed by current anxieties, challenges, and headwinds.

"There's a lot of anxiety about what's happening in this town [Washington, DC] and what's happening in the world."



Among challenges mentioned were:

- Anxieties about the disruptive policies in Washington, DC, especially tariffs and DOGE. These policies and actions are creating enormous uncertainty and could lead to significant funding cuts for various programs that impact cities across the country.

"We really rely on federal aid."

- Anxieties within communities that have large immigrant populations.
- Challenges related to immigration, border control, security, and public safety.
- Infrastructure development and transportation challenges.
- Challenges related to population growth, such as affordable housing and crime.
- Drug challenges, particularly related to fentanyl overdoses.
- Challenges in providing quality public education.

"We struggle with real city issues of crime and increased population."

One mayor quoted LBJ, who supposedly said, "When the burden of the presidency gets exceptionally heavy, I always think to myself, it could be worse; I could be a mayor."

Serving as mayor of the nation's capital brings a multitude of unique challenges.

Perhaps no mayor has a more difficult job than the mayor of Washington, DC. As the nation's capital, every detail is scrutinized including its schools, crime, police force, transportation system, homeless population, and more.



Muriel Bowser, Mayor, Washington, DC

Mayor Bowser said that during her 10 years as mayor, Washington, DC's population has grown rapidly, while crime has fallen. Washington, DC has balanced 28 budgets in a row, has an AAA bond rating, and has built the infrastructure for a productive workforce.

During President Trump's first term, following the murder of George Floyd, Mayor Bowser had a Washington, DC street painted with Black Lives Matter. Now, with Trump 2.0, Bowser is less defiant. "We have bigger

fish to fry," she said. She said her role forces her to rely on every bit of strategic influence and persuasion she has ever learned. One lesson she has learned is to avoid public finger-pointing or arguments.

"My approach is to work with the Administration in the same ways that we work with every American president."

While Bowser is working with the Trump administration, she is concerned that big employment cuts from DOGE could have an enormous negative financial impact on the city. She is also advocating for Washington, DC to become the 51st state, to remedy the fact that Washington, DC's 700,000 citizens currently lack representation in Congress.

The best part of being a mayor is having a positive impact on people's lives.

Several mayors have served multiple terms – often for more than a decade – and expressed no interest in any other political office. Other mayors had fulfilling careers in business, law, medicine – or even as police or fire chief – and felt a call to serve their local community as mayor.

"The greatest part of being a mayor is you have the most influence over people's lives, and solutions can be found at a local level."

Being a mayor is about building personal relationships, being creative, coming up with ideas, and being able to implement those ideas and see them come to fruition, which often takes more than one term.

"The exciting thing about the role of mayor is your opportunity to shape a community."



Bill Peduto, Former Mayor, Pittsburgh, PA



Knox White, Mayor, Greenville, SC

Finding Friendly Help for Navigating Washington DC

Overview

The current political environment in Washington, DC and DOGE's cost cutting is creating uncertainty and anxiety. The best approach for mayors is to focus on what they can control. This includes taking initiative, being creative, building relationships, and bringing people together. Several examples illustrate how mayors are acting apolitically and without social media to build trust and solve problems.

Context

A current and a former member of Congress shared their perspectives on navigating the polarized environment, and several mayors shared case studies of actions they have taken and lessons learned.

Key Takeaways

The relationship between municipalities and the federal government has worsened and DOGE is hurting communities.

In real-time polling, a majority of mayors (71%) say the relationship between their municipality and the federal government is worse under the Trump administration, and most mayors (86%) say DOGE is hurting their community.

Polling question	Better	Worse	About the same
The relationship between my municipality and the federal government has become _____ under the Trump administration than during the Biden administration.	11%	71%	18%

Polling question	Helping	Hurting	No impact
Is DOGE helping or hurting your community?	6%	86%	8%



Quinton Lucas, Mayor, Kansas City, MO

Mayors understand the desire for greater efficiency and reduced government spending, but many mayors and citizens want greater pragmatism than being shown by Elon Musk and DOGE. "They are cutting people in the National Park Service," said a mayor, "Cutting health-care, cutting education, and beyond. This is truly challenging."

"I think the American people are shifting to a viewpoint of 'Let's be reasonable. Let's be pragmatic. Let's not be radical.'"

However, despite the fraying of the relationship with the federal government and a general dislike of DOGE, there isn't much difference in the ability to reach federal officials than previously.

Polling question	Agree	Disagree
It has become harder for my community to reach federal officials	53%	48%

In general, mayors need to tune out the DC noise and focus on doing their job.

A former member of Congress and governor implored mayors not to be distracted by the noise and drama coming out of Washington, DC.



John Kasich, 69th Governor, Ohio

"Don't be sitting around trying to figure out what the hell is going on in Washington."

Mayors have a great deal of control over their own destiny. Mayors have the ability to be creative and flexible, take risks, try new things, and engage in pilots. Other suggestions include:

- Don't complain and whine.
- Don't become partisan. Don't consider everyone in the administration the enemy.
- Find solutions and involve your staff in solving problems.
- Build grassroots coalitions, which can involve churches, synagogues, and mosques.
- Engage leaders of institutions in your community and ask them to help solve problems.
- Have fun. Don't take yourself too seriously and project an attitude of happiness.

Develop personal relationships.

While the former governor counseled mayors to be proactive and not to whine, he also advised that if there is a legitimate gripe, then mayors should speak with their elected officials in Washington, DC to ask for help.



Freddie O'Connell, Mayor, Nashville, TN

"A relationship-based approach has worked. . . creating the space for people who want to get work done together, away from the noise of social media."

Mayors have taken different approaches to dealing with sensitive immigration issues.



Wilmot Collins, Mayor, Helena, MT

In the current political climate, no issue is more important or sensitive than immigration. One mayor, who was a refugee, has many refugees in his city. Despite these individuals being in the United States legally, they are scared. The mayor has worked to reassure and educate his community's refugees that they are here legally and shouldn't be afraid. He has also organized meetings involving the police, to try to further reassure the refugee population.



John Cowen, Mayor, Brownsville, TX

During the presidential election, both Biden and Trump visited Brownsville, Texas—a town on the US-Mexican border—on the same day. While Brownsville's mayor appreciated that the border was being highlighted, his approach was purely non-partisan.

In Findlay, Ohio, with a population of 41,000, there was an influx of about 2,000 Haitian immigrants over the past few years. This was atypical, as Findlay hadn't historically had a large immigrant population.

Controversy began during the presidential election, when Trump falsely accused Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio—less than 100 miles away—of eating people's pets.

Findlay's mayor responded by:

- **Focusing on facts.** There was some negativity in the community which made it critical to educate the community about the facts. Those facts included that the Haitians in Findlay were there legally, had jobs, and had strong relationships with their co-workers, and there was no increase in crime.



Christina Muryn, Mayor, Findlay, OH

"The national rhetoric has amplified fear rather than accuracy . . . we really focused on factual information; we focused on facts and what we control locally."

- **Speaking with immigrants outside of the spotlight.** Some immigrants expressed fear and felt the need to tell their co-workers they were there legally and were not eating animals. Instead of holding large public events or posting on Facebook, Findlay's leaders met with the immigrant population in private conversations. These conversations included individual meetings, outreach through employers, and outreach through English as a Second Language classes.

While Albuquerque doesn't identify as a sanctuary city, it is being threatened with funding cuts by Trump administration for not sharing information about its residents.

"Threatening to cut [federal] funding for any reason is the opposite of keeping our communities safe."

In Albuquerque, multiple mayors from different parties have developed an effective approach to keeping the community safe, while navigating immigration challenges. The approach began with a Republican mayor who created the Office of Immigra-



Richard Berry, Former Mayor, Albuquerque, NM



tion & Refugee Affairs and worked with the Obama administration to have ICE keep bad actors off the streets.

Inspired to make Albuquerque an immigrant-friendly city, Albuquerque created a non-disclosure law. This means that police officers and other city officials don't ask for a person's immigration status and don't keep records about immigration. (Albuquerque doesn't have the information the Trump administration is asking for.)



Tim Keller, Mayor, Albuquerque, NM

Police officers like this law because when they stop someone for a traffic violation, they aren't asking about their immigration status. It allows police officers—who are a scarce community resource—to focus on fighting crime, rather than acting as immigration officers. Further, someone who is a victim of domestic violence is encouraged to call the police for help instead of being worried about immigration laws.



Bill Cole, Mayor, Billings, MT

"We believe we're safer not asking the question [about immigration status]."

In Billings, Montana, there is an acknowledgement that an immigrant convicted of severe criminal charges should be deported. That is a decision beyond the

scope of a mayor. However, mayors can play a key role in shaping the attitude and culture within the community.

"What we can influence is how people treat each other in our own community."

To bring people together, Billings holds events that draw hundreds of people to celebrate different ethnicities and languages. These events have been a huge success.

Giving mayors and communities the ability to make decisions is the essence of federalism.

Congressman Ro Khanna challenged federal government efforts to force communities to enforce laws that are opposed by the community. He believes local governments should have great latitude to pass laws for the community and to decide how to allocate resources.

"My view is that we ought to have local governments be able to use their police officers for their priorities. That, in its essence, is federalism."



Ro Khanna, US Congressman, California, 17th District



Looking Out for Your Economic Well-Being

Overview

In every city, a strong economy is a top priority. Creating this strong economy is based on having a qualified workforce, good education and healthcare, and affordable housing, and being viewed as a good place to live.

While every mayor is working to build a strong economy, many have concerns about the ripple effects of Trump administration economic policies, especially tariffs, that are disrupting the national economy, supply chains, and local economies.

Context

Mayors and economic experts shared their reactions to the Trump administration's economic agenda, discussed implications for cities, and shared examples of steps that mayors are taking to achieve and sustain vibrant cities.

Key Takeaways

Mayors thought the economy under Biden was strong but are now worried about the economy, especially due to tariffs.

The majority of mayors believe the US economy was strong during the Biden administration, but Biden's administration failed to explain the strength of the US economy.

Polling question	Agree	Disagree
During the Biden administration, the US economy was strong.	78%	22%
The Biden administration failed to explain the strength of the US economy.	94%	6%

Now, 68% of mayors believe that the Trump administration will be bad for the economy and 89% are increasingly concerned that the US economy is heading toward a recession. Mayors' views about a possible recession are influenced by tariffs. Most mayors believe tariffs will be inflationary; mayors overwhelmingly prefer selective tariffs on strategic sectors compared no tariffs or blanket tariffs.

Polling question	Agree	Disagree
President Trump is right that the US has allowed unfair, asymmetric trade relationships for too long.	45%	56%
I am worried tariffs will be inflationary.	94%	6%

Polling question	No tariffs	Selective tariffs on strategic sectors	Blanket and/or reciprocal tariffs on rest of the world
What is your preferred approach to tariffs?	14%	80%	6%

Participants had several comments about tariffs.

A former federal official believes that when mayors think about economic issues, the focus is on the basics, like jobs, putting food on the table, and health. She believes tariffs might have a considerable impact on families and communities. She advised mayors to focus on practical, real-world solutions.

"The survey probably reflected that for many of you, those impacts [of tariffs] are going to be very real if they go forward."

Even one of President Trump's economic advisors expressed reservations about tariffs. In his view, being tough on China makes sense, as does leveraging America's strong economic position to extract concessions in a range of areas. Still, tariffs on Canada and Mexico don't make sense. These tariffs, and the constant changes, are causing uncertainty in the financial markets and are threatening a trade war.

"I agree with almost everything Trump wants to do with the economy but I do have a lot of reservations about what he wants to do on tariffs. I think it's a little bit of a dangerous strategy because I don't want to see a trade war."



Sylvia Mathews Burwell, 22nd Secretary of Health & Human Services



Steve Moore, Economic Advisor to President Trump



A mayor from Michigan said tariffs are wreaking havoc with automotive supply chains in the Midwest. Another mayor said that amid a need for more affordable housing, tariffs are driving up the costs of the building materials, which is counterproductive.



Natasha Sarin, Former Deputy Assistant Treasury Secretary for Economic Policy

An economic expert who served in the Biden administration expressed confusion. She said one way to view the 2024 presidential election was as a referendum on inflation, yet the Trump administration's policies appear highly inflationary. Also, the Trump administration talks about stimulating growth while eliminating the trade deficit. But if demand goes up, then imports will go up, foreign direct investment will go up, and the trade deficit will go up. Thus, the Trump administration's stated goal are incongruent.

When the Trump economist was asked if he was communicating with the White House about his opposition to tariffs, he responded, "They're hearing it in the White House from their constituents."

There is more to Trump's economic plan than just tariffs.

The Trump economist argued that Trump's economic policies go far beyond tariffs. They include making the tax cuts from the first Trump administration permanent and decreasing regulation, which will spur economic growth.

The former Biden administration official argued that "tax cuts are politically attractive but they are not free." Tax cuts expand the deficit, reduce the capability of the country to respond in a crisis, and disproportionately benefit the people at the top of the economic distribution.

Both political parties agree about the importance of vibrant cities, but differ on the policies.

Representatives from the Trump and Biden administrations stressed how important vibrant cities are to America's economy. Both mentioned education and housing as top priorities in building vibrant cities.

"We cannot thrive as a nation if we don't have economically vibrant cities."

The Trump economist sees the keys to vibrant cities as:

- **Taxes.** He argued that taxes in cities are too high and are driving out high-income people.
- **Schools.** He argued that the quality of schools in American cities is terrible. His policy solution is universal school choice, where people can choose where to send their kids to school.
- **Housing.** There is an affordable housing crisis in cities. The suggested solution is to look at zoning and land use restrictions.

Two mayors took issue with the focus on zoning restrictions as the solution. One mayor advocated for incentives to create more affordable housing, arguing that the carrot works better than the stick, and citing the success of opportunity zones.

The Biden administration leader recounted the industrial policy strategy, which involved investing in key industries through the CHIPS Act and transitioning to a clean energy economy. He mentioned that while federal policies change when administrations change, "cities are still the building blocks of the United States."

In this official's view, for cities to succeed, the keys are:

- **High-quality education.** Education must train the workforce for the jobs of the future.
- **Affordable housing.** The suggested strategy was to improve the permitting process.
- **Creating good places to live.** Good places to live attract workers and businesses.
- **Travel & tourism.** Create a place that people will want to visit. Short-term rental housing is a positive for local economies.



Kevin Scarpatti, Mayor, Meriden, CT; Scott Singer, Mayor, Boca Raton, FL



Ron Klain, White House Chief of Staff to President Biden

"Good education, good schools, good health care, good culture, and open doors. I think that's the sign of a strong city in the long run."



Indya Kincannon, Mayor, Knoxville, TN



Will Joyce, Mayor, Stillwater, OK

Mayors described initiatives they are implementing to create vibrant cities.

While economists and national policymakers offered suggestions, several mayors offered real-world case studies of programs they are implementing to make a difference in addressing these important issues.

In Knoxville, Tennessee, homelessness and housing are big problems. The city worked with the county, the state, and HUD to build 32 apartments for homeless veterans.

Stillwater, Oklahoma is a college town that has historically relied on Oklahoma State University to drive economic growth. Seeking to become less reliant, Stillwater has offered incentives to attract employers to the city.

Boise, Idaho is building on its strong technology presence. For decades, Boise has been a chips and science city, which has fueled economic growth. To sustain growth, Boise has focused on diversifying its economy while dealing with other key issues, including housing, schools, police, and infrastructure.



Lauren McLean, Mayor, Boise, ID





Fortifying Your City's Health And Public Infrastructure

Overview

During and since the pandemic, public trust in vaccines and public health has eroded. Health has become politicized and misinformation has proliferated. The public is now skeptical about vaccines and doesn't trust health messaging or messengers. This is occurring as funding for safety net health programs such as Medicaid and VA services is on the cutting block.

The challenge for mayors is to coordinate the local healthcare system to eliminate gaps in care and to try to rebuild trust in public health and in healthcare. This will require communicating honestly and engaging trusted local health experts, including people's own doctors.

Context

On the fifth anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic, health experts reflected on the loss of confidence in public health, the potential loss of funding, and what mayors can do.

Key Takeaways

During and since the pandemic, there has been a huge loss of trust regarding health.

Since the pandemic, the trust and confidence in public health has plummeted, especially among Republicans. Prior to the pandemic, 84% of Republicans had confidence in public health officials; now only about 35% do, a decline of 50%. Health experts see this loss of trust due in part to the politicization of health, along with the spread of misinformation.



Donna Shalala, 18th Secretary of Health & Human Services

Looking back on how the first Trump administration responded to COVID-19, the President and the administration ignored warnings and scientific advice. The President initially said COVID-19 was no different than the flu, was nothing to worry about, and would go away.

"That the administration ignored warnings and ignored scientific advice is devastating for our country."

Politicians, not scientists, led press conferences. And if scientists participated, it was from the White House, which was inherently political. Then, when vaccines were created, many people did not believe the vaccine was safe. Now, the current Secretary of HHS doesn't believe vaccines are safe and is perhaps the world's most influential antivaxxer.

"The first victim of war is truth and the first victim of the pandemic was truth . . . the first thing that happened in the pandemic is that the public was not leveled with. This created distrust."

Resulting from lack of trust are low vaccination rates. A few years ago, more than 95% of kids entering kindergarten were vaccinated for measles. That rate has declined precipitously, contributing to measles outbreaks in Texas and elsewhere, which a public health expert deemed as "absolutely preventable."

Similarly, less than 50% of people in the US have been vaccinated for the flu. This is alarming as there are roughly 4 million new infections each day and about 50,000 people were hospitalized with the flu last week. However, there has not been unequivocal messaging from HHS about vaccinating children for measles or getting the flu vaccine.

"The truth is vaccines in this country are safe."

The key to regaining trust is honest communication.

The consensus among health and policy experts is that regaining trust requires telling the public the truth. One health expert said, "If you want to get people in your cities, your municipalities to do hard things – and during a pandemic, you're going to have to ask them to do hard things – we have to tell them the truth."



Jonathan Reiner, Professor of Medicine, George Washington University



Cassie Franklin, Mayor, Everett, WA

"We have to work together to build trust, and the only way to build trust is to tell the public the truth."

A problem during the pandemic was that the truth changed. It is important to be honest with people that science changes and as more information is available, it is possible to be more definitive. It is also necessary at times to say, "We don't know."

Suggestions for rebuilding trust on health include:

- **Engaging local experts.** People don't trust national politicians or social media, but they will trust local experts. This includes the mayor, local health officials, and local health experts. For mayors in agricultural communities who want to build trust with residents, a suggestion is to connect with the USDA and experts at local land grant universities.

"I would say what we learned in the aftermath [of the pandemic] was that local messengers and trust really matter."

- **Encouraging physician outreach.** Even more trustworthy than local experts is a person's own doctor. Mayors can encourage doctors in the community to engage in outreach to encourage patients to get vaccinated. One mayor noted that during the Mayors College he had been contacted twice by his own doctor with reminders about prescriptions. People pay attention to and trust communication from their own doctor.

"Everyone trusts their own doctor."

- **Consider grassroots local communication.** One mayor confessed that he had been the mayor for two years before he met the head of the health department. They only met because of COVID. Now, they do events in the community together, like speaking to the Kiwanis Club.

"The way we communicate is so important. . . . I think getting a message out on social media at this point is just a toxic environment. Private meetings and conversations can be more effective."

In addition to loss of trust there may be loss of funding for healthcare.

In President Trump's recent address to Congress, he didn't mention healthcare. Unlike in his previous administration, it is not on his agenda. Still, healthcare funding is at risk. Some experts believe there could be an \$880 billion reduction in Medicaid, along with cuts to the Veterans Administration. The VA is the largest healthcare system in the country and is largely a safety net system.

Significant funding cuts for the VA and Medicaid will affect healthcare for people in communities across the country. Many veterans live in rural parts of the country and the US has recently had the largest increase in veteran enrollment since World War II.



David Shulkin, 9th Secretary of Veterans Affairs

"Mayors are going to need to watch and talk to your local VAs to make sure there's not an onslaught of need in your communities."

Amid the loss of trust and funding, there are actions mayors can take.

A former government official said the local healthcare system is more than just public health. The health system encompasses all aspects of healthcare. Mayors can bring together all parts of the healthcare system to work together and identify gaps.

"If we learned anything in COVID it's that at the local level, all parts of the healthcare system have to work together. You as the mayor have the convening power. You can get everyone in the same room and talk about the gaps."

A pediatrician who co-founded the Children's Health Fund sees the US stepping back from public health by, for example, withdrawing from the World Health Organization. But for mayors, national and international events are noise. Mayors must see through the noise and focus on local actions.



Irwin Redlener, President Emeritus & Co-Founder, Children's Health Fund

"The big challenge as mayors is to listen and see through the noise and the fog."



This health expert offered his own prescription of 10 steps that city leaders can take.

1. Select a respected, highly credentialed individual to run the health department, ideally a physician with excellent communication skills.
2. Local officials should never attempt to obscure, underplay, or overplay information in a crisis.
3. Uncertainty is a concept that can be appropriately conveyed to the public.
4. Create a diverse panel of advisors who reflect community demographics but are experts in medical and public health sciences.
5. Maintain robust, updated, and accessible online public health resources in language(s) understandable to the lay public.
6. Provide an interactive online section for public questions and answers.
7. Senior health department staff should meet on a regular basis with people in neighborhoods across the city.
8. Public health leaders should hold regular press briefings with the mayor during crises or impending crises.
9. Be prepared to seek alternate sources of funding from the state, foundations, and corporations.
10. Collaboration between state and local health departments, in-state and cross-state, should be encouraged.



Ensuring the Safety of Your Residents

Overview

For mayors and local law enforcement professionals, collaboration with federal law enforcement is a key to ensuring the safety of residents. The FBI has technology, information, expertise and a desire to collaborate. Collaboration is already taking place but as the FBI puts more agents and personnel across the country, opportunities for information sharing and capacity building at the local level will increase.



Kash Patel, 9th Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

As an important note, mayors and law enforcement officials should not focus solely on violent crime. Residents' perceptions and fears are affected by broken windows, graffiti, and drug dealing. It is essential to simultaneously tackle both crime and disorder.

Context

New FBI Director Kash Patel engaged in a dialog with mayors and public safety experts about ways to work together to fight crime and improve public safety, and changes taking place at the FBI.

Key Takeaways

Mayors are hopeful about working together more collaboratively with the FBI.

Real-time polling shows that mayors see an opportunity to work with the new FBI leadership in a constructive way. Among areas where greater coordination is needed are cybersecurity and foreign terrorist threats.

Polling question	Agree	Disagree
FBI leadership has the opportunity for a constructive reset in municipal law enforcement relations.	73%	27%
I look forward to working with new FBI leadership to address public safety in my community.	59%	42%
The FBI and local law enforcement need to coordinate better on cybersecurity protection.	100%	0%
The FBI and local law enforcement need to work better on foreign terrorist threats.	82%	19%

Mayors commended the FBI for providing support in several areas.

A mayor with a background in law enforcement remarked, "We have always had a wonderful relationship with federal law enforcement." Other mayors shared similar sentiments. Mayors commended the FBI for:

- **Working with local law enforcement.** Mayors noted that crime does not have a political party. Communities led by Democratic and Republican mayors face major challenges with crime. Mayors commended the FBI for working with local police forces on specific incidents and on specific task forces, and for embedding FBI agents alongside the police. Mayors expressed appreciation for the FBI's support and partnership.

The FBI Director commented that when the FBI provides resources to work in collaboration with local law enforcement, the FBI is not coming and taking over cities.



Leonardo Williams, Mayor, Durham, NC

"We are not going out to take over. We are going to fold in and we are allowing state and local officials to lead, because they know their communities the best."

- **Supporting terrorist incidents.** A mayor whose city experienced a terrorist attack commended the FBI for the coordination, collaboration, and additional resources provided after this attack.

"The additional resources allowed us to stand up, in terms of mitigating and hardening our target areas. The response has been phenomenal."



LaToya Cantrell, Mayor, New Orleans, LA



Mattie Parker, Mayor, Fort Worth, TX



Jane Castor, Mayor, Tampa, FL

- **Combatting gangs.** While gangs today are very different than in the past, there continue to be gangs involved in narcotics, cybercrime, and violent crimes. Working with local law enforcement to combat gangs is an area where the FBI adds significant value.

The FBI's new leadership sees several areas where change is needed.

In response to questions from mayors, FBI Director Patel highlighted areas where he wants to see change and improvement, especially related to collaboration at the ground level. This includes:

- **Decentralization.** The FBI has about 30,000 employees, including 14,000 agents. Currently, about 11,000 FBI employees are in the Washington, DC region. Director Patel is committed to moving about 1,000 more employees – agents, intelligence analysts, and support staff – from DC into the field, particularly into high crime areas. When this occurs, FBI personnel

will bring and share cyber technology, additional capabilities, information sharing, and more. Mayors and other law enforcement experts support this planned decentralization.

- **Information sharing.** Successful law enforcement occurs when there is close collaboration among all levels of law enforcement. This requires better bi-directional information sharing.

"To have a successful secure nation, we need state and local law enforcement to be there in lockstep, and it can't happen in Washington, DC."

- **A unified cybersecurity system.** Currently, the FBI has a patchwork of great cyber capabilities but lacks a unified system. To create a streamlined, unified cybersecurity system, the FBI wants to know what communities need in the cyber sphere and what communities have that is working.

To further improve collaboration, mayors had several asks of the FBI.

While mayors were appreciative of the Director's commitment to greater collaboration, several mayors asked for help in specific areas.

- **Technology and expertise.** A large-city mayor explained that despite declining violent crime, his residents voted to increase police hiring. But hiring qualified people for law enforcement is a challenge. This mayor asked for the FBI for technology, expertise, training, partnership, and other capabilities – not money – to enhance his police force's capabilities. The Director sees this occurring as part of decentralization.



Eric Johnson, Mayor, Dallas, TX

- **Elevation of SEAR for special events.** SEAR is Special Event Assessment Rating. When an event receives SEAR status, a region or municipality receives additional technology, equipment, and support that local areas couldn't afford on their own. Mayors want it to be easier to request SEAR status.

- **Updates on longer-term cases.** A mayor talked about the toll that unresolved, ongoing cases can have on neighborhoods and asked for these cases to be expedited. Director Patel understands and agrees. Ideally, there can be shorter timelines for some cases. For those cases that continue for years, it is important to provide readouts to the appropriate people and channels in the jurisdiction so they are in the loop.



Jamael Tito Brown, Mayor, Youngstown, OH

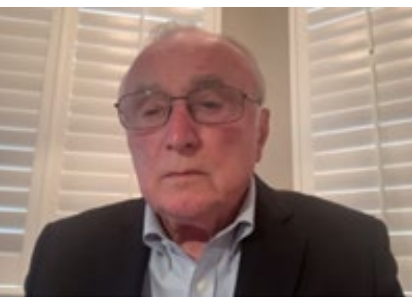
- **No weaponization.** Mayors do not want to see the FBI engage in weaponization or targeting individuals for the sake of political gain. Director Patel agreed.
- **Clearing officers' names.** When police officers have been investigated and nothing has been found, they return to their jobs. But they often still have a black cloud hanging over them because there is no written notice to officially clear their name. Director Patel was unfamiliar with this but is willing to look into it. He emphasized that the FBI and anyone in law enforcement must be held accountable to a high standard of ethics.



Law enforcement experts offered mayors advice to improve public safety.

A seasoned law enforcement expert summarized the key theme of Director Patel's remarks as "collaboration." Mayors and local law enforcement leaders must collaborate with federal, state, and local officials as a force multiplier.

"No city, no community can deal with these issues on your own. You need force multiplication and collaboration."



Bill Bratton, 38th and 42nd Commissioner,
New York Police Department

Other advice included the need to focus not just on serious crime but also on disorder. Just seeing a declining homicide rate might cause a mayor to believe crime is not an issue. But do not lose sight of what is generating the most fear in communities, which is disorder. Broken windows, graffiti, drug dealing, and street prostitution reflect a deterioration in the quality of life.

"You might be touting successful reduction in shooting murders but the public is not feeling it. Why? Because they are not feeling that the streets are any safer . . . you must deal with crime and disorder simultaneously, not separately."

A former mayor advised mayors that domestic terrorism is now a local responsibility. This encompasses hate and extremism. There are resources, such as Strong Cities Network, to help cities deal with these challenges.

Also, a former federal official mentioned that the purge of amazing federal law enforcement talent represents a unique opportunity for local law enforcement to scoop up this talent.



Olivia Troye, Former Homeland Security
Advisor; White House COVID-19 Taskforce



Who Believed in You – The Inspiration That Fueled Your Ambitions

Overview

Almost every successful person had a transformative mentor provide them assistance at a critical moment in their life. This mentor helped the mentee learn, grow, and achieve a level of success they might not have believed was possible. Imagine the impact if there were a mentoring movement to lift people up. It's possible.

The idea of mentorship resonated with mayors, several of whom shared powerful life stories of someone who provided them with mentorship and guidance. Several mayors have also provided mentorship for their city, infusing values into their cities such as compassion and kindness.

Context

Husband and wife David McCormick (US Senator, Pennsylvania) and Dina Powell McCormick (President, BDT & MSD) discussed their soon-to-be-released book [Who Believed in You: How Purposeful Mentorship Changes the World](#). Several mayors described mentors who made a difference in their lives as well as values they championed as mayors.

Key Takeaways

Most successful people have had a mentor who believed in them.

No one does it alone. Having interviewed dozens of successful people for their book, David and Dina McCormick found that every successful person had someone who believed in them, encouraged them, lifted them up, and made them believe in their own potential. This might have been a teacher, a coach, a boss, a relative, or even a distant acquaintance who said something transformative at a key moment.

"Almost every successful person we talked to could point to someone who believed in them, who made them who they are."



Dina Powell McCormick, President,
BDT & MSD

Armed with foundational research about mentorship from Jeffrey Sonnenfeld and his team at the Yale School of Management, David and Dina then interviewed dozens of luminaries who shared stories about the mentors who impacted their lives.

Among the people they interviewed were Condoleezza Rice, Mary Barra, Brian Grazer, Walter Isaacson, General H.R. McMaster, Satya Nadella, Nikki

Haley, Stephen Schwarzman, Tory Burch, David Chang, and many more.

Often, at the time a person received advice, coaching, mentorship, and even tough love, they didn't realize the ultimate impact. But upon reflecting upon their journey and success, every person could look back and see the critical impact of a transformative mentor. David and Dina have identified that the critical elements of transformative mentorship are trust, change, investment, and confidence.

David and Dina wrote this book to highlight the importance of mentorship in each person's life, and to encourage people to "pay it forward" by mentoring others.



David McCormick, US Senator,
Pennsylvania

"You can make a huge difference in someone's life by being there to be a true 'transformational mentor.'"

Successful people have had to deal with and overcome failure.

Failure is part of life. However, it seems that many young people struggle with failure. Both David and Dina shared examples of struggling and failing. Particularly noteworthy was when David was demoted from his position of CEO of Bridgewater Associates, which was a very public failure. This forced him to understand why he had failed, learn from it, and figure out what he needed to change.

"I really believe that you don't grow in success. You grow with failure."

Many mayors have been positively influenced by mentors.

Several mayors described how mentors influenced them. Among the comments from mayors were:

- One mayor described how her life had not been a fairy tale, with numerous tragedies in her family. But amid the hardship she experienced, "Throughout my life, I always knew I had someone that was there. I call them my angels . . . there were too many to count."



Natalie Rogers, Santa Rosa, CA



Dane White, Mayor, Escondido, CA

- Another mayor described a childhood coach who went above and beyond with constant encouragement, which continued long after the coaching interaction ended. For the past 25 years, any time the mayor's name has been in the paper, the former coach still sends a note of encouragement and support.

- One mayor told a story of how his college-aged son was the person who told him, "You need to run for mayor." This mayor said, "My son saw something in me that I didn't see in myself."

- A mayor who had experienced drug addiction and homelessness from the age of 14 through 22 reflected on a friend's mother who always believed in him. Even when his life was in tatters—until he got his life together and went to rehab—she believed in him and told him he was meant for greater things in life.

- A mayor recounted a campaign event early in his political career when he touted his educational and professional credentials. A little old lady asked, "What's in your heart? What is the reason you want

to serve people?" This question stuck with him. For someone to enter public service, what matters most is what's in your heart.

- A mayor recalled his second-grade teacher asking the students in his class to raise their hand if they would be going to college. He didn't raise his hand, because he didn't know what college was. The teacher pinched him and said, "Put your hand up, you're going to college." He never forgot that, he went to college, and

now this mayor does the same thing with children in his community.

Similar to mentorship, mayors view their role as lifting others up.

Beyond the work of a mayor related to public safety or economic development, mayors can influence the values and culture of a community. Several mayors shared aspects of their philosophies and values that they have tried to transmit to their communities.

- "Our mission is to raise up leaders to speak life into our community. It's to be encouragers and cheerleaders."
- "I believe that young people have everything it takes to be successful. They just need an opportunity. So, I said I would dedicate myself to opening that door of opportunity for young people."
- "Great businesses are run based on their values. Every decision is made through their values. In running for mayor, I knew I wanted my first two values to be a city of lifelong learning and a city of health—physical health, mental health, environmental health, spiritual health—but I was unclear of my third value . . . that turned out to be the value of compassion. . . Every city is going to have tragedies. The question is are people ready to get through the tragedy together? . . . The message to everybody is think about these human values—kindness, compassion, and love. Everything else we talked about today is secondary."



Eric Enriquez, Mayor, Las Cruces, New Mexico



Greg Fischer, Former Mayor, Louisville, KY