

Transcript

Policy Summit 2023

Officially Thriving: How Three Mayors Are Prioritizing Inclusion and Ensuring Access for All

Research shows that cities prosper when more neighborhoods and residents are included in economic development plans. A diverse panel of current mayors discusses their plans to ensure all residents, particularly those who have been underserved, have access to quality jobs, entrepreneurial opportunities, affordable housing, safe neighborhoods, and public transportation, and that they are given a voice in creating a sustainable future.

Moderator

- Lavea Brachman, Visiting Fellow, Brookings Metro

Speakers

- Justin M. Bibb, Mayor, City of Cleveland, Ohio
- Christina Muryn, Mayor, City of Findlay, Ohio
- Joseph V. Sember, Mayor, City of Erie, Pennsylvania

Announcer (00:00:00):

Please welcome to the stage Lavea Brachman, visiting fellow at Brookings Metro.

Lavea Brachman (00:00:13):

Hello, everyone. Welcome to the last plenary panel of this wonderful conference. Good afternoon, I'm Lavea Brachman, visiting fellow in the Metro Program at the Brookings Institution, and also an Ohioan. I am here to introduce and then moderate this final plenary panel, Officially Thriving: How Three Mayors are Prioritizing Inclusion and Ensuring Access For All. I want to talk for a minute about a report that we just issued, the Brookings Metro Program, which we examined how cities and counties across the country are using the American Rescue Plan funds in ways that benefit historically excluded groups, and this is certainly something I think our mayors will be talking a bit about in a few minutes. That report was called From Recovery to Revitalization: How Local Leaders Are Unlocking the Potential For The American Rescue Plan. (00:01:17):

Through a number of interviews, we found many thoughtful local leaders deploying funds and making more transformative, inclusive and sustainable investments to catalyze real and lasting change for those populations most left out, and those that were particularly devastated during the pandemic. Local governments pursued dual track investment strategies, implementing both emergency relief and stabilization measures, as well as investing in rebuilding a more equitable economy. (00:01:50):

Focusing on the ladder, which are typically in the more transformative investments, those investments shared three characteristics. One, they took a portfolio approach, a more systems change approach, that invests in programs strategically across multiple systems and policy domains, designing strategies to improve capacity across entire systems, some of what we've been talking about through this conference, of, say, workforce development, small business supports and community development. The second characteristic of these more transformative investments, they were more intentionally targeted in disinvested areas, picking up, I think, on Tim Bartik's points in the last plenary, prioritizing historically disadvantaged households and

neighborhoods in design, particularly picking up on the Qualified Census Tracts defined by HUD, but provided in the regulations by the Treasury Department and ARPA.

(00:02:46):

Third, these investments were done increasingly collaboratively, meaning these intentional partnerships formed with community-based organizations and other nonprofits, so between the public and nonprofit sectors, but also leveraging resources from philanthropy and working with other civic actors. So investments with these characteristics are more likely to live beyond the political cycles and current leaders who are championing them today, as well as beyond the spending deadlines that the American Rescue Plan had to lay out. So for example, these would be not just one-time capital allocations in, for instance, physical infrastructure, but would consider costs of ongoing maintenance.

(00:03:28):

Well, I'm not going to go into more specific examples right here because we have our mayors to talk in much more detail about this. I wanted to present this because I really think, through this work, we are seeing impressive and thoughtful work being done by local leaders, with a number of promising practices emerging and being piloted under strong leadership, to make the most of this once in a generation federal funding moment. Coincidentally, two of the communities we interviewed and studied are represented here on the stage, the city of Cleveland, and more broadly, Erie County. So I'm looking forward to hearing more from the mayors. I want to welcome them to the stage right now. Thank you very much.

(00:04:24):

Good afternoon. It's great to see you here. Right immediately to my right is Mayor Justin Bibb of Cleveland, who was recently elected, or not so recently, but took charge of the city after a number of years of previous mayor. Christina Muryn from the city of Findlay, thrilled to have a medium-sized city represented. As well as Mayor Joseph Schember from Erie, Pennsylvania.

Joseph Schember (00:04:58):

Yes.

Lavea Brachman (00:04:58):

So I'd like to ask each of you to take a few minutes to talk about what is your vision of a thriving community, and how's that been informed for you since you've come to be mayor?

Christina Muryn (00:05:13):

Wonderful.

Lavea Brachman (00:05:13):

Starting with-

Christina Muryn (00:05:13):

Good afternoon. Hopefully you all had a wonderful lunch. Please don't fall asleep on us, so we're going to expect a lot of interaction. A thriving community to me is really that there's opportunities for everyone to be engaged and feel that they belong in the community, and that means a lot of really intentional work to be able to develop a community that both is a great place to retire and there's economic opportunity, and you're able to attract and retain young professionals. And I know that, especially in smaller communities, Findlay's about 41,000, a micropolitan community just south of Toledo, Ohio on I75, and so we were talking earlier in the rural communities panel, we were talking about the migration patterns for being able to bring people back to Findlay is really important and a great sign of a thriving community.

Lavea Brachman (00:06:05):

Wonderful.

Justin Bibb (00:06:06):

Very good, very good.

Lavea Brachman (00:06:07):

Mayor Schember?

Joseph Schember (00:06:07):

Yeah, when I became mayor of Erie, Pennsylvania, before I took office, I wrote a mission and a vision statement, and the mission statement was just six words long. It was, "Build opportunity, restore, hope, transform Erie." And Erie, of course, had lost about 40,000 people over the last 50 or so years, and we're trying to turn that around now, my team and I, we're working hard on that. And then, our mission statement is two sentences. Erie is a community of choice, and the word choice can mean a lot of different things, any meanings you think of, they apply.

(00:06:46):

And we celebrate five things in Erie, and these are things we're trying to create, and they may exist to some extent but not completely in most cases here. First one is rich cultural diversity. That's something we really do have in Erie. I go to the swearing in of 50 New Americans 10 times a year at our Federal Courthouse, and I've been doing that since I'm mayor, and it's always the high point every month for me. The second thing is our welcoming vibrant neighborhoods, and we do have neighborhoods that are in very bad shape as well that we're working hard on improving. Third is our world-class downtown and Bayfront, there's a lot of great things going on there. Erie Insurance is our largest employer in Erie, and they're all over this part of the country, and it's incredible what they've done. I can give you more detail on that later.

(00:07:38):

Our world-class downtown and Bayfront are excellent education for everyone, and of course, the city doesn't actually do any education, but we try to support education in Erie, and we're real pleased that about two years ago we finally got a community college in the city, that's the one thing we were missing for a long time. And the last thing on this is our abundance of good family sustaining jobs, which, when I took office, I didn't realize how many good family sustained jobs we still have open right now. There's over 1000 available right now, so we're trying to promote that and continue with that as well. I think I'll stop there.

Lavea Brachman (00:08:17):

Wonderful. Mayor Bibb?

Justin Bibb (00:08:18):

Well, for me, it's really simple. How do we create the right conditions for families and children to live up to their God-given potential? And you think about the theme of the conference, communities thriving in a changing economy, we, as mayors, see that on the front lines now more than ever, coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

(00:08:41):

As mayor of Cleveland, a traditional legacy American city, I'm thinking about it in a couple of ways. Number one, I believe that public safety is the prerequisite to economic prosperity. And so, we are working around the clock with law enforcement, with community organizations and activists, to keep our residents safe and secure. Everything from historic investments in our police department, to modernized technology, to be thoughtful and smart on cutting down on violent crime, to really leveraging the historic investments we've gotten from President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris through the American Rescue Plan. We were one of the first cities in America to create a neighborhood safety endowment fund, to generate over \$10 to \$15 million of long-term revenue to reduce violent crime in our neighborhoods.

(00:09:33):

Secondly, government has to move at the speed of business. And so, since I took office last year, we've been making very historic strides to modernize city hall. Everything from making sure that every employee has Microsoft 365, to paid parental leave for the first time in our city's history, to ensuring that we have a database on every property in our city to cut down on vacant lots and hold these out of state LLC investors accountable to stabilizing our housing stock in our city. And thirdly, we can't have a thriving city and a thriving country if folks don't have clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, and a home that's free of lead paint. And so, we've been leading an aggressive agenda to make sure that we prioritize climate justice in our city, to ensure that every family and every child can thrive in the great city of Cleveland, Ohio.

Lavea Brachman (00:10:31):

Fantastic. Let me start back with you, Mayor Bibb. How do you see community voices getting incorporated into those priorities and that vision?

Justin Bibb (00:10:44):

Well, it's paramount for me. It's something that I took very seriously not when I was mayor, but when I was campaigning to be mayor. I spent days after days knocking on doors, talking to residents, and I believe that resident engagement and ensuring that we ground what we're doing from a public policy perspective and to live the experiences of our residents is so important. Just yesterday, two days ago rather, I did two canvases. One to connect families and children to summer learning that we have in our city and our public school districts and our rec centers, and the other canvas I did was our summer safety walks, talking to residents and business owners about what we can do to keep our community safe. And so, we've got to do a better job as mayors to bring government to the people, and we can't just sit in city hall every day, we've got to be out in the neighborhoods, talking to folks about what's working and what's not working.

Joseph Schember (00:11:48):

Absolutely.

Lavea Brachman (00:11:49):

Mayor Schember, how are you seeing the community?

Joseph Schember (00:11:51):

I totally agree with everything you were just saying. We've been going door to door since I first took office in 2018, and my team is really committed to that, and I have a very diverse team, I'm very proud of that. I always say I'm the only old white guy on the team, everybody else is very diverse.

Justin Bibb (00:12:09):

He's really young, don't let him [inaudible 00:12:11].

Joseph Schember (00:12:11):

Thank you, I appreciate it, I appreciate it. We have a monthly business council meeting, where we have a very diverse group that comes in and gives us advice, we usually will focus on certain things. There's a thing called the Municipality Equality Index, which you're probably familiar with that, have heard about that. When I first took office, our Municipal Equality Index was 27. Three months after I took office, we got a notification of what it was, and my team and I decided we're going to transform that. The highest you can get is to 100, you can't get higher than that, but that was our goal, and I'm very proud to say that in 2022, last year, we hit 100, and now we hope to keep it there. So we're very, very proud of that. Thank you.

(00:13:02):

We also have a Love Your Block initiative that we just started last year for the first time, we had two years of funding for it, and last year we did some improvements on 31 houses really in low income neighborhoods. And what we've learned was these people didn't even know their neighbors, but we had a rule that there had to be at least three houses within a block or two that were all doing the renovations, and we were very successful with that. In fact, so successful, last year, we had the 31 applications, we did all 31, this year, we've already had 170 applications for this, so we're looking forward to doing that again, and we may not be able to do all 170, but we do plan to do it beyond this year as well. We're looking for some funding to be able to continue doing this as well, so we're very proud of all that.

Lavea Brachman (00:13:55):

Mayor Muryn, and let me do a little twist on the question. You're incorporating community voices as well in different ways. Have you heard new or different issues since the pandemic, and how has that affected your thinking?

Christina Muryn (00:14:10):

So it definitely is a challenge, and I would say that engaging with citizens is probably more difficult now than ever. And I frequently hear from people, "Well, we have all these different methods of communication, I don't understand why you're not able to engage with them." I think that that's because we do have to go to them. And so, I think there's a lot of room for improvements, especially in smaller communities where we don't necessarily have larger staffs that are completely focused on communication. We just actually added an individual on my team that helps more with our communication so that we are getting information out on social media more, trying to work with our local newspapers, attending block watch meetings is super key, but there's still a lot of people that are not engaged. And so, we're looking at how we can start doing maybe an annual mailing update about the community, and being more engaged with some of our publications that are going to citizens, like our community newsletter, different things like that, among just our traditional engagement.

(00:15:16):

I would say we're seeing a little bit of what everybody said. We've seen an increase around housing issues and food insecurity, and we're definitely seeing, with the change in SNAP benefits, with folks, with inflation, we're definitely seeing that putting pressure on our more vulnerable communities. And we're very fortunate in Findlay that we have great partnerships, and really one of the best ways that I get information about our different vulnerable populations is from organizations like many of you. I trust and work very closely with our nonprofit leaders and our community foundation and United Way to say, "What are you hearing and seeing in the populations you work with, and how can we get information and resources to them more efficiently?"

Lavea Brachman (00:16:01):

That's great. Are you able to form important collaborative partnerships, and how are you doing that? It's really important.

Christina Muryn (00:16:10):

Yeah, so definitely. In the city of Findlay, we are very fortunate to have great collaborations, and it was branded a couple of years ago, the city of Findlay has been named America's Top Micropolitan for nine years in a row by Site Selection Magazine, and in that, I think it was year two or three of us winning that, they said, "What is the Findlay formula?" And we really believe in collaboration, and it's this mentality of government, business and education working together to solve our problems. And so, we definitely rely heavily on the collaborations, and we saw it be

tremendously useful during the early stages and throughout the pandemic, when we were able to easily call those different partners and say, again, "How do we get resources directly? What are you hearing from folks? Businesses, how do we adjust?" And that really has helped stabilize our family members, but also it stabilized our small businesses, because we had those connections with them and were able to work together effectively.

Lavea Brachman (00:17:08):

Mayor Bibb, I know your administration reaches out a lot to other community organizations. How are you seeing that collaboration play out?

Justin Bibb (00:17:16):

Yeah, I would say collaboration is key for any mayor. Despite the fact that we're seeing all this federal historic investments in our respective cities, we still have finite resources as mayors and we can't do it alone, and one of the biggest powers we have, as mayors leading our respective cities, is the convening power of the office, of the seat. One area that we prioritize, through the great work of a program that my fellow mayor and I have just finished up with Bloomberg and Harvard University, is we brought together a brand new collaborative coalition to really reinvigorate and reimagine a new economic strategy for Cleveland's southeast side. So that's the Lee Harvard, Mt. Pleasant, Union-Miles area of the city for folks who aren't familiar with the geographic regions of Cleveland.

(00:18:07):

And it's a part of the city where I was born and raised, I'm a native son of the southeast side. This is a part of the city that was first a middle and upper-middle class Jewish neighborhood, then white flight happened and it became a home for Black Americans coming up to the north, seeking economic opportunity, from the south during Jim Crow and segregation. It's the place where my late grandmother, her home is still there in our family's name. And when I was growing up in the early 1990s, it was a beacon of the Black middle class, but because of redlining, structural racism and historic disinvestment, it hasn't gotten its fair share in a long time.

(00:18:54):

And so, through this collaboration with Bloomberg and Harvard, we brought together 40 key stakeholders from government, the private nonprofit sector, to really think differently about how we have an all of government approach to really make Cleveland southeast side a beacon for the American Dream once again. And we're using \$50 million of American Rescue Plan investments to do a couple of things. Number one, \$5 million to repair and rehab up to 200 homes in the southeast side. Another \$5 million to revitalize some of the main street commercial corridors of this part of the city, because as anyone would tell you, your main streets determine what happens on your side streets. And another \$5 million to have targeted, differentiated incentives to incentivize more private capital investment in critical commercial corridors of that part of the city.

(00:19:49):

We've also hired a senior strategist, a cabinet level advisor in my administration, quarterbacking and convening all of this effort to revitalize this part of the city. And so, without this collaboration, we wouldn't have the capacity and the wherewithal to have this focused approach to really have a targeted intervention to revitalize a key part of our city's economic future.

Lavea Brachman (00:20:12):

Mayor Schember?

Joseph Schember (00:20:13):

Yes, I'm also in that Harvard Bloomberg training. In fact, we just got to the end of it recently.
Justin Bibb (00:20:18):

Yeah.

Joseph Schember (00:20:18):

We were interviewed about that. It was incredible. I'd been four and a half years as mayor when we started, and I've been about five and a half years now, but I couldn't believe how I just focused on certain things and I wasn't looking at other things I should be looking at, and that's what Bloomberg Harvard did for me. It opened my eyes and it helped me transform not only what I'm doing, but I think transform who I am, to really try to make things better in Erie, and do things that make sense for every resident of Erie, not just white people, not just old people, but every resident.

(00:20:59):

And I always say that the one thing I'd like to accomplish as mayor, I've been saying this since I was first elected, if I could only accomplish one thing, what it would be would be to eliminate racism and prejudice in Erie, so no one would be judged based on the color of their skin, their gender, their nationality, their religion. All that is minor differences, I think, between all of us, we're all human beings, we probably share over 90% of everything. Let's work together and respect each other. And I always say at the end of talking about this back in Erie, I'll say, "If we accomplish that, I can't even imagine what an incredible city Erie would be, if we can just make that happen."

Lavea Brachman (00:21:40):

So I wanted to maybe have you all address a little bit what some of the challenges have been, and obviously we're coming out of this pandemic and we all encountered personal challenges, but community challenges as well. But I'm curious if you could talk a little bit about the challenges you encountered in trying to move your vision forward.

Justin Bibb (00:22:00):

I think there are a couple trends that are frustrating for me as mayor, and I know Mayor Muryn shares this sentiment. And what's really unique about this stage here is we have Republicans and Democrats on this stage who are talking about the same opportunities and the same challenges facing our respective cities. Mayor Muryn and I are part of the Ohio Mayors Alliance, a group of big city mayors across the state really fighting for the strength and the future of Ohio cities.

(00:22:29):

A couple of things keep me up at night. Number one, we have a legislature in this state who has no idea what it takes, particularly Republican legislatures in this state, who continue to undermine the power of mayors to get stuff done for our cities. Let me give you a couple of examples. Number one, just last year, Republicans passed a senate bill that now allows for permitless carry in the state of Ohio. And I've seen a direct correlation between that bill being passed and the number of gun homicides that we're responding to in Cleveland. The mayor of Cincinnati, the mayor of Columbus, will say the same thing. And now, this legislature won't allow me to pass one bill with city council to keep our city safe when it comes to gun deaths in our city. That's immoral and unconscionable and irresponsible.

(00:23:22):

The second thing is they continue to usurp the power of mayors to enact any laws, whether it be on gun safety, whether it be on public health measures related to tobacco or to COVID-19 relief measures. Right now, we are fighting to make sure we can actually still have a rental registry because they want to take that power away from us as mayors. So everything you want to get

done in our city, from economic opportunity, to closing the racial wealth gap, to making sure that our children can walk to school safe, be safe in the school and come home safe, all boils down to having legislatures in Columbus who have common sense values and want to govern with a common sense perspective on how to get stuff done facing our cities. And this has a direct impact on the long-term GDP of our state, because almost 80% of our state's GDP comes from major cities across the state. And so, we need our legislatures, particularly Republicans, in Columbus to get their stuff together and help us mayors get stuff done.

(00:24:31):

Sorry.

Christina Muryn (00:24:36):

All right. Take a deep breath. It's going to be okay.

Justin Bibb (00:24:36):

I get really excited.

Lavea Brachman (00:24:36):

Mayor Muryn?

Christina Muryn (00:24:42):

Yeah. So though I don't necessarily agree with all of Justin's positions on the topics, I would completely agree with the mentality that closer to the people is the level that is best equipped to address the issues. And so, as mayors, we are the boots on the ground that are listening and being caught at church and in the grocery store and gets the phone calls where someone's crying because of an issue that they're facing, whether it's crime related, housing issues, all of these different things. I would agree that state preemption is certainly a challenge.

(00:25:23):

But I think what's more important to talk about today, and what I've really been hearing echoing from all of you over the last day and a half, has been that the issues that our communities are facing are all the same issues, just to varying levels, and with different approaches to solving them. And so, we try to get together and talk regularly because the best idea is one that you can steal from someone else and implement more quickly, and mayors really do that well.

(00:25:52):

But right now, we definitely are seeing the impacts coming out of the pandemic and the economy as a whole. And though I think we have a lot of great opportunity and we're really making some innovative transformational investments in our communities, there's also a lot of these problems that are not going to be fixed by one time money. As mayors, we are talking constantly and figuring out how can we make structural changes in our community? With the American Rescue Plan Act dollars, the city of Findlay only received less than \$5 million, so a very different dollar amount.

(00:26:29):

So we took a bit of a different approach with the CARES money, we invested into local nonprofits, stabilization services, those types of items. With the ARPA funds, we use it as revenue replacement, since we were under that minimum amount, and we have been putting it into a couple of different programs, as well as some of the infrastructure projects that we knew we were going to have to do, which gave us a little more breathing room to identify, what are those investments that we can make over the next five years that are really going to change the shape of our community, drive economic investment, and lift the tide that all of our citizens deserve to have these opportunities within the city of Findlay?

Lavea Brachman (00:27:08):

I want to come back to that question, but just want to let Mayor Schember talk about some challenges.

Joseph Schember (00:27:12):

Okay, thanks. And I think I'm probably between the two of you in terms of the amount of ARP funding we got in Erie. We actually got \$76 million, all of which has been designated, and we've spent about \$34 million of it already. And the things we've focused on are economic and community development, and this is in Erie's inner city, because that ARP funding, there's 150 pages to tell you what to do, but the thing that really came through to me is you need to help the people that were impacted most by COVID-19, and you have to prove you're doing that or you have to pay the money back.

(00:27:50):

In Erie, I know minorities were infected by COVID-19 and about three times the rate of white people, so we've really focused a lot of what we're doing on that. For instance, \$15 million of it is going into, probably like most cities, Erie has a lot of housing that's in very bad shape right now, so \$15 million of this money is designated for the inner city to either tear down things that can't be fixed up or fix them up and make them decent places to live. About \$14 million went into public safety as well.

(00:28:26):

So we've really trying to use COVID to move Erie forward, and I think we're accomplishing that. And we all have until the end of 2024 to make changes, but by the end of 2024, we have to say, "This is definitely what we've either already spent or will spend all the money on," then we have till 2026 to spend it all. I'm really hoping we can get all ours spent well before that. And we're trying to spend it on things that are not just going to help people in the short-term, but are going to transform Erie and help people for decades to come.

Lavea Brachman (00:29:01):

Mayor Bibb, I know you've been working closely on prioritizing ARPA spending.

Justin Bibb (00:29:07):

Yeah, we received the eighth-largest amount from the Federal Government, \$512 million. Not too much.

Joseph Schember (00:29:14):

No, wow.

Justin Bibb (00:29:16):

And for us, this was not an opportunity just to fund project after project after project, but really take a long-term view about how this historic federal investment in our city could really set our city up for the next generation. A couple of things I want to just tee up from our portfolio investments. One, our largest single allocation went to a new fund that we're calling a Site Fund For Good Jobs, \$50 million of funding, which we want to try to double to \$100 million over the next couple of years. This fund is important for a couple of reasons. Number one, at one point, Cleveland was the fifth-largest city in the country. We were a premier titan of the industrial revolution. John D. Rockefeller got his start here as the world's first billionaire, he was born here and is buried here.

Joseph Schember (00:30:13):

Wow.

Justin Bibb (00:30:14):

And we really were the backbone of the American economy for a long time. But because of globalization and free trade and steel jobs and other jobs going overseas or going to the Sun Belt,

we lost an historic amount of jobs. A couple of data points, just to put this in context. Over the last two decades, not only have we lost 20% of our population in Cleveland, but we've lost, in almost every ward in our city, over 30% of all jobs wiped out, completely gone. Over the last 15 years, while the United States has experienced an 11% increase in traded sector job growth, Cleveland experience on that same time horizon a negative 5% in traded sector job growth.
(00:31:09):

So for nearly two decades, we as a city and as regional economy have not had a clear focused strategy on how to create good paying jobs in the urban core of our city. So this fund that we've just passed with city council will, number one, it's going to take 1000 acres of vacant land in our city, primarily located in Cleveland's east side, we're going to turn these 1000 acres of vacant land, brownfield sites, into greenfield sites. And already, early numbers show that this will allow us to create over 65,000 new direct and indirect jobs in our city. And so, while I'm excited that Intel is in Columbus, what I'm really excited about is that those supply chain companies that are going to support Intel and Honda and Ford, we want them to set up shop right here in Cleveland, Ohio, and give people in our neighborhoods, from Lee Harvard to Mt. Pleasant to Union-Miles, a job you can walk to, a walk to work agenda. And I think this will really set up our economy long-term in a very effective way.

Lavea Brachman (00:32:16):

That's really transformative. I'm a Columbus resident, but I'm really rooting for Cleveland.

Justin Bibb (00:32:22):

Thank you. Just move. Don't tell Andy I said that though.

Christina Muryn (00:32:29):

I'm texting him after this.

Lavea Brachman (00:32:33):

I also want to mention that I've had the pleasure of working with your staff on a Brookings initiative called The Transforming Cities Lab, that worked with you all with some of your optimizing your ARPA spending.

(00:32:45):

Well, let's switch topics a little and talk about workforce. This morning's plenary talked about the workforce ecosystems and the challenges thereof. What do you see in your own localities that are facing you regarding workforce development and training? There are, I think, a lot of opportunities, particularly with federal money coming, but how do we scale up and really confront those opportunities?

Christina Muryn (00:33:14):

So the city of Findlay is like every other community, we're trying to figure out that workforce supply demand calculation. One thing that's really unique about us is that we really are a job hub for the region in northwest Ohio. And so, the city of Findlay, our population is about 41,000, the county's about 75,000, on a daily basis, we have about 30,000 people come into the county to work. So we have significant employment, strong manufacturing, agricultural world headquarters of Marathon Petroleum Corporation, so we are very fortunate to have a really vibrant economy.

(00:33:49):

We actually, a number of years, I think probably seven or eight years ago, our community foundation did community conversations, and identified a couple of key issues, food insecurity, housing, transportation, and workforce development was one of those initiatives that they really recognized as a community priority. And we established a coalition called Raise the Bar, which

is focused on cradle to career, and how do we layer, again, going back to that Findlay formula, our government support and education, with our nonprofit, as well as then our businesses, to work on not only getting people into jobs once they're an adult and ready to work, but helping make sure that our children growing up in our community saw the opportunities for employment within our community and that they were equipped to take them.

(00:34:41):

And so, that works, that can mean a lot of different things. We are a Leader in Me school system, which is Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, which is amazing, it's been fantastic. I can do a whole session about that. As well as then manufacturing days and our literature coalition working together. So we have been very focused on this. We are making some great progress with bringing folks in and growing our pipeline, but we haven't been around long enough to really have that hard data of seeing more of our folks staying in Findlay right after college or coming back right after college. And so, that's something that, again, I'm really focused on. As a young professional, I grew up in Findlay, Findlay is my home, and I want a community that's vibrant for my grandparents, for my siblings to want to move back, for me and my husband, and making sure that we're attracting and retaining, and we're not just part of that story of people moving away and never looking back.

Lavea Brachman (00:35:41):

That's great. Mayor Schember, the challenges, and then taking advantage of some of these opportunities coming down the pike.

Joseph Schember (00:35:46):

Yes, we've done several things to try to improve Erie's workforce, and a lot of it is, again, trying to help minorities advance and not continue on the way they may have been going for generations. So a couple of things are, I think I mentioned earlier, we supported forming the Erie Community College, which is a one or two year training that gets you into a job. So it seems like fewer and fewer children want to go to college now, and so if they get out of high school and they can get this one or two year training to get a job that's going to pay a decent wage, that really helps a lot, so we're very proud that that's going on.

(00:36:29):

We've also, we work with local partners and stakeholders to try to help us develop, we try to achieve workforce development and create apprenticeship programs that people... In fact, just this week, we hired two people at city hall who are in an apprenticeship program. They're high school students, they're juniors or seniors, but they're working in their first job and learning a lot, and we met with them earlier this week and I was very impressed with their approach to things. And the third thing is, we're providing help to an Erie company, which is called Child Development Centers, that's the name of the Erie company, and they provide affordable childcare for about 600 young children right now in Erie. That is really helping a lot. And they're receiving funding from grant programs that we have, and also some very low interest rate GAP financing as well for that. So we're very pleased with that and excited.

(00:37:34):

And one of the things I did when I first became mayor, we had a thing in Erie called the Police Athletic League, or PAL for short, and it existed years and years ago, and it started up the year before I became mayor. And when I came in as mayor, they had about 50 students involved, and about eight or 10 police officers involved. And the program is they go into high schools, and the first thing they do after school's out is they help the kids with their homework. They get that done, and then they go to the gym and play, or they go outside and play, so they work together.

(00:38:10):

We have almost 1000 kids now enrolled in that program. They're all in the Erie public schools, and probably 70% to 80% of them are minority kids. So we have them together, we're very proud of that. And there's 72 of our police officers now actively involved in this program. They spend about 250 days a year with these kids, some of it's weekends, some of it's after school. And one of our African-American police officers is in charge of this, and he is incredible, I've gotten to know him really well, and it's just incredible what he's doing to help us transform Erie.

Lavea Brachman (00:38:50):

That's great. Mayor Bibb?

Justin Bibb (00:38:53):

I think both my colleagues hit it spot on. From my point of view, as mayor, everything we focus on in terms of workforce development has to be focused on not just work, but good paying wages, family sustaining wages, and long-term wealth creation. And we don't talk about wealth creation enough in terms of what we're doing at the local level. I was just talking to the CEO of United Way, Sharon Sobol Jordan, about their new value proposition and what they're looking at in terms of how they make investments. How do we get our residents to think about their net income and their net worth long-term? And we have to look at the entire spectrum of how we think about our workforce.

(00:39:42):

So from a K-through-12 education perspective, here in Cleveland, we're one of the only cities in America that has mayoral control of our public schools. And I'm really focused on, number one, how do we aggressively address the learning loss that we've seen coming out of the pandemic? But once we address that learning loss, how do we expose young people to jobs early in their development? I'm not talking about high school, I'm talking about elementary school and middle school, about what jobs they can have. We have a good program we just started a couple of years ago called PACE, Pathways for Advancing Career Exploration, right here in Cleveland, where we're talking to middle school students about the jobs they can have in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, IT, quantum computing, et cetera.

(00:40:34):

And we also have to think differently about how we train our adult workforce. I know my executive director of workforce development is here, Michelle Rose, who came to us from the labor department under Secretary Marty Walsh. We are reinvigorating our local workforce investment board to be a nonprofit model now so we can do some more disruptive things as it relates to training our adult workforce. To that end, we used \$10 million of American Rescue Plan investments to really fund a new pipeline program for workers in the built environment. Everything from new workers, to remediate lead paint in our homes, to folks that will lay down the new broadband and fiber in our neighborhoods, to folks that are going to build and rehab new homes on Cleveland's southeast side. And so, we as mayors have to be aggressive in getting every resource we can to really address the entire spectrum of how we think about workforce development.

Lavea Brachman (00:41:33):

Mayor Muryn?

Christina Muryn (00:41:34):

Yeah, one thing I want to add is that we don't talk enough about around workforce as well is the fact that there's all of the other foundational components that lead to someone not being able to get a job or go to work or be reliable to maintain that job. When we talk about kids in school, we

know that if they aren't in a good home environment, they have environmental concerns, they're not fed, they're not going to be able to perform and learn. It's the same thing, adults showing up to a job, if they don't have a good home situation or they're not able to make ends meet and get that food.

(00:42:12):

So one of the things that we have done is educating our businesses on the resources that are there, and I know yesterday we talked a little bit about businesses taking advantage of that, and I don't think they're necessarily taking advantage of that, but stabilizing our citizens is something that we're really focused on. And again, going back to those partnerships, our businesses engage so well with our nonprofits that we're able to say, "If you have an employee that's having work issues because they're having car problems, here's who you can talk to so that we can help get them funds to get their car repaired," or, "Here's the number, you can set them up with HATS to get transportation services." And so, I think that that, again, it's making sure people understand the systems to support those individuals.

(00:43:00):

And we haven't talked about mental health and substance abuse, but that's obviously a huge issue across the entire United States, Ohio has hit really hard. We've been fortunate that we're making significant progress in that, but we have seen a huge increase in mental health issues and substance abuse coming out of the pandemic.

Lavea Brachman (00:43:18):

Yeah, absolutely. Well, I want to ask one other question then open it up. So looking back, what would you say you might have done differently, or a lesson learned as you think about going forward? Mayor Schember, I'll start with you.

Christina Muryn (00:43:36):

We all look away.

Joseph Schember (00:43:39):

What would I have done differently? I know as I got into the mayor for several years, being mayor, I did fall into a routine and a certain way of doing things. I still worked hard, and I'd worked 40 years for PNC Bank before I retired from there to run for mayor, and I loved that job 'cause it was all about helping people too, and I started it as a teller.

(00:44:05):

Just a little bit about my background, as a kid, I wanted to be a Catholic priest, and I am amazed my parents let me do this, out of eighth grade, they let me go into the seminary, which meant I left home and lived at St. Mark's Seminary in Erie, and I actually spent six years there. Now, I was home for summer vacations and other vacations and things, but it was unusual. And now that I've been a parent myself, I told my wife early on, "None of our kids are going to the seminary when they're out of grade school." So it's been a great experience for me. I've learned a lot in trying to move Erie forward. I think I got off the track of your question.

Lavea Brachman (00:44:43):

No, thank you for sharing that. It's really-

Joseph Schember (00:44:46):

I apologize.

Lavea Brachman (00:44:46):

... fantastic.

Joseph Schember (00:44:48):

Thank you.

Christina Muryn (00:44:49):

I would say one of the things, I've been mayor for four and a half years now, and I think one of the things is, during COVID, I wish I had been a little more aggressive on pushing forward some of the other initiatives. I think we all, rightfully so, got into survival mode, and we were really focused on just getting through and making sure that we were stable, but I think that there was also some missed opportunity to really push forward on economic development and discussions on certain topics that I think would've been really productive. So I think that, I'm not saying I'm perfect by any means, obviously, but I feel like the last few years, there's not something I look back on and be like, "Oh, what were you thinking?"

Joseph Schember (00:45:33):

Did the best possible.

Christina Muryn (00:45:35):

Yeah, I think when you're mayor, you've got to stick with your convictions and move forward, and something's wrong, you adjust, it's not necessarily like... You can't beat yourself up every day or you would not be mayor very long.

Lavea Brachman (00:45:46):

Absolutely. Mayor Bibb?

Justin Bibb (00:45:48):

I think one of the assumptions I had when I got elected and took office last year was I assumed people would know what was happening in the city, what the mayor was doing, what initiatives were out there, just because I just thought everyone should know what was going on in the city. That was a flawed assumption because I think it spoke to my inherent optimism and belief that government is in the back of mind in terms of what everyone thinks about and talks about, that's how I was raised.

(00:46:26):

And what I've learned since taking office last year is that we are a very resource rich city, but we are connection poor. Let me tell you what I mean by that. Every time I knock on a door in any part of the city, most folks don't know what resources exist to help them, whether it be how to get a loan or a grant to repair their home, or where to send their child for a swim lesson or a local basketball camp or a robotics camp at a rec center, or where to get support to address issues around food insecurity.

(00:47:09):

And it's easy for us, all of us in this room, to get very comfortable in government or working at the Fed or our fancy jobs at a foundation or a nonprofit or anywhere in the private sector, to think, "Let's do the work, it's well-thought-out, release it to the masses, and the problem is solved." And we all have to do a better job of grounding ourselves in the reality of what's actually happening with everyday people that we're trying to serve. That's why, for me, knocking on doors is so important, and staying approximate to the people that I'm elected to serve, humbly elected to serve, every single day.

(00:47:52):

And what I'm wrestling with in my head as mayor is, how do we change the paradigm in our city of being resource rich and connection rich? And it is frankly so hard, given the media environment we live in right now, where, number one, we have a lack of civics education and knowledge, and not just in public schools, but just in the masses. Number two, no one trusts anything you see, whether you watch Fox News or MSNBC or CNN, and for millennials and Gen Zs, they get their news from Instagram and TikTok so they don't know what the hell the

mayor's doing any day of the week. And so, we have to be disruptive in terms of how we communicate, how we get information out there, and how we meet people where they are. And that's, I think, one of the biggest challenges that keeps me up at night right now.

Lavea Brachman (00:48:49):

Well, we're going to open it up, but I just have to thank you all for your candid remarks so far. It's been really wonderful. It will open up to questions from the audience. Question.

Nick Stone (00:49:10):

Okay. I'll go. Hello. I was wondering-

Justin Bibb (00:49:15):

What's your name and where are you from?

Nick Stone (00:49:16):

My name's Nick Stone. I live in Cincinnati.

Justin Bibb (00:49:20):

Cincinnati.

Nick Stone (00:49:23):

I was wondering, you guys have been talking about jobs a lot, but I have a fun question. What do you do once five o'clock hits in your respective cities? What do you guys like to do for entertainment?

Christina Muryn (00:49:47):

Well, first of all-

Justin Bibb (00:49:47):

It's not five o'clock, dog.

Christina Muryn (00:49:47):

I was going to say.

Joseph Schember (00:49:47):

We're not satisfied-

Justin Bibb (00:49:48):

Maybe for Mayor [inaudible 00:49:48], but not for Mayor Bibb.

Nick Stone (00:49:49):

What is something people don't know about your cities that you like to do for entertainment?

How about that?

Christina Muryn (00:49:58):

Yeah, you know what? First of all, we joke, but I very frequently communicate with people, and I'm texting my sisters, "Oh my gosh, it was a crazy day." And I look back at the clock, it was a 14-hour day for the fourth day in a row. So it definitely is a 24/7, 365 job. But for fun, Findlay has a wonderful downtown, and so I love meeting friends for dinner, going out. My thing that I do with my husband is golf, it's time where we just walk on the golf course and we get our steps in and I am semi-able to disconnect. I only check in every 20 minutes instead of every five. But we're really able to do that, and that's really enjoyable to be able to just have that time together, be outside and be active. Otherwise, I just go home and turn on the television to Queen Charlotte and relax for a little bit.

Joseph Schember (00:50:56):

There's only one person in Erie mad at me right now, I'm married to her, it's my wife. I'm never home, literally. I do very little. The one thing I do is I'm addicted to running. And when I played basketball and tennis in high school, to some extent in college too, I hated to run when the coaches made us do it. But then, when I was done with that, I think, "How am I going to stay in

shape?" So I started, I would walk two blocks and run a block, walk two blocks, then I'd walk one block, run a block. Then I started running, and eventually I became addicted to running. (00:51:32):

And a couple of years ago, I started to say, "Okay, I get 10,000 steps today." Then I went to 11,000 the next year, 12,000 the next year. That was last year, so you probably thought I would go to 13,000 this year? I went to 20,000 steps a day this year. I get most of that in the morning, I'm up early, I'm usually up at about 5:00 in the morning, and I walk around the house first just to get loosened up, and then I usually go for about an hour run outside. But that's about the only different thing I do, other than working with people in the office and trying to move Erie forward.

Justin Bibb (00:52:06):

Well, when I'm not driving my team crazy at city hall, two things give me joy. One, I love to eat. Cleveland has a really, I think, great food scene. So every Friday night, I try to have a good meal with some of my best guy friends in town.

Joseph Schember (00:52:22):

When are you going to start putting on weight?

Justin Bibb (00:52:25):

Hey, don't let the tailored suit fool you, brother. All right?

Joseph Schember (00:52:25):

Okay.

Justin Bibb (00:52:31):

But secondly, I'm a big music head, so I saw Rick Ross last weekend, which was really cool.

Joseph Schember (00:52:35):

Wow.

Justin Bibb (00:52:36):

I'm going to see Drake in Detroit in a couple of weeks. And when I'm done being mayor, I think I want be a DJ one day.

Joseph Schember (00:52:42):

Wow.

Justin Bibb (00:52:43):

Watch out, yeah.

Christina Muryn (00:52:44):

Okay. Wait, I have a funny... I've told you this.

Justin Bibb (00:52:46):

I got good DJ skills.

Christina Muryn (00:52:47):

No, he's a terrible DJ. But I joked with some of my employees, when I decided to run for mayor, and I was doing the transition period, one of my friends that was taking over my job literally just set up shop in my office for the six months of transition. And so, I started saying, "I love music." I change my music throughout the day based off of what I'm working on. And I said, "So if I don't become mayor, I've decided I'm just going to be DJ Mayor Muryn." And so, I actually have a couple of playlists that are fun.

Justin Bibb (00:53:21):

So do I. Mine are better than hers.

Lavea Brachman (00:53:24):

We'll get to that in a few minutes. Other questions?

Speaker 7 (00:53:27):

Yes, I'm over here. Sorry to shift from a fun question to a-

Justin Bibb (00:53:32):

It's Friday, come on.

Speaker 7 (00:53:33):

It's Friday.

Lavea Brachman (00:53:36):

Where are you from?

Speaker 7 (00:53:36):

This is more just to put some questions in your mind. When you talk or you think about your economic development plans for your city, I'm wondering, where will the money come from?

Who will control the economic development? And who will own what is developed?

Lavea Brachman (00:53:58):

Should we go back to DJ playlists?

Christina Muryn (00:54:00):

No, I love that question. So in Findlay, our economic development, I think it was in early 2010s, privatized our economic development. And when I say privatized, we have a private entity that is funded by membership of other businesses in our community that funds it and took it out of government, almost similar to JobsOhio, if you're familiar with the model. And we obviously work very closely. Our incentives primarily are making sure that sites are ready to go, that the ALTA surveys are done, the geotech is done, infrastructure is either in the area or we know the plan on what we would need to do to get that done.

(00:54:44):

And so, that has served us very well, because the best thing you can do to spur economic development in your community, in my opinion, is have an easy, easy, easy process. Site selectors send you that initial questionnaire and are looking at those properties, if you can respond very quickly with all of those answers and a very clear story about what it would take to get the deal done in your community, you're going to move up the list. So that has really been key. The city of Findlay government has not historically made significant financial contributions towards economic development, though we are in the process right now of committing some infrastructure dollars to potentially land a project. But I think getting more proactive on that and saying, "If you need this, we're willing to provide this," just further helps make those deals occur.

Justin Bibb (00:55:36):

I'll say that, as I said all afternoon, it's so important that, and it's critical that we've had a president in President Biden who actually caress and believes in American cities, and this new industrial policy being led by the president I think is going to position Cleveland really well, because we are making things in this country again, and we are primed to take advantage of this new economic competitiveness strategy. In terms of who owns it, we are going to do our part at the city of Cleveland. When I took office, we restructured our economic development and community development areas, where we now have a chief of integrated development so we can have a one-stop shop, that's the goal long-term. We're also going to continue to be aggressive with our balance sheet, and being thoughtful about how we deploy and use and target the right incentives to encourage good, inclusive growth that's going to create good paying jobs in our city.

(00:56:32):

But the other thing we have to do as mayors is we have to sell, sell, sell and pitch our story to the world to bring new investment back to our city. I'm excited to see that Dan Gilbert and Bedrock are looking to commit over \$3.6 billion to revitalize our riverfront, it was featured in The Economist a couple of weeks ago. And I'm talking to investors every week about how to invest in Cleveland and northeast Ohio to make sure that we can be a leading giant in the Midwest, in the country, once again. But we have to be creative, and so I'm really excited to have a county executive as well here in Calgary County that I partner with as well too. And I would say the state government has been very supportive as well. JobsOhio has been a great partner to us here in Cleveland, but we as mayors have to look under every table for every dollar to get our fair share to be competitive.

Lavea Brachman (00:57:31):

Mayor Schember?

Joseph Schember (00:57:31):

I totally agree with everything that both of you said. We've got to take this on, we've got to transform our area. West 12th Street in Erie, in fact, all the way over to East 12th Street, was all manufacturing firms. My first job as a young kid growing up was in a factory on West 12th, and my job was they would do aluminum castings, once they cooled off enough, they would come to me, I would chip the excess aluminum off. And I earned enough in one summer to pay for my fall and spring semesters at Gannon University, which is a university in Erie.

Justin Bibb (00:57:31):

Wow.

Joseph Schember (00:58:06):

And I enjoyed the job so much. I became friends with my coworkers, most of them were much older than me, we would get together on weekends and play cards and things. It was just an incredible experience. But all that kind of job has gone away now. They don't even exist anymore. That's all been automated now. And our West 12th Street became an empty street. We have all these huge buildings, but now they're starting to fill back up again. There's the new kind of business, which, because I'm an older guy, I don't totally understand all the stuff that we're seeing in front of us here, all that, but I know that's the future. That's what my kids do, they do that kind of stuff and explain it to me. But it's just incredible, and I think we will continue to move forward with that.

Christina Muryn (00:58:55):

One thing I just want to add is we talk a lot about landing larger investments, the attraction piece of economic development, I just want to hit really quick that in Findlay and across the country, your largest economic development driver goes back to yesterday's panel with small businesses and growing your existing businesses. It's not just about that attraction now that's flashy and fun to discuss, but it goes back to all of the other components we talked about. A safe community, good educational system, good housing options, amenities. You're not going to attract businesses if you're not going to have a place where their workers want to work. So it's really about looking at a comprehensive view, and that is what mayors do every single day to get it going.

Justin Bibb (00:59:38):

Absolutely.

Lavea Brachman (00:59:39):

Thank you for that great question. I think we have time for maybe a couple more.

Rashid Mahal (00:59:42):

Thank you, mayors.

Speaker 9 (00:59:44):

I'm over here, ma'am.

Rashid Mahal (00:59:45):

Right over here. Thank you, mayors. Thank you, Mayor Bibb, for everything you're doing in the city of Cleveland. Rashid Mahal, city of Cleveland. My question to you relates to resilience at the city hall. As we enter post pandemic world, how have your city halls now developed resilience to address potential hiccups, economics, health, et cetera? How are we better prepared today than we were two years ago to handle massive shifts that are sometimes unanticipated?

Thank you.

Joseph Schember (01:00:22):

One of the things we've done is we had no security at our city hall, and during COVID, we started to talk about that and thought, hey, this is a good time. And so, now, you can't just walk into city hall. You have to go through a metal detector, and we have police officers who are there, and they'll look at people, and if you set off the alarm, they'll check you out more closely. And then, you can't go upstairs. When I first became mayor, people told me that they would see people wandering around on our fifth floor and not know what were doing, and the people didn't seem to know what they were doing either. So that security that we put in place is probably a minor thing for the entire city, but it sure meant a lot to the city hall, and I think made all of our employees feel much more comfortable being at work, and not worried about who might come into their office or that sort of thing. That's just one example.

Christina Muryn (01:01:20):

Yeah, I'll go quick. So I think resiliency in Findlay and Hancock County and the things, we didn't change a lot with our government processes necessarily, I would say that we found different ways to do business, to make sure that we are more adaptable and more accessible to citizens. Simple things, I know it's silly, but we didn't really have online payment options for a lot of our services, so implementing that was something that came out of the pandemic. Forms just being online, different things like that, you don't have to come up to the office to pick it up. We streamlined those.

(01:01:52):

But I think the largest thing that we noticed with our community is, again, the diversity in our economy, and how that was really beneficial. Some of our larger cities that their downtowns were primarily office spaces were much harder hit, especially given that Ohio city's are income tax based primarily, when folks were suddenly not working there, we were fortunate that we have a little bit of a cross section of everything, so our economy overall was very stabilized. But I think just tightening some of those bonds and improving processes was something that occurred coming out of the pandemic.

Justin Bibb (01:02:32):

I think one of the things that was hard for me to grapple with and my leadership team, we had to have the entire cabinet and many members of our administration be trained in how to handle a mass shooting inside of city hall, but also how to handle a mass shooting if it happens in our city. And it's the one call I know I'm going to get at some point, and I just pray to God that I have the strength and the stamina and the courage to handle it in an effective way. Those are the things that are hard, those are hard conversation to have with your leadership team, but I think you have to have them now so you can build that resiliency long-term.

(01:03:18):

And I would also say one of the things that we learned during the pandemic, I took office at the height of Omicron, we were getting ready to host the NBA All-Star game, probably the first global event coming out of the Omicron variant in 2022, and we got really focused on how do we better coordinate with the county public health department, how do we better coordinate with our foundations and our faith-based communities to get folks vaccinated and boosted. And I think those protocols and those partnerships will really allow us to be more effective and ready for the next pandemic in whatever wave it comes in.

Lavea Brachman (01:03:57):

I think we have time for one more question.

Gene Gordon (01:04:00):

Okay, I'm over here. Is the mic on? Oh, okay. My name's Gene Gordon. I'm from St. Louis, Missouri. You just mentioned an about mass shootings. We just had one in St. Louis that happened at the fifth floor of my office building. But listening to you guys, it sounds like after five o'clock sounds like stability, but my thing is, you mentioned jobs, jobs, workforce, with all in reality that 90% of jobs are going to be displaced by automation and advanced technology, and you didn't touch on that without condemnation. Another thing is, they didn't answer the question that, don't answer, who will own it? Who would control it? And where would the money come from? I know we got a lot of money from the stimulus, but that's not the tide that's going to lift all boats. What are you going to do in reference to poverty, racism, and crime in the community? And all you are mayors receptive to, he mentioned a paradigm, to taking a look at a new paradigm, because it's obvious that old systems and concepts are not working. How receptive are you to look at a new paradigm?

Justin Bibb (01:05:27):

So I'm going to say something that's not popular, mayors can't solve all those problems by themselves. If you expect your mayor to solve structural racism, structural poverty, and the poverty of violence in our cities, you're sadly mistaken. And this is why having lawmakers in your state, legislatures who share your values, who share our values, is so important, and this is why having a congress who can get their act together in D.C. is so important. But the things we're committed to doing here in Cleveland is making sure we are doing our part to be a competitive thriving city that addresses some of these issues.

(01:06:08):

Number one, I talked about our aggressive approach to make sure we have a strategy to create traded sector job growth, so that folks can have real long-term wealth creation. We are aggressively looking at how do we close the learning loss in our school district so that every child in our city has a high quality school to go to, because when you graduate from a public high school in Cleveland, not only should you get that diploma, but you should be able to pass English 101 at a community college or at a Cleveland State University. That should be the baseline foundation. And then, we're going to hold companies accountable. We just passed an historic community benefits ordinance here in Cleveland to make sure that if you build in our city, Cleveland residents and minority developers get their fair share.

(01:06:55):

And so, we as mayors, we're going to do our part, but our legislatures and Congress, they've got to do their part too. And residents have a role to play in this conversation as well, because government is not the solution. Everybody has a role to play and we can't forget that.

Lavea Brachman (01:07:14):

Quick responses.

Joseph Schember (01:07:14):

I totally agree with that, but I still try to have a big impact on it and make things better. I think I mentioned before our Police Athletic League, that's a long-term solution. We started with kids in grade school, and some of them are now in high school, but none of them are working yet, but eventually, we hope these kids that have gone through the Police Athletic League appreciate and value themselves more and don't think negatively about themselves, but because of the experience they've had working with our police, and our firefighters are involved in this too, that that will transform them into at least average citizens, people that have a good job, know how to go to work in the morning, and then do other things at night at home, and hopefully build a good relationship with...

(01:08:06):

I'm fortunate, I've been married to my wife for 43 years. By the way, I dated her for 10 years before that trying to convince her to marry me. Sometimes she tells me she's still not sure she made the right decision. But I'd just encourage the more all of us can be involved, and try and encourage everybody to have a good life, the better it'll be. You don't have to be robbing people to make money.

Christina Muryn (01:08:31):

I will try to briefly answer or hit on all of the items you mentioned. First of all, the workforce issue is a long-term issue. We've seen a significant decrease in immigration, we've seen the baby boomers retiring, we see people waiting longer to have children, there's a total shift. So I'm not really concerned too much about people being replaced by automation, I think that it creates new jobs with different skills, and we need to make sure that we're preparing for that appropriately.

(01:08:57):

As for structural systematic changes, those take time. And I think the one thing that I really want to hit on is the fact that we have to build communities of belonging, and that means sitting down and having conversations and understanding people's humanity and those relationships. And I think mayors have a great opportunity to be a convener on that and help set the expectation of those, but it's completely part of... It's all of our responsibilities, and engaging people across our community, to sit down and come to the table and have meaningful conversations, I think, is extremely important, along with all of those other aspects on the work that many of you are doing.

(01:09:42):

So I think these are all very complex issues, these are the probably very similar problems that we've been talking about for the last 16 years that this has been held, and I think we're making significant progress, but there's a lot more work to be done.

Lavea Brachman (01:09:57):

Well, I don't know about you, but this conversation's made me very proud to be on the stage with each of you. Round of applause for these elected officials.

Justin Bibb (01:10:09):

Mission accomplished.