

**MEDIA ADVISORY**

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## **Do We Have the Public Will To Reduce Poverty?**

### ***Religious, Business and Community Leaders Discuss the Importance of New Partnerships in Combating Poverty***

**When: Wednesday, May 7, 2008, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**Where: Council on Foundations Leadership Summit  
Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center  
Chesapeake Room D/E  
National Harbor, MD**

**Washington, D.C.** – Religious, business and community leaders from across the political spectrum will come together on Wednesday, May 7 for a series of panel discussions focusing on the growing public will to reduce poverty. The three panel discussions are sponsored by the foundation-led initiative, Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity, and will take place at the Council on Foundation's 2008 Annual Conference at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center from 2-5 p.m.

The panel discussions, which are part of the conference's Advanced Practice Institute on poverty, will look at the importance of capitalizing on and sustaining the political will to tackle poverty. "The emergence of new partners is vital and suggests that the public has reached a critical turning point in its willingness to come up with workable solutions for tackling poverty," said Michael Laracy, coordinator for public policy at The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Laracy and Andrea Silbert, president of the Eos Foundation, will provide introductory remarks for all three panels.

**PANEL ONE:** *Poverty is Too Expensive: What Happens if the Chamber of Commerce Says Poverty is Unaffordable?*

In both Savannah, Ga., and Kalamazoo, Mich., the local Chamber of Commerce has coordinated community projects to tackle poverty. In Missouri, companies provided support for a regional poverty walk that led to a 2007 Mayors' Summit on Poverty. What has lead growing numbers of business leaders to get involved in fighting poverty?

- **Jodie Levin-Epstein (Moderator)**, deputy director, Center for Law and Social Policy
- **Daniel Dodd**, project director, Step Up, Savannah's Poverty Reduction Initiative
- **Anne Doss**, co-chair, Southern Business Leadership Council, and executive vice president, Wachovia
- **Nicole Ravenell**, president and CEO, the Southern Institute on Children and Families

**PANEL TWO: *Poverty Among Us: What Happens if Evangelical Christians Bring Their Fervor from the Front Lines into the National Policy Debate?***

Evangelical Christians are on the front lines when it comes to helping those most in need. Christian churches and evangelical movements also run multi-million dollar community and workforce development corporations. This session explores the potential of a broader, more cohesive faith-based campaign for creating policy solutions to domestic poverty.

- **David Kuo (Moderator)**, CEO and managing member, LibertyWire.com, and former deputy director of the White House Office of Faith-Based Initiatives under President George W. Bush
- **Charles E. Blake**, presiding bishop and pastor, Church of God in Christ
- **Lee de Leon**, president and CEO, Templo Calvario Development Corporation
- **Ronald Foreman**, national social services secretary, The Salvation Army
- **Daniel Vestal**, executive coordinator, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

**PANEL THREE: *Poverty in the Gulf: What Lessons Have Emerged on Sustaining Partnerships?***

The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina provided unmistakable evidence of the poverty in our midst. This session looks at the current state of public and private strategies to rebuild in the Gulf region and the implications for sustaining a national commitment to reduce poverty.

- **Ashley Shelton (Moderator)**, vice president of programs, Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation
- **Angela Glover Blackwell**, founder and CEO, PolicyLink
- **Gloria Johnson-Cusack**, senior vice president, Greer, Margolis, Mitchell, Burns, and Associates, former special assistant to President Bill Clinton and director of public liaison in the White House Office of National Service

Media check-in for Council on Foundations sessions is in room Chesapeake 9 of the convention center.

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*Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity: Foundations Ask Presidential Candidates What They'll Do for America is a new initiative supported by American foundations to develop sustained political will on the pressing issues of poverty and opportunity. Spotlight starts by engaging candidates in substantive discussions about poverty in our country and eliciting ideas and perspectives about what must be done.*

*The Spotlight web site offers the latest research and news from around the country and features compelling commentary from leading public figures and experts. Through ongoing forums, discussions, and outreach, Spotlight will seek to ensure that poverty and opportunity are on the national agenda long after the elections are over. For more information, visit [www.spotlightonpoverty.org](http://www.spotlightonpoverty.org).*