

**Keynote Speech:
90th Anniversary Symposium
Indiana University School of Social Work**

Andrew Cuomo

Abstract: *In celebration of 90 years of social work education at Indiana University, the School of Social Work sponsored an Anniversary Symposium on April 12, 2002.*

Andrew Cuomo, former U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and current candidate for New York State Governor, delivered the keynote address. In his address, Mr. Cuomo recognized the history and growth of Indiana University School of Social Work from its origin in 1911 to its current status as a state-wide, multi-campus enterprise. He discussed the formation of Project Help (Housing Enterprise for the Less Privileged) and shared some of his experiences as Secretary of HUD. He also explored several contemporary social, political, and philosophical issues, including the potential long-term effects of the tragic events of September 11, 2001.

Introduced by Ms. Jane Schlegel, M.S.W., Chair of the Indiana University School of Social Work Campaign Committee, Mr. Cuomo interspersed his prepared remarks with spontaneous reflections. His comments are presented here in unedited fashion.

Keywords: *Andrew Cuomo, Indiana University School of Social Work, housing, social policy, homelessness*

Jane Schlegel: It's now my pleasure to introduce our guest for the day, who didn't even get lunch. He just got here, and it's one of those days when probably everything didn't go according to the plan, but we've all had those. So, we're very sympathetic to that.

I could immediately sense the energy Andrew Cuomo brings to his work, to his campaigning, and I'm sure to his family. I just want to touch on a few things. He has a website, which is <http://andrewcuomo.com>. If you want to read about his work and his campaign for the Governor of New York in more detail, you could go to the website.

In the meantime, I want to mention something that he did that I think as social workers is significant and reflects his energy and creativity. In 1986, as a young

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attorney, he started a program called HELP. HELP stands for Housing Enterprise for the Less Privileged. This is a provider of transitional housing, and many of the wraparound services that go with helping people who have been homeless move to self-sufficiency. After he started that program, in 1991 he became head of the New York City Commission on the Homeless while continuing to operate HELP. In 1993, he came to Washington, D.C., first as Under Secretary of HUD, and he was determined from what I could tell from reading, to bring to the federal government the lessons he had learned at the city level. He developed a continuum of care strategy to help the homeless become self-supporting at HUD. At HUD he created a consolidated planning process that gave communities and their residents a greater role in determining how HUD money was used. Both his continuum of care project and his consolidated planning process won the Harvard Universities Kennedy School of Government Innovations in America Government Award. I think that's pretty impressive. We're always looking for innovations in government.

I want to quote David Osborne, who wrote a book that was actually the Bible of our former Mayor Steve Goldsmith, and that book is *Reinventing Government*. Some of you may have read it or heard of it. He wrote that Andrew Cuomo's management reform "represents one of the most ambitious, fundamental, and exciting reinvention plans in the recent history of Federal Government."

Andrew Cuomo was born in New York City. He became a lawyer. As you know, we've heard of his father who served as Governor of New York. Andrew Cuomo is now running for Governor of New York, himself. He is married to Kerry Kennedy Cuomo. They have three daughters, and I would predict as those daughters get a little older, he may wish he were back running HUD. It will probably look like a walk in the park.

Andrew Cuomo: Thank you very much. I'm going to leave the comment about the three daughters and running HUD alone, because I'm not sure what I could do with that that would work out well. Thank you for the kind introduction.

It's a true pleasure to be here today with all of you. I want to first thank Chancellor Bepko and Dean Patchner for the invitation. It's a pleasure to be with them. It's a pleasure to be back in Indianapolis. I did a lot of work here when I was the HUD Secretary. Mayor Goldsmith was mentioned, and Mayor Hudnut, who was a very creative fellow. We did a lot with Indianapolis, and it's a very beautiful city. One of the good things from my experience in Washington: I was all across the nation in literally every state, and I think Indianapolis really brings the best of all the different urban components together. It has a strong economy. It has an urban life, but it's a very livable city. It's a pleasant city, and it has a great population. So, it's a pleasure to be here.

I did work in Fort Wayne, and I did work in Gary. Whenever you think we're a success, and we've mastered the universe, you can always just take a ride to Gary and look at some of those neighborhoods. Then you know how much more work that we have to do. I've heard the slogan that was used in the other room. I heard it a little differently, though. Maybe it's an East Coast thing. I heard that great cities have great universities, and great universities have great schools of social work, and great schools of social work have great alumni and faculty. That's the way I heard that statement.

Congratulations on 90 years of great work! I believe that the School of Social Work truly does do the Lord's work. I believe it's going to be a growth business, and I'm going to speak to that in a moment. I'm sure we need it more and more than ever before. It is a tough field, but ultimately more rewarding, if not more challenging than dealing with buildings, or dealing with finance, or dealing with marketing. You're dealing with people. That's the beginning, and that is the end.

You heard about my experience at HELP from Jane. HELP was a not-for-profit organization that helped homeless families. Homeless families was a euphemism. Homelessness still is a euphemism. We don't want to admit exactly what it is, so we call it homeless. It sort of immunizes us from the pain of what it actually is.

When I was working with homeless families in New York in the late '80s, the number one cause of homelessness was domestic violence. Number two was substance abuse. Number three was mental health. We called it all homeless. We made it a housing problem, which made it almost simpler to deal with, less painful. If you ever had to admit the problem we have with domestic violence, and admit that we have a problem where men abuse women in our society physically and with frequency, that this is not an issue that is isolated to any economic group, but is pervasive, that would be difficult for us. So, we call it homeless.

I started working with the homeless and formed an organization called HELP. Fifteen years later it's the largest provider for the homeless in the nation. Seventy-five thousand people have gone through it. To this day, I believe it's the greatest thing that I've done with my life thus far. It got difficult, and that's why I say your work is so challenging. Primarily, we were a social service organization that provided housing, but only as a place for the delivery of services. We worked with social workers, who basically ran the operations. We went from two employees to 500 employees over a number of years. I did it for five years, and at the end of five years I couldn't take it anymore. The day-in, the day-out, the human trauma that you deal with. For every one success, you have two stories where you take a step back. Ultimately, I couldn't take it. It was too much of a toll. I fled help for the safety of the bureaucracy. I became a paper pusher in Washington, DC. It was nice. There was no human contact. I dealt with the Congress, and I didn't consider that human contact. I was one of the youngest cabinet secretaries in history as you heard from the Chancellor.

Bobby Kennedy, who would have been my father-in-law, was younger when he was named Attorney General by his brother. That was nepotism, so I don't count that as competition. I was appointed, and I was 39 years old. I was head of HUD. I left four years later, but those were a long four years. Those were the Clinton administration four years. We experienced all sorts of things in those four years. Those were long days, and those were long nights. Four years later I left, and I was 67 years old. That's why I look the way I do. HUD was a difficult post. I got HUD basically because everyone else was too smart to go there. It was the enemy of the Republican Congress. They wanted one thing. They wanted to blow up HUD. That was their main point. They wanted to eliminate it, and God bless them, they were not shy. They told you exactly how they felt.

I remember when I was nominated for HUD. The President can nominate you, but only the Senate can confirm you. These are very different concepts, and the

Senate wants to make sure that you understand this, that the President only nominates, but they confirm, so, therefore, you work for the Senate, and therefore you are responsive to them. So, they hold your life in their hands for a period of time. They call it the Senate Confirmation Process, but really they just take you by a string, and they dangle you over a flame for a period of time until you pay the amount of appropriate respect due to the United States Senate and Congress, and then they either release you to four years of pain, or just drop you directly into the flame. So, I ran the gauntlet that was the Senate Confirmation process, and I was going through the hearings, and one of the Senators, who was from down South, and who was a big enemy of HUD and everything that HUD did, because HUD helped those poor people in those poor places with those funky problems that shouldn't exist in the first place, and we were going through the process, and the Senator looked at me and said, "Now, boy, you don't have to bother unpacking when you come down because you're not going to be here that long," but I was, and we saved HUD.

I turned out to be a successful HUD Secretary, successful HUD Secretary being defined as a HUD Secretary who's not indicted by the end of his tenure, and I did that. We actually made some changes, and we did some good things. We did good things on the areas that you work in. We did a lot of work on the homeless. We doubled the budget. When I got to HUD, the budget for homelessness was about \$300 million. It was still seen basically as a housing physical problem, the continuum of care, but as a social service model to helping the homeless, and we brought the budget up to over a billion dollars, and we brought not-for-profits in all across the nation to work on the issue. We bought home ownership to its highest level in history, 67%, and we fought discrimination. We did a lot of good work, and if I took any lesson, it was how much needs to be done, but yet what a great potential we have to do great things. Those are the points I want to touch on today.

I want to start with one quick story that sums up the point to me. That's the story of the farmer and the flood, which sort of brings it all home to me. The story of the farmer in the rural part of the county. It had been raining for a number of days. The county officials were concerned about the rain, and they called up the county, and they found out that the river was starting to swell, and that there was going to be a flood. The county officials got in a large truck, and they went out to the rural part of the county and went to the farmhouse. They said to the farmer, "You see all this rain? Actually the river's swelling, and there's going to be a flood, but we have some time. We have a big truck outside. We're going to take you and your belongings to safety." The farmer looked at the county official and said, "No, I'm a God fearing man. I go to church every Sunday, and the Lord will take care of me." The county official said, "All right, but we have the truck, so let's go ahead and get in the truck." The farmer said, "No," and they were back and forth a little bit. Then the county officials left disgusted. The rain kept coming and kept coming, and a few days later there was six feet of water. The county officials, being industrious as they were—good government employees, they now had a boat. They got in the boat, and they went back to the farmhouse. They said to the farmer, "We told you that it was raining. We told you that they said it was going to flood, and now you have six feet of water, but don't worry we have a boat outside. We're going to bring you to safety in the boat." The farmer looked at them, and said, "No, I'm a God fearing man. I go to

church every Sunday, and the Lord will take care of me." They said, "We know. You said that last time, and look where we are now in six feet water. Get in the boat now while we still have time!" The farmer said, "No, the Lord's going to be there for me. I'm sure of it! I'm sure of it!" They said, "Come on, we'll get in the boat, and we'll take care of the Lord later." He still said, "No," and they went back and forth, and they argued. Eventually, the farmer insisted that they get back in the boat, and they leave. The rain keeps coming, and keeps coming, and now the farmer is standing on the roof of the farmhouse, and the water is up to the farmer's neck. Only his head is above the water. He has his head above the water, and he's looking up. As he's looking up, he hears a great rumbling sound, and the clouds start to part, and there's a loud noise as the clouds are parting, and it gets windy. Then there's a helicopter. It's the county officials that are in the helicopter. They throw down a rope and they say, "Grab the rope! It's us, the county officials. We can still save you. Grab the rope, and we'll pull you up to safety." The farmer said, "No, I'm a God fearing man. I go to church every Sunday, and the Lord. . ." They said, "Grab the rope before it's too late!" In the next scene, the farmer's at the pearly gates. He meets our maker, and the Lord says, "Hello, welcome to heaven." The farmer says, "It's nice to be here. I guess it's better than the alternative, but, Lord, I'm confused. I went to church every Sunday. I thought you were going to be there for me. What happened?" Our Lord looked back at the farmer and said, "You're confused? I'm confused. I sent a truck, a boat, and a helicopter. What happened?"

The point to me is that in the final analysis, it is up to us. It is our action. It is our initiative that will decide destiny and decide fate. Nothing happens. What happens is what we make happen, and it starts with us. I think that's an important lesson for today, because we are at a crossroads. I think the Chancellor is exactly right. I think this nation is at a point that it can go in different directions, and we're working through that right now, but we are truly at a crossroads. As they say Indiana is at a crossroads, we are at a crossroads today for a number of reasons. Number one, the economy is basically good. It's not great, but it's basically good, and we don't have to be preoccupied with the economy. When the economy is bad, it becomes the entire subject of the day. When the economy is good, we're not worried about our immediate economic wealth.

We have a 1996 welfare reform act that has given us a totally different program model of how we're going to help millions of people across the United States. We are more diverse as a nation than ever before. By the year 2050, we will be a majority minority. You go all over the United States and you meet new immigrants. Immigration and diversity is now not just a function of the coasts. They're in Minneapolis. There are new immigration patterns all across the United States, and that is changing us. We are younger. The baby boomers are moving on. There is a new generation. Generation X, generation Y, and I'm not part of it, but they see the world totally differently. A different set of values, different stimuli, and they're now taking their place.

Most importantly, I think, and what's going to be most transformative is the 9/11 experience. I think one day they will talk about 9/11 the way they talked about the John F. Kennedy assassination, or World War I, or World War II, or being a Depression baby. This is going to be individually formative, and formative of the

nation. I think we're still working through it, and I don't think we've determined yet what it has meant. I think we're still processing the feelings, but you can see two very different options, and you can see that we're at a fork. One option is that we can take the 9/11 incident, and we can take that fear, and we can close down. We can constrict. In some ways it's almost the natural response. When you get startled, (remember) the startled reflex with a child... when you're afraid, you constrict. Your body says, "Pull within. Close down. Cover your vulnerable parts. Reduce your vulnerability." You can almost see us doing that as a people. Closing down, building walls, getting suspicious, getting afraid. You're different than I am. You have a different skin color. You have a different tone. Maybe you're a terrorist. Let me see your papers. Let me pull you off the line. Getting afraid and getting tight is an option for us individually, and for us as a nation. You can't trust anyone. Become nationalistic, close out borders, close out boundaries, and get tight.

The second option is to go the exact opposite way. Yes, we are vulnerable. Yes, we can be hurt, but the solution is not to close down, but to open up, and be liberated by the vulnerability. Not to be restricted by it. Let's learn why, understand why, and let's become more protective and more secure certainly, but let's reach out and form alliances, and form connections, and become safe in the whole, rather than individualized and isolated. That is a less natural response. It is a more intellectual, more intelligent response, and I believe long-term a more productive response, but not a natural one.

I believe in government. I'm running for Governor. Why? Because I believe in government. Forget all the politics and all the bologna. Government is purely the vehicle that says we will operate as a collective. If you choose the fork that says, "We should be community. We should be together," then the vehicle that does together, that does community, is government! It gets too complicated with all these TV shows, all these program numbers, and all this federal mumbo jumbo. All government is is when we decide we're going to do something together, the committee we form is called government, and it does what we can't do as individuals.

We need the military defense. Not everyone can defend the country. Okay, we'll have a committee do it. We need to protect ourselves domestically. We'll have a police force. We can't do it individually. Okay, we'll form a committee. That committee becomes government. If you believe in the collective rather than the individual, and you need an implementation vehicle, that then is government. So, yes, I believe in government. Yes, I'm running for governor, and yes, I was at HUD, but only because I believe in the collective. Not because I have any great need to amass pension benefits as a government employee, only because I believe in the collective. I believe that the vehicle has to work. I believe that the vehicle has to be credible, and I believe we have a lot of reform to do in that way, because the government vehicle doesn't work today.

Only 18% of the new generation that's coming on vote. Why? Because government doesn't work. Government isn't inspirational. They didn't have a John F. Kennedy, a Bobby Kennedy, or a Martin Luther King. They had none of that. Their main interaction with government is the Department of Motor Vehicles, when they get a license, and the Internal Revenue Service, when they decide to make some money. These are not inspiring interactions where you say, "I want to be with

them. I want to be that clerk in the DMV." They don't have that same feeling. You have to make it work.

First, the politics, the political paradigm we have today is outdated. When I was in Washington, one of the marbles I had was whatever the issue was before the United States Congress; the vote was always by party line. Democrats always voted for Democrats, and Republicans always voted for Republicans on whatever the issue. Should we cut down trees under six feet tall in the Midwest? Democrats all have one opinion, and Republicans all have one opinion. How can it be? The loyalty was to the party label rather than the public interest in public service. It had become more about your party affiliation than your popular sentiment. They didn't bring the independent judgment that was suppose to be representative of government that Jefferson and Madison talked to us about where you're going to represent the people and bring your skills and abilities. They said, "What's the call on this one boss?" "We vote against the trees that are six feet tall." It constantly was that sort, and that doesn't work. The traditional definitions don't even work. The Democrats want to have a simplistic view that says, "The private sector is bad, and we need government to control the private sector." That doesn't work. Maybe you have that fear coming out of the depression, where you saw the private sector victimize women and children, but that was decades ago.

The Republican view is that government is bad. If you just let the private sector work, life will be all rosy. Go look at Gary and Deanna after eight years of the strongest economy in history, and tell me how well the private sector does lifting all votes. Gary was anchored if that was your theory that it lifts all votes. The traditional paradigm doesn't work. Also the operating model of government doesn't work. It is where the corporate sector was 30-40 years ago.

The best analogy I have is the analogy of the bank in the '60s. Remember what a bank was about in the '60s. The power was in the bank. The power was in the corporate institution, and you were just a consumer. You were just a customer. You had no power. You were just a person. They were the corporate entity. The bank was always on the corner of every city. Big granite building with big columns that made the statement, "I am the bank and you are a mere person." You would go to the bank, but you would go to the bank on the bank's terms. The bank closed at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Why? Who could get there by 3 o'clock in the afternoon? It didn't matter. If you wanted your money, you figured out how to come. They laid a reform, and then they were actually open on Saturday mornings as a convenience. You'd have your little pass book, and you'd go up to the teller and say, "May I please have my money back?" "Well do you have your pass book? Let me see if the paper is in order?" "I forgot my pass book." "Then, no money for you today!" The power was with the bank. The power was with the institution. We've gone 180 degrees from there. Now I have my ATM card. If I have to move more than 10 feet in any direction to find an ATM teller, I'm going to get a new bank because that's just unacceptable. I have the power. I am the customer. I am the consumer. I don't care. The power is not in the institution. The power is me.

Government is still in the '60s model. They think they are the institution, and you must come to them. It doesn't work that way. The whole service delivering mechanism doesn't work. The whole organization doesn't work. The stovepipe approach doesn't work.

I was in the Department of Housing. Then there's the Department of Health and Human Services. What if you had a health problem and a housing problem? Then you come to me, and I'll give you an apartment. Then you have to go next door and see Donna Shalala, and she'll give you health needs, but the problems aren't presented that way. Homelessness, domestic violence, substance abuse, it doesn't happen that way. It doesn't happen in the stovepipes, but that's the way the government is organized, and if you don't present the problem the way the government is organized, they don't recognize the problem. None of these things work top down anymore. All of the solutions are bottom up. All of them are comprehensive solutions on a community basis.

Government as a service deliverer doesn't work. The not-for-profits are much better. Make the government work. Change the political paradigm, get out of the old labels, change the operating methodology, make it perform, and make it work. Then you'll start to have the credibility to actually address the new problems.

Once you have government working, the two priorities in my opinion, first of all, the public education system. You can go to any city in this nation, and there are two education systems. You can go to the rich side of town. They will show you the schools on the rich side of town, either public or private, and they will be state-of-the-art. You go to the first grade, and you see first graders on a Pentium processor. You go to school on the poor side of town, and it's the exact opposite. The most sophisticated piece of electronic equipment they will have is the metal detector that you walk through on the way to the classroom. Two different education systems.

What was supposed to be the great equalizer for American society, the education system, now has become the great discriminator. It was the great equalizer. It said, "I don't care what color your skin, where you came from, what your accent is, what your country of origin, or how much money your parents have in the bank, you can become the president of the United States based just on the public education system." That was the American experiment, and that was American democracy. We'll invest in you. We'll grow you, and you'll help all of us. We did that through the public education system. That was it. No handouts. Nobody ever asked for a hand-out, but we'll give you an education, the public education system. Now it does the exact opposite. And now you have a real fear that if your child goes to the wrong school, the child will never catch up. If your child goes there seven, eight, or nine years, he or she may be left behind for the rest of their lives and not be able to catch up. That is job one.

Job two is going to be the issue of race. The outside threats have gone for this nation. The internal threat is more dangerous and more insidious. Racism is alive and well. We don't even want to admit it. We don't even want to talk about it, let alone solve it. It's almost like homelessness and domestic violence. We don't want to say domestic violence. Why? Because it hurts us. It's too painful to admit the problem we have. Race is the same thing. We don't even want to talk about it, but it is there across the board. It is just as ugly as it was in the '60s and the '50s. That same brutal, physical kind of ugliness and racism.

They dragged a black man, Mr. Bird, to his death in Texas only because he was African-American. I did a case in Pennsylvania when I was at HUD. We sued the Ku Klux Klan. Why? Because the Ku Klux Klan targeted a woman who was biracial. She

had an African-American father and a white mother. This was a biracial girl. The KKK's fear was that you may not know that she was biracial, because she was very light skinned. This is a great fear for the KKK that you're going to mix blood, and you may not know that this woman is African-American. So, what they did as a public service was they put her picture and her identification on their website. They would track her whereabouts, so everybody would know exactly where she was. So, if you went into an establishment, and someone happened to meet her, you would know she's black. God forbid you would be on notice. The family ultimately moves from Pennsylvania. Thank God for the Internet, because the KKK could track the family. The family moves five times in two years, trying to get away from the KKK. We sued the KKK. That was the first time the KKK had ever been sued, and the Grand Marshall of the KKK of the State of Pennsylvania. That was two and one-half years ago. Discrimination has also become a little more subtle, and a little more intellectual and institutionalized. It is inherent in our banking system, our housing system, and our insurance system.

We used to do discrimination testing at HUD. Take the same financial form, every number and every statistic the same. We'd give it to an African-American, and give it to a white person. They would both go into the bank. The same exact life history, everything exactly the same, just the color of the skin different. The white would get the loan, and the African-American wouldn't. That's in the year 2000, and we don't even want to talk about it, but we're becoming more and more diverse. The problem's not going to go away on its own. Don't worry, it will go away. No, it's going to get worse, and it's not just black/white. It's black, white, brown, yellow, Asian. Seventy-five different languages in the New York City public school system. One-hundred and ten different languages in the L.A. public school system. Learn how to deal with this, or it will defeat you, I am convinced, because the whole experiment was, "Don't worry, we can take people from different places and bring them together, and they'll forge one nation." The differences will be a source of strength and not weakness. That's not where it is now. We have to have the courage to speak about this issue and address it.

God blessed Bill Clinton. He talked about a one America race dialogue. He said, "Let's have this discussion in every church, in every temple, in every school, and every kitchen table all across the nation," and understand why we get afraid when a person is different. What does it say to us? When a person has a different skin color or a different accent, why does it challenge me? Why does it threaten me? What does it say to me that makes me angry and makes me fearful? Understand the problem. Then secondly, say to this nation, "It is not just wrong discrimination, it is illegal." By the current laws today, it is illegal. We don't enforce the laws, but it is illegal. Enforce those laws with the same vengeance that you enforce the drug laws, that you enforce the tax laws. Say to the people in this nation, "No, we will not tolerate discrimination, and we're going to enforce it," and take the enforcement agencies and those laws, and make them work. Not that the EEOC is a joke.

In my state, the State of New York, Division of Human Rights, you make a complaint, it takes seven years to hear the case. You know what that means? The case is never heard because Justus delayed is Justus denied. You can't make a case after seven years. What are we really saying? We know what goes on, and it's going to be a subtle admission. Public education and race relations are going to be the top two

priorities, and we have to do it now. I believe in the fork in the road and the cross-roads. I believe we're going to take the right fork. I believe that the 9/11 experience is going to wind up having a silver lining. I don't think we're there yet. I think we're still processing it, but I think that's where it's going to come out. Maybe I have a different perspective coming from New York, where this is a much more intense response, but I think it is formative, and I think there is a silver lining, and I think this is the silver lining.

On 9/11, the first image was the plane hitting the building. That image is etched in our memory, in our heart, and in our soul. That image will never leave us. That is an image of fear, cowardliness, and pain. That is there. The second frame is the ground floor, with policeman and firefighters running into the building and showing a courage that we have never seen before. Then, people coming out of the building and being embraced by New Yorkers. Not a place known for love and charity. New Yorkers were there together in a way they had never been before. Nothing I had seen in my 44 years was anything like this. A sense of giving, a sense of charity, a sense of unity, where literally there is nothing that you could have asked that they wouldn't have done one for the other. Where they literally gave the shirt off of their backs, the blood out of their veins, the money out of their pockets. One for another, and we were one. We were one! We were united! We didn't look one to the other and say, "Oh, you're a different color skin than I am. I'm nervous of you!" We said the opposite. We didn't see the differences. We saw the similarities. We saw the commonalities. We saw the humanity. We saw the brotherhood. We held one another. We cried for one another. We looked to one another with hope, with love, and with openness, and not just within New York, the entire nation saw this. The entire nation responded the same way. From California to all across the country, they said, "We're there with you! We're all one! We're Americans! You're not a different city, a different state, you are one of us! We're united in this moment. This event has been transcended, and has brought us together." This event has created such an energy that it has gotten past all the bramble and all the weeds, and its taken us to a higher place. It said we are connected. The Chancellor said we are a fabric. We've heard for so many years that we are a fabric. We felt it. We felt that there's a cord that connects me to you, to you, to you, and to you, and maybe the cord's been invisible, but we felt the fabric that that cord weaves, and we understood that when one goes up, we all go up. When one comes down, we all come down. We got it that day. We felt it, and that was a beautiful feeling. It's like love. Once you feel it, you want it again and again and again. Love is stronger than fear. That togetherness, that joining, that union is such a powerful feeling that we want it again and again and again. If you had it once, you can have it again. If you weren't afraid of the other person once, maybe you can be together again. If you could be united as a nation once, maybe you could be united as a nation again. That is a very powerful feeling, and we had it. It's not an intellectual concept. It's not a religious concept. We tasted it. It's not in the history book, community, from the Latin *communitas* of the common. We were the common. It was Matthew 25. We were brothers. We were sisters. We felt it, and it was a great feeling. If you did it once, you can do it again. It comes back to the farmer and the flood. It's up to you! No one else is going to do it. Someone has to start the pattern. Someone has to start the cycle. Someone has to be the first person to put his or her hand out, and say, "I'm

with you. I'm not afraid of you. I'm here for you. I'm vulnerable, yes. Maybe you can hurt me, but we're all vulnerable, and I'm going to take the chance because love is greater than fear. We can do so much more together than we can do alone, and we're really together in the first place." Thank you and God Bless.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Any of the difficult questions I will give to the Dean and the Chancellor.

When are you running for President?

At this rate, I'm going to be running for cover soon.

What do you think about welfare reform reauthorization, the limited resources for welfare, and the time limits for welfare recipients?

I think welfare reform was a great opportunity, and in some ways a good thing, but in most ways a bad thing. I was on the welfare reform task force that President Clinton put together. The welfare reform that he put in had nothing to do with the welfare reform that came out. To do real welfare reform, it would have cost more money short-term, not less money. Welfare reform was not about saving money to do it intelligently. I think it came up with a false construct. The construct for welfare reform became shouldn't we make people work. The answer is obviously yes. If you can work, you should work, and welfare reform then said, "Well then you must work!" Yes, except that was never the issue in the first place. I've been in every poor community in this country. I never once had someone say, "Mr. Cuomo, do me a favor. Can you help me get a welfare check?" Never once. Instead "Help me get transportation. Help me get education. Can you help me get child care?" Never once, "Can you help me get a welfare check?" The trick was getting the person through the transition to the job. Getting from here to there is often a chasm, and resolving those issues, which are expensive and often long-term. We haven't felt the pain of this because we were in a very strong economy. The economy was going so strong that it just inhaled everyone into the job market, and the government had a lot of money, and the welfare reform plan block granted all of that money down to the cities and states, and the states gave it to the cities. So, whatever welfare burden there was could be paid. I'm afraid now the economy slows, the money that was block granted is now gone. If Indiana has a welfare problem now, and the feds say, "Well use the money I gave you four years ago," they're going to say, "That money's gone." They're giving away tax cuts. There's going to be no money, and now we're going to have a major problem. If the economy slows, the first person laid off will be the same people. They'll become the unemployment roles. They'll be very expensive. There will be no money. That's the fear. The only good news, because I was in Washington for eight years, so you had to be an optimist otherwise life was very long, the good news was politically it's not the same issue that it was. The politics of this afforded conservatives an opportunity to beat the progressives over the head with the welfare reform stick. It was quite effective for them. It's no longer a political issue to use against the progressive community. That's the good news.

How can government do a better job and use technological innovations to improve services?

(We're beginning) to see local governments getting this. I talked about the DMV. The wealthier and more advanced communities will now have web-based DMV systems, which is their way of saying, "We're starting to get this." The government needs to perform the way the bank does, and the way any institution in the country that you're going to contract with does, and they're not there yet. Local governments are starting, states with income, the federal government will come. In some ways, the more removed from the person the government is, the more entrenched it tends to be in its own bureaucracy.

When I was at HUD, I went to a web-based system. I went to kiosks in shopping malls, so that government goes where you are. You're not supposed to come to the government. The government should go where you are. Government should be convenient. It's the ATM, 10 feet here and 10 feet there. Government should speak your language. When I worked at HUD, they have a whole language of their own there at HUD. It had nothing to do with the English language. I remember the first day I walked in, they would say, "Hi, I'm working at CDBG now, and I'm going to put out a NOFA, and we're going to do a Section 8 certificate for the new com plan, so we're excited you're here." I'd say, "That's great. I'm really happy I'm here now, too." That's how they talked to people. Like you were supposed to know their language, otherwise, you were unintelligent. That is changing slowly. I think you'll see local governments start to get it first because you will demand it of local government, or they will no longer be in office. Then, it will rip them up.

What do you think about the eviction from public housing of family members of those persons convicted of drug offenses?

This was passed when I was there. This is, if you are convicted of a drug offense in public housing, it's the family associated or a tenant associated with that person that gets evicted. The most common case is when a grandmother has the lease, and the grandson is convicted of drugs, so the grandmother gets evicted. I believe this was an overreaction. We tend to work in pendulum swings. We had a problem in public housing. We had a problem with drugs, and public housing had gotten out of control. It was out of control, the Chicago housing authority. The children sleep in bathtubs because the mothers are afraid of stray bullets. The Chicago housing authority would drive the children across a courtyard in a vehicle with armor-plated glass because they're afraid to let the child walk across the courtyard to go to a school. It was out of control. Dramatic response, over-response. Anyone who was associated with a person who does any drugs is a victim. I think that's what the first strike was, but it's been upheld by the Supreme Court, and it's going to be the law. It will have, no doubt, some effect, a chilling effect, on the behavior in public housing. That's the good news. The bad news is a lot of innocent people are going to be evicted because of it, and we're going to pay a very high price. My guess is that the pendulum will swing back, but it's going to take a couple of years, and sometimes the pendulum comes back very slowly. The analogy that I'm working on now. . . New York has something called the Rockefeller drug laws. They were passed by Governor Rockefeller. This was in the '60s when you had high drug crimes. They passed a law for a very small amount of drugs. You have a minimum sentence, mandatory minimum, 10 years or 15 years. So, you have kids who would get busted with a small amount of drugs, and bang, you go away. Mandatory min-

imum. It doesn't matter what the judge says. It doesn't matter what the specific facts are. You go away. We had a tremendous increase in the prison population. All young, almost all minorities, males, small-drug related. Now, I'm trying to talk about alternatives to incarceration substance abuse for minor offenders. A prison cell costs about \$30,000 in change in New York. Residential substance abuse can be \$16,000-\$17,000. It's less expensive. It's about half the cost, plus you also redeem a person rather than paying for them forever, but change comes slowly.

What role do you see universities playing in your vision of a united, compassionate, and caring society?

I think it's going to be a key role because it is not the natural response of people. I believe the natural response is to constrict. It's almost biological. It's almost chemical. It's the startled response. You hear the noise and you close down. The alternative is an educated, informed, disciplined, intellectual response. With the universities, it is much more taught than instinctive.

Your school of social work, definitely what you're doing, the skills you've learned, will inform not just you, but you can bring this message to others. Also, universities on a practical level. Universities are great assets in a community and for most community development (and) urban development. I started a program at HUD, the University Partnership Program. Build off of the university. Make the university part of the community. It's not a fortress isolated onto itself. It is a great asset in the community. Breakdown those university walls, and let the university open itself onto the community, and let the community open itself onto the university. I had a lot of success with that program, both in concept and in practice. So, I think it works on both levels.

You said after 9/11 that people in New York united. So, what do you think about gays and lesbians getting the equal opportunity to receive the same compensation that heterosexual couples receive?

I agree with that. I'm 100% in favor of that. There's a law in the United States in the state of Vermont that's called Civet Union, which says essentially that a civet union partnership has all legal rights as if you were husband and spouse. Vermont is the only state that has that law. I would propose it in the State of New York. I would like to see the State of New York be first, but I'll settle for being second with that law.

You spoke about the (9/11 tragedy) in New York of bringing people together, and how this is the way we really should be within the nation. What seems to happen in America's past is that it seems to be a tragic situation or something very significant where we all see each other as one, but at some time after that it reciprocates. What do you see are the roles that individual non-profit government can play to sustain that and really make it a part of American life as opposed to (a transient phenomenon)?

That's an excellent question. I'm working through that now. I don't have a really specific answer for you, but I don't know that it's going to be that fleeting. You had generations that came home from World War I and World War II, and boy, they were Americans, and they understood the flag. They were united, and they felt a sense of camaraderie that no one has felt since. Certainly in my 44 years, I've never had any galvanizing experience in my lifetime. So, I don't know that it's necessarily that

fleeting for that reason, and also I don't know that the threat goes away. I don't know that 9/11 will have been a one shot, pardon the pun, I think the fear is going to be lingering because the first image of the plane in the building is going to be lingering. You turn on the TV and you hear about the Middle East and its suicide bombers and cafes and buses. After 9/11, this means it brings it home here to you, also. If you turned on the TV and you saw what's happening in the Middle East on 9/10, you would have said, "Well that's the Middle East. That could never happen here. This is America." You turn on the TV and you see that on 9/12 and you say, "That could be here."

I was in the Middle East the week before last as a sign of solidarity during this period. I went to Israel, and they live with it every day. I think that may very well be what happens here. I would love to be able to say, "Oh, don't worry, that's never going to happen again," but I don't believe it's true. I believe in some ways that 9/11 was a precedent in that it said to the world, "You can do this." Why didn't this happen before? Well, because you couldn't do it. Why not? Because it's the United States. We have all the security. They're very powerful. They're very smart. You could never do this. Nobody could ever get away with it. Now it's sort of a given. 9/11 says it's not a given. You could be a terrorist organization, not the most sophisticated, and you could actually do this. By the way, you can hit the giant in the jaw, and the giant's knees buckle, and you could take the entire United States of America and bring it down with one terrorist act. We've informed the globe of that, and I'm afraid it became self-fulfilling.

When I was in the federal government, after the Oklahoma City Bombing, the FBI said, "Be careful, because there's now going to be a rash of bombings." I said, "Why?" They said, "Because these types of fanatics see one incident, and then says to them gives them license." If you can do it once, I can do it also. I can do it again. After Oklahoma City, I don't know if they were publicized, but we had a rash of bombings. Not bombings, literally, but domestic type terrorist activities, and I think that's very much going to happen here. So, I don't know that it's fleeting for those reasons. There are going to be plenty of reminders. I also think some of this is going to be that we will remember it because it was nice. There was an element of nice here. I don't think we can say that yet. To talk this way in New York, it's almost incongruous, but there was a sweetness to New York. There was a sweetness that you've never felt in New York. It is enticing, and it is appealing. Once you taste it, you want it again. You want that sweetness back. I think that's probably the greatest reason that we'll follow that fork. It felt right, and it felt good. It felt nice, and we were just in a good place on that plane in life, and I want to go back there.

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