

PAUL TSONGAS ON CITIES

His Record

- \* Since late 1976, served on the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development and played an active role in the passage of housing legislation including parts of the energy bill designed to provide for home insulation.
- \* Served as co-chairman of the Northeast-Midwest Economic Advancement Coalition Taskforce on Housing and was active in the successful effort to change the Community Development Block Grant formula to aid the older cities of the Northeast
- \* Cosponsored the 1977 Housing and Community Development Act authorization, which included the dual formula to aid older cities. During House debate Tsongas said, "...the cities that are having real trouble are the urban+core cities. The problems of the older cities are national problems." Helped defeat an amendment to delete the dual formula approach and reduce the Community Development funds for Massachusetts.
- \* Briefed Patricia Harris, Secretary of HUD, on the controversy surrounding the Lahey Clinic's proposed move to Burlington. Tsongas did not support the move of the \$80 million medical facility because it would benefit the suburbs at the expense of Boston's urban environment (easier access to health care facilities in urban areas.)
- \* Cosponsored H.R. 6655: to ammend certain federal laws pertaining to community development, housing, and related programs.
- \* Cosponsored H.R. 8719: to provide that the Secretary of HUD shall implement programs designed to provide increased security for public housing projects.
- \* Cosponsored H.R. 7011: to provide economic adjustment to communities, industries and workers who may be affected by reductions in defense contracts and facilities.
- \* Worked to obtain a HUD subsidy for the proposed \$5.7 million Essex Towers project, crucial to the development of the project which will provide 198 units of housing for the elderly and 6,000 square feet of commercial space important to the revitalization of Lawrence.
- \* Assisted in obtaining a recreational rehabilitation grant of \$29,000 for park site improvements in Methuen.
- \* Worked with the owner of the vacant Grants Building in downtown Lawrence to get a SBA loan guarantee so the building can be rehabilitated and occupied.
- \* Worked with the city of Lawrence in applying for SBA designation as an urban development area.
- \* Worked for a HUD "neighborhood strategy are program" which would provide 270 section 8 housing units for downtown

- \* Lowell and 100 units of Lower Belvedere, totaling approximately \$13 million, important for the revitalization of these areas.
- \* Authored and introduced the legislation to create the \$40 million urban national park in Lowell, signed into law by the President in June. The bill provides for the preservation and restoration of major mill complexes in Lowell. The bill has been praised by the New York Times, Washington Post, and Boston Globe for its precedent setting approach of using the city's past to build its future. The park is the lynchpin of plans to revitalize this urban area.
- \* Supported legislation to prohibit "redlining" (practice whereby banks refuse to provide mortgages within certain ~~urban~~ areas of a city.)

### Proposals

- \* Support the use of HUD funds to rehabilitate HUD projects falling into disrepair from high vacancy rates and lack funds for maintenance.
- \* Create incentives for industry and business to move into existing facilities rather than the creation of industrial parks outside the cities. Shift the focus federal loans and tax credits from new construction to rehabilitation of existing facilities. ~~Help support~~
- \* Help support daycare facilities for business moving into urban areas.
- \* Work to create a federal-state partnership for the revitalization of urban areas: "the creation of federal incentives to encourage state governments to improve their capacity to deal effectively with the problems of their cities." Aid states to create a long range development strategy in order to coordinate the use of federal money coming into the state and maximize its effectiveness. (Reorganization of state agencies in accordance with development strategy.)
- \* Create incentives for long range planning in state development strategies for urban areas: a formula for matching state money with federal money ex. urban public transportation.
- \* Work to create a partnership between private and public investment in cities: incentives for business to move into cities, an agency to help target private investment to distressed urban areas.
- \* Shift some of the focus of federal spending from the creation of new facilities to supporting the maintenance of existing facilities-- fight urban degradation, as well as seek revitalization, ex. spending for maintenance of waterworks.
- \* Location of federal facilities in urban areas -- targeting them in distressed areas.

- \* Aid for regional facilities as part of a long range strategy for small cities, ex. vocational schools, waste treatments facilities.
- \* Make sure the long range development strategy to aid cities does not take money away from stable cities creating the degradation of these cities.
- \* Focus development strategies on the urban environment as a whole: work to get business to return to the city to combat unemployment, meanwhile rehabilitating existing facilities: work to make <sup>the</sup> urban housing environment better by rehabilitating existing housing projects: support better public transportation programs: create park sites in urban areas from vacant lots.
- \* Create incentives for the transfer of vacant properties to either tenant organizations or the state for the creation of urban gardening sites as well as urban park sites.
- \* Support the revitalization of urban housing through programs like homesteading as long as they do not force the present inhabitants from the area.
- \* More projects like the Lowell National Park to revitalize cities by capitalizing on their historic and environmental assets.
- \* Work to improve and rehabilitate entire neighborhoods-- partial rehabilitation often is wasted because single improvements either point out the disrepair of the rest of the neighborhood or goes unnoticed because of the general state of the neighborhood.
- \* Support the classification of property to allow homeowners to hold on to their property and not be forced to sell it due to 100% valuation and sky-rocketing property taxes. 100% valuation would only increase urban housing degradation and increase the need for federally funded housing for those displaced by an inability to pay their property taxes.

## Urban outline

The old ways do not work. Urban renewal meant urban destruction; scatter-shot social programs all too often raised expectations that were not met.  
--Examples (?)

What are the priorities? A public-private partnership to revitalize urban America.

- First and foremost--JOBS--meaningful, lasting jobs with a future
- Public jobs cannot be an end in themselves. In creating public jobs we have to strengthen the urban economy and attract those private sector jobs to the cities which will bring new economic life to urban neighborhoods and downtown centers.

## National investment priorities

- To rebuild the economic strength of our cities we need a combination of job intensive public works--CETA expansion (?) in the public sector and
- In the private sector a mixture of tax incentives, credits, and exemptions for industry and commercial business (Examples?). Economic development legislation. Regulatory encouragement (?)
- Targeting of federal assistance CDBG victory. Formula change giving greater weight to poverty, housing age, cost of living means Massachusetts cities will receive two-to-four times previously authorized aid in fiscal 1980.

## Housing

- Federal assistance for public and private in a partnership--no way government can solve the housing problem alone. Federal, state, and local resources must all encourage new private development.
- Problems of "gentrification." Allowing people to remain when their inner-city neighborhood suddenly starts to get fancy--North and South End, Beacon Hill. Condo development--Cambridge and Brookline.
- Guarantees: Mortgage insurance, rent subsidies, other (?) (This is a Brooke issue).

## Rail and transit

- We need the investment now to meet the need later. Energy efficient transportation networks essential to urban economies.
- Northeast Corridor rail rehab.
- PRO rail concept--Again public-private partnership.
- Changes in federal urban mass transit assistance.

Direct investment

- Public offices, schools, water systems must be located to attract private investment. The entrepreneurial spirit has to return to government. Citizens have to get their money's worth.
- President's executive order on locating government offices in city and town centers is a good start, but it doesn't go as far as your own governor's does in Massachusetts.

Parks

- Lowell is the best example of the kind of partnership I'm talking about. Federal-state-local government and private sector worked on the state and national parks.
- New life in Lowell because people pulled together to make it happen.
- That kind of cooperative action proves that government still can and does work in these days of doubt and concern.

HARAMBEE

*-Pull Together!*