



Council of Urban Boards of Education *Congressional Luncheon Agenda*

Council of Urban Boards of Education
Congressional Luncheon
Tuesday, February 2, 2010

Rayburn House Office Building, B339
Washington, DC
12:00 p.m.

Welcome Remarks & Introductions

Lock P. Beachum, Sr., CUBE Steering Committee Chair and Board Vice President,
Youngstown (OH) City School District

Congressional Address by Congressman Chaka Fattah (D-PA)

U.S. House of Representatives, Second Congressional District



Our keynote speaker, *Representative Chaka Fattah* is an experienced lawmaker serving his eighth term in the U.S. House of Representatives. He represents the Second Congressional District of Pennsylvania, which includes parts of Philadelphia and Cheltenham Township. A member of the powerful Appropriations Committee, Congressman Fattah holds a seat on the following subcommittees: Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies; Financial Services; and Energy and Water Development.

Rep. Fattah is also the architect of the GEAR UP program due to his desire for all children to have an equal opportunity to receive the best education possible. Another of Fattah's legislative achievements, The College Retention Program, has provided more than a million students with financial assistance in the form of grants, low-interest loans and college work-study programs, in an attempt to help meet the cost of attaining a post-secondary education. The program aims to retain students by offering resources to help them complete school and be fully prepared for success after graduation. He is also a leading Congressional advocate for Project GRAD (Graduating Really Achieves Dreams), a national program preparing to expand in Philadelphia.

Questions & Answers

Reginald Felton, Director, NSBA Federal Relations, Advocacy and Issues Management

Closing Remarks

Lock P. Beachum, Sr., CUBE Steering Committee Chair and Board Vice President,
Youngstown (OH) City School District

The objective of the CUBE Congressional Luncheon is to further CUBE's advocacy goals with federal lawmakers on behalf of urban public school children.

ABOUT CONGRESSMAN CHAKA FATTAH

Chaka Fattah is an experienced lawmaker serving his eighth term in the U.S. House of Representatives. He represents the Second Congressional District of Pennsylvania, which includes parts of Philadelphia and Cheltenham Township. A member of the powerful Appropriations Committee, Congressman Fattah holds a seat on the following subcommittees: Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies; Financial Services; and Energy and Water Development.

Appointed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Chair the Congressional Urban Caucus, Fattah will lead its members to craft an urban agenda on issues such as public safety, employment, education, transportation, housing, health and strengthening the nation's infrastructure. In addition, the caucus will seek and support legislation that advances the development of strong economically vibrant metropolitan areas.

SHAPING EDUCATIONAL POLICY

The nationally funded GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs), of which he is the architect, began with Congressman Fattah's desire for all children to have an equal opportunity to receive the best education possible. Assisting millions of children, GEAR UP has become the largest pre-college awareness program in this nation's history and has contributed more than \$2 billion toward the educational advancement and college readiness of low-income students.

Since being signed into law in 1998, GEAR UP has prepared millions of young students, from inner-cities and low-income families around the country, to enter college – and to succeed.

While working hard to pass GEAR UP into law, Fattah was sure not to forget about his hometown of Philadelphia. In 2003 Fattah created a last-dollar scholarship program, the CORE Philly (Philadelphia College Opportunity Resources for Education) Scholarships. The program served students residing in Philadelphia as the first city-wide scholarship designed to provide assistance to every Philadelphia high school graduate. About 13,000 students received \$24 million in one-time scholarships before the program was discontinued because of funding cuts, ending with the spring 2009 term.

Another of Fattah's legislative achievements, The College Retention Program, has provided more than a million students with financial assistance in the form of grants, low-interest loans and college work-study programs, in an attempt to help meet the cost of attaining a post-secondary education. The program aims to retain students by offering resources to help them complete school and be fully prepared for success after graduation. He is also a leading Congressional advocate for Project GRAD (Graduating Really Achieves Dreams), a national program preparing to expand in Philadelphia.

LEGISLATIVE INNOVATOR

While educational reform has remained paramount throughout Fattah's legislative career, he also has served as an innovative leader in other areas including public housing reform, job training placement and urban tax policy reform.

Fattah also showcased his commitment to constituent concerns through his actions following the controversial Presidential election of 2000. Fattah was an original co-sponsor of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, which provided money to States that replaced controversial punch card voting machines.

During his 12 years of public service to the city of Philadelphia –serving six years as a state representative and another six as a state senator – Fattah led the way to help local families make the transition from the Federal welfare program to the workforce with the help of job training and work placement programs. In 1986 Fattah developed the annual Fattah Conference on Higher Education, which motivated thousands of Philadelphia's youth to pursue graduate and professional education beyond their undergraduate degrees. Read to Lead – another of Fattah's educational initiatives – provides free books and classroom instruction to more than 5,000 students.

Fattah serves on the powerful House Appropriations Committee, which oversees more than \$800 billion in discretionary spending. Fattah, before election to Congress in 1994, served as a member of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education and on the Board of Trustees of Lincoln, Temple and Pennsylvania State Universities, and the Community College of Philadelphia.

In addition to being named one of the country's 50 most promising leaders by Time Magazine, Fattah received a ringing endorsement from The Philadelphia Inquirer when the newspaper proclaimed Fattah "has been an effective champion for people in need of affordable housing, young children denied a head start in school, and low-income students trying to finish college and earn advanced degrees."

Fattah is preparing bold policy initiatives for the 111th Congress, starting with his introduction on the first day of the session of the American Opportunity Tax Credit Act of 2009. The legislation offers every person seeking a college education the financial opportunity to pursue one and it reflects the call from President Barack Obama, during his campaign, for Americans to expand their commitment to public service. In exchange for their investment of 100 hours of public service, students will be eligible to receive a \$4,000 refundable tax credit to pay for college.

Other initiatives include the Transform America Transaction Fee, which calls on the Department of Treasury to study a proposal to change America's economy by eliminating all Federal taxes on individuals and corporations, and instead replace them with a revenue generating system based on transaction fees. Fattah will also introduce the Student Bill of Rights, a proposal that requires states to certify, with the Secretary of Education, that its public school system provides students with equal access to qualified teachers, the opportunity to learn from up-to-date textbooks and access to computers, libraries, and qualified professional personnel.

BACKGROUND

A life-long resident of Philadelphia, Congressman Fattah attended city public schools, the Community College of Philadelphia, the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School, and the University of Pennsylvania Fels School of State and Local Government where he earned a Master's Degree in Government Administration. He also completed the Senior Executive Program for State Officials at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He is married to Renee Chenault-Fattah, and has a family of four children.

Fattah was elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives at age 25 in 1982. He served 12 years in the Pennsylvania Legislature, six years in the House and six years in the State Senate. He was elected to Congress in November 1994.