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2011 NGA Annual Meeting
Salt Lake City, Utah (July 15-17)

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[Plenary Session Transcripts](#)

Governors Attending

Gov. Robert Bentley, AL
Gov. Sean Parnell, AK
Gov. Tagiola Tulafono, AS
Gov. Jan Brewer, AZ
Gov. John Hickenlooper, CO
Gov. Dan Malloy, CT
Gov. Jack Markell, DE
Gov. Eddie Calvo, GU
Gov. Neil Abercrombie, HI
Gov. Pat Quinn, IL
Gov. Terry Branstad, IA
Gov. Bobby Jindal, LA
Gov. Martin O'Malley, MD
Gov. Haley Barbour, MS
Gov. Jay Nixon, MO
Gov. Brian Schweitzer, MT

Gov. Dave Heineman, NE
Gov. Christopher Christie, NJ
Gov. Beverly Perdue, NC
Gov. Jack Dalrymple, ND
Gov. Benigno Fitial, NMI
Gov. Mary Fallin, OK
Gov. Luis Fortuño, PR
Gov. Lincoln Chafee, RI
Gov. Dennis Dugaard, SD
Gov. Bill Haslam, TN
Gov. Gary Herbert, UT
Gov. Peter Shumlin, VT
Gov. Robert McDonnell, VA
Gov. Chris Gregoire, WA
Gov. Scott Walker, WI
Gov. Matthew Mead, WY

Guests

Committee Guests (abbreviated committee name or other session in parentheses):

David Aguilar, Deputy Commissioner, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security (HSPS)

Lew W. Cramer, President & CEO, World Trade Center Utah (EDC)

J. Keith Crisco, Secretary, North Carolina Department of Commerce (EDC)

Dr. Stephen Flynn, President, Center for National Policy (HSPS)

Cindy Gillespie, Managing Director, Public Policy and Regulatory Affairs, McKenna Long & Aldridge (HHS)

Colette D. Honorable, Chairman, Arkansas Public Services Commission (NR)

Steven Larsen, Director, Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt, Chairman, Leavitt Partners; former Secretary, U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services; former EPA Administrator; and former Governor of Utah (HHS)

Jamie P. Merisotis, President and Chief Executive Officer, Lumina Foundation for Education (ECW)

Matt Rogers, Director, McKinsey & Company (NR)

Plenary Session Guests:

John Seely Brown, Visiting Scholar and Advisor to the Provost, University of Southern California and former Chief Scientist, Xerox Corporation

Thomas Friedman, Three-Time Pulitzer Prize Winner, Best-Selling Author and Columnist for The New York Times

Susan Hockfield, President, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Discussion Subjects

- **Economic Development and Commerce Committee (EDC)** – Governors’ Perspective on International Trade and Investment
- **Education, Early Childhood and Workforce Committee (ECW)** – Leveraging Higher Education to Increase U.S. Competitiveness
- **Health and Human Services Committee (HHS)** – Health Insurance Exchanges Implementation
- **Natural Resources Committee (NR)** – Job Creation in the Energy Sector
- **Special Committee on Homeland Security and Public Safety (HSPS)** – Remembering September 11th – Protecting Our Borders and Communities
- **2010-11 Washington Gov. Christine Gregoire's Chair's Initiative: *Compete to Complete***
- **Plenary Session Discussion Subjects: Higher Education: Catalyst for Economic Growth; Advancing Competitiveness**

Points of Interest

The opening plenary session began with a welcome by Gov. Gregoire to the Arab, Canadian and Chinese delegations and a thank you to the host, Gov. Herbert. Gov. Herbert then welcomed and thanked everyone for coming to Utah.

Gov. Gregoire discussed the role education plays in economic competitiveness. She said strengthening our economy means ensuring residents have the necessary skills to compete for the jobs of today and tomorrow. Gov. Gregoire stressed that in today’s competitive environment, economic development and education and training strategies must be one and the same.

Gov. Gregoire then discussed her chair’s initiative, *Compete to Complete*, which focused on promoting better measures of performance for higher education institutions and highlighted college completion as an essential ingredient for creating a competitive economy. In conjunction with the initiative, she unveiled a document, *From Information to Action: Revamping Higher*

Education Accountability Systems, an effort to develop metrics to make policy decisions as governors about the direction to take higher education in states.

She then turned the session to Dr. Susan Hockfield and John Seely Brown to talk about higher education as a catalyst for economic change.

Dr. Hockfield believes that to restart America's job creation machine, we need to retool the engine that has driven wave after wave of economic growth after World War II – American's innovation system. She discussed items we use in our everyday lives – eBooks, GPS – that represent a science-based innovation that made a big impact in the marketplace. All of these life-changing innovations have something in common - they grew out of advanced research conducted with federal dollars at American universities, and they were translated into market-ready ideas by U.S. entrepreneurs and companies that have made a dramatic impact on our economy. While she believes the innovation system is alive and mostly well, Dr. Hockfield says there are many things that can be done to make it more effective, by: attracting brilliant strivers and helping them get all the education and hands-on experience they can handle; serving homegrown brilliant strivers to dramatically improve science and engineering education; and increasing the number of U.S. graduates in those fields. Dr. Hockfield closed by urging governors to celebrate the inventors and entrepreneurs in their states.

John Brown began with what he described as “The Big Shift” – moving to a different type of a world, retool yourself – learn new things – probably every five years versus every 30 years. Brown also touched on the importance of producing in America, the infrastructure of economy and connecting resources to do new things. He emphasized the need to continue to constantly keep learning and make it fun.

The session ended with the recognition of outgoing Gov. Barbour and NGA's 10 year Corporate Fellows.

The U.S.-China forum started with Gov. Gregoire welcoming governors, Ambassador Zhang and Madam Li. The forum provided an historic opportunity for U.S. governors and governors of Chinese provinces to discuss four topics: trade and investment, educational exchanges and cooperation on energy and the environment.

Gov. Gregoire led the first discussion and conveyed the importance of building long-term relationships that could benefit both countries in trade and investment. Madam Li introduced a film about the Zhejiang Province and Party Secretary Zhao Hongzhu to speak on trade and investment. Leader Hongzhu highlighted business exchanges between Zhejiang province and the U.S. The U.S. is the third largest import source for Zhejiang and in turn enterprises from Zhejiang have invested in the U.S. Leader Hongzhu noted that the U.S. and China must continue efforts to build a better future involving business exchanges and investment corporations.

Gov. Fortuno started the discussion on energy. While governors of both the states and provinces are implementing energy reform, there are still steps that need to be taken as it is a key component to economic growth. Gov. Fortuno highlighted the energy work being done at the state level in Puerto Rico as well as at the federal level. The U.S. and Chinese governors need to

continue working together to ensure energy and economic security. Madam Li then introduced Gov. Luo Huining and a short video to highlight the Qinghai Province and developments of new energy. Gov. Huining gave examples of how Qinghai is using new technology to advance the energy sector.

The third topic, environment, was introduced by Gov. Branstad. The U.S. and China currently have a strong trading partnership in agriculture products. Gov. Branstad highlighted work done by Iowa through a sister state program. After Gov. Brandstad spoke, a video was shown about the Yunnan Province with remarks by Gov. Qin Guangrong. Gov. Guangrong spoke on the challenges of eco-safety, environmental protection and resource conservation. He then discussed the actions being taken to help with these challenges.

The final topic discussed was education and was introduced by Gov. Nixon, who discussed educational goals, challenges and reforms in the U.S. He spoke briefly on the number of exchange students between the U.S. and China. A video about the Anhui province was shown, followed by remarks by Gov. Wang San Yun. He addressed pilot programs in education that are working to give equal access to education for all kids and the need to expand educational cooperation between the U.S. and China.

The session closed with Gov. Gregoire thanking participants and reminding them of what a historic event the forum was for U.S. and China relations.

The closing plenary session began with Gov. Gregoire giving an outline of education in America versus the rest of the world. She then turned to Thomas Friedman for his perspective on how America can recapture its position as a global competitor of innovation and economic leadership in the world.

Friedman began with the notion that the American dream is in peril. He claims that Americans have taken for granted the vital source of our economic stability – the idea of a growing economy where everyone can expect to live better than their parents. That American dream, he says, is vital to our status in the world. Friedman describes what he believes are the four challenges facing America today: adapting to the IT revolution; adapting to globalization; entitlements and deficits; and energy and climate. He claims that globalization, as typified by China, challenges every American town, every American job and every American industry directly or indirectly and that every individual needs to find their extra, their own unique value proposition.

At the closing the chairmanship was handed over to Gov. Heineman, who spoke of his initiative, *Growing State Economies*. The initiative will provide governors and other state policymakers with a set of policy options that have been shown to foster business growth. A major emphasis will be on understanding how a small business becomes a fast-growing firm and what policies support that transformation.

Memorable Quotes

Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire: “During President Hu Jintao's visit to the United States in January, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Chinese Foreign Minister Yang signed a Memorandum of Understanding supporting the establishment of a U.S.-China Governors Forum. Since then, the National Governors Association has partnered with Madam Li of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship With Foreign Countries to provide a forum in which governors could discuss such issues of mutual concern as trade and investment, educational exchanges and cooperation on energy and the environment. Those efforts have culminated into this meeting today, a truly historic meeting, an opportunity for us to hear from one another and exchange ideas as governors, leaders, tasked with finding new opportunities and developing meaningful partnerships for the future.”

Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman: “For all the tough and difficult issues that states face today--and we just heard this-- boosting economic growth remains our most important and our most challenging one. Economic growth is key to our success as governors. That's why my initiative will be Growing State Economies. This initiative will provide governors and other state policy makers with a set of policy options that have been shown to foster business growth. A major emphasis will be on understanding how a small business becomes a fast-growing firm and what policies support that transformation. High- growth businesses are one of the driving forces of the modern global economy. As governors look to best strategies to strengthen economic performance, we must emphasize policies that help the private sector grow, creating new job opportunities for our citizens, and that's what this initiative is going to be all about.”

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