

**Prepared Remarks of Philip Mangano
Executive Director
United States Interagency Council on Homelessness**

Good Morning.

Cardinal Mahoney, thank you for your invitation to re-visit a city I lived in a number of years ago. I worked in the music industry back then, which did nothing to prepare me for my initiation into Washington. In Washington, ethics briefings are a way of existence. In the music industry they don't exist.

I left to move to Boston because I thought I would become a Franciscan. I went for instruction. The priest told me about the three vows – poverty, chastity, and obedience. Well, one for three might be good enough for Shawn Green or Raul Mondesi, but not for the Franciscans.

Now I'm living in Washington and the ethics attorneys are giving me instruction. Guess what? I'm back to the same three vows.

And my work in Washington is to coordinate the efforts of 20 federal agencies. As someone introduced recently quipped, I have heard of herding cats, but this is herding 20 schizophrenic cats.

So, I'm glad to be back out here. In fact just a few months ago I visited and Mayor Hahn and I went down to Skid Row and visited homeless people and programs. And we went under the bridges which re-sensitized us to the conditions in which some of our neighbors are living.

As you know, when you visit Skid Row, it's hard to believe that you're in this country. You think you've crossed the border into a third world favella. But, unfortunately, you're simply within the shadows of this great city's high rises. In the entertainment capital of the world. But there's nothing entertaining about it.

Let's face it. It's a disgrace. And it's not just this city's disgrace or your disgrace. It's our disgrace. And we all need to do something about it. And we are.

I am very happy to tell you that at our Interagency Council Meeting at the White House yesterday, less than 24 hours ago, we announced a number of national grant awards targeted to our most vulnerable neighbors, on the streets, with disabilities, experiencing chronic homelessness.

I am especially gratified to inform you that Los Angeles received not just one of the grants announced yesterday, but two. The first was part of our chronic homelessness initiative. Skid Row Housing Trust Fund will receive \$2.1 million to make a difference there. Is someone from the Trust Fund here?

And the second grant is one that targets jobs and housing to people experiencing chronic homelessness. The Workforce Development Division of the Community Development Department and the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health will partner in \$6 million over the next several years to ensure employment and housing for those neighbors of ours.

The focus of those two grants reveals a great deal about our intentions and our perspective in Washington. Concerning homelessness. Our intent is to change the verb and vocabulary of homelessness. We are no longer content just managing homelessness. We're changing the verb to **ending**.

And we're changing the vocabulary as well from **managing** to a **management agenda**. An agenda that is data and research-driven, performance-based, and results-oriented. And we're changing the vocabulary from **enabling** to **engaging**; from **serving in place** to **housing in a place**; from **single agency siloing** to **interagency funneling**, from **polarization** to **planning** and from **program-focused** to **consumer-centric**.

And perhaps the single most important word and theme of our effort is partnership. Our intent is to create a partnership that literally extends from the White House to the streets, involving federal agencies, state houses, city halls, community and faith-based organizations, and homeless people as our customers and consumers.

We have been partnering with states to create state interagency councils that mirror the work we are doing in Washington in bringing the 20 federal agencies together to ensure that their resources are made more available and accessible to homeless people.

And we're partnering with cities and countries to create 10-year plans to end homelessness. This summer, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Association of Counties unanimously adopted resolutions supporting our chronic homelessness initiative and supporting cities and counties in creating 10-year plans to end homelessness.

At the U.S. Conference of Mayors, we worked closely with my friend Mayor Tom Menino of Boston, who was President of the Council and Mayor Daley, who has adopted a 10-year plan for our nation's third largest city.

As you know they have pretty big D's after their names. In fact, it's in their marrow. There's no question that their genetic code is DNA.

And you know that this Administration in Washington has a pretty big R after its name. But at the Conference we agreed that, on this issue of homelessness, partnership trumps partisanship. That on this issue there is no D or R or I or G. We're just Americans ending a national disgrace.

Partnership. We've called the 20 federal agencies together, too. Yesterday, all 20 were there at the White House Conference Center not just to announce awards, but to work together to make their resources more available and accessible to homeless people. When we had our first meeting back in July of last year – after a 6 year dormancy in the Council – I sent out an invitation. “Come to a Banquet at the White House” the card read in big letters, I knew that the idea of food would attract people to a meeting, as the Cardinal certainly knows.

Then at the bottom in small print: “By the way. It's a potluck.”

Meaning, of course, that every department and agency needed to bring their resources with them and work together in partnership to make them available to our poorest neighbors. That's what led to the initiatives announced yesterday that will benefit your city, our partner.

Mayors, Governors, cabinet officials, the President. The long – awaited political will is beginning to constellate.

We know that homelessness is a national problem and we know it has local solutions. And we're looking to Los Angeles to demonstrate that those local solutions will work.

Finally, our partnerships are developing a new standard of expectation on this issue of homelessness. We expect visible, measurable, quantifiable change on our streets, in homeless programs and, most importantly in the lives of homeless people themselves.

We'll no longer accept the dumbing down of homeless people as unable to secure or sustain housing or jobs. That old myth is discredited all across this country. We can now say that there is a housing strategy or technology for every profile of homeless person, whether on the streets for 10 years or a family just falling in.

Nor should we accept any longer the shuffling of homeless people from one city to another, or from one side of town to the other, or from one homeless program to another. Not if we're customer-centric, which is a modern way of saying, we shouldn't do to others what we don't want done to ourselves.

Nor can we accept the dusting off of 19th century vagrancy and loitering laws that create a 30 or 60 or 90 day punitive response, but **no lasting change**. We don't need the old ideas, when the tipping point aims at strategic solutions, not ineffective incarcerations.

The new research and technologies developed in the past five years have made it possible for mayors to endorse 10-year plans to **end** homelessness; for governors to create interagency councils; for the President and his Cabinet to call on us to end chronic homelessness in the next decade; for housing initiatives all over the country to house our most vulnerable neighbors; and for homeless people to be our partners and customers.

That's why the initiatives we announced yesterday and the President's budget proposal for FY'04 are now named the Samaritan Initiative. Others have passed by. We've stopped. Stopped for those who have been left on the side of the road, literally and symbolically. Our intent – to leave no one behind. No individual. No family. No child. That's what our partnership is all about.

To ensure that everyone – President, Cabinet Secretaries, Governor, Mayor, County Executive, Homeless Program provider, advocate, homeless person – that everyone has a place at the table, and a place to live.

Stopping for all. Ensuring that no one is left behind. And that everyone will be known by a single name – neighbor – and treated as one.

Together let's make Los Angeles live up to its Franciscan name.
Thank you. And please keep me in your prayers.