

US Interagency Council on Homelessness
Full Council Meeting
Remarks by Philip Mangano
March 28, 2003

Opening Remarks

This meeting begins an historic year for the Interagency Council on Homelessness. First, it brings together the three Secretaries who have established a new standard of collaboration on the issue of homelessness. They and their staffs have been coordinating activities for two years now in an unprecedented initiative to foster interagency strategies. Their commitment has moved forward the President's initiative to end chronic homeless in the next 10 years.

Second, in the history of the Council, which now spans 16 years with a six year ellipsis, there has never been a chairperson of the Council other than the Secretary of HUD. This Administration and the Congress determined that such a precedent needed to be undone. And so today we welcome Secretary Thompson into the Chairman's seat.

And how fortunate the Council is to welcome to its Chair the boundless energy and expansive creativity of Secretary Thompson. As a state legislator, Governor, and now as Secretary he has demonstrated a capacity for problem solving so needed to address chronic homelessness.

His creativity on welfare reform, expanded access to healthcare for low income people, including the Pathways Program for disabled people, equip him for creativity in addressing family and chronic homelessness. Thank you for your willingness to serve the Council.

And we welcome into the Vice-Chairman seat Secretary Anthony Principi who has been a forceful advocate for homeless veterans and deeply committed to ending chronic homelessness among veterans. In light of current world events, his work is crucial to ensure a hospitable return for our troops.

This Administration, in revitalizing the Council, understood that no one agency could solve homelessness on its own. And that a break with the past was necessary.

And in the selection of Secretary Martinez as the inaugural chair of the revitalized Council, we recognized someone who would willingly and openly welcome such a change and foster such collaboration. In enthusiastically supporting the transition today, Secretary Martinez once again demonstrates what we've come to know about him:

- **He's deeply committed professionally and personally to the issue of homelessness.**
- **He's open handed in sharing resources and turf in pursuit of the outcome of ending chronic homelessness.**
- **He's part of a team that intends to leave behind a legacy of accomplishment, especially for our poorest neighbors.**
- **And he understands and supports the initiatives of the Council to include all federal agencies in a collaborative strategy.**

His year has been a year of activity and accomplishment. And so on behalf of the 20 member agencies of this Council and the staff, who have so enjoyed and appreciated the hospitality of the Secretary and his staff at HUD, we want to offer a symbol of our acknowledgement of your leadership role in revitalizing the Council and providing leadership for its first year.

Please receive this token of our appreciation and affection for your kindness, strength, and determination.

The engraving says:

**UNITED STATES
INTERAGENCY COUNCIL on HOMELESSNESS**

**ABOLITIONIST AWARD
TO
SECRETARY MEL MARTINEZ**

**PRESENTED BY MEMBERS AND STAFF
FOR HIS PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL
COMMITMENT TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS
AS CHAIR OF THE REVITALIZED COUNCIL**

THE INAUGURAL YEAR

MARCH 2002 TO MARCH 2003

On the plaque are two keys. One key is cut. It is the key to the very first apartment created for a homeless person during Secretary Martinez's term. An apartment on Long Island, New York.

The other key is uncut. It represents all the future housing that will be created by the initiatives Secretary Martinez has supported for those experiencing chronic homelessness.

And so, Secretary Martinez, on behalf of all gathered here, please receive this offering of our esteem, friendship, and respect.