From: Local Progress, the National Municipal Policy Network
To: Nosakhare, Shereda
Subject: Racial Equity, Workers' Rights, and the Legacy of a Great Mayor
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February Newsletter **Volume 2, Issue 4**

Do you have news you'd like featured in the Local Progress Newsletter? Let us know!

Upcoming Local Progress Events

Racial Equity in Our Cities: A Webinar on Strategies for Institutional Change

March 4, 2014, 2:30-3:30 Eastern

Racial inequities persist in our communities, including with respect to education, jobs, housing, criminal justice, and health. Local government is uniquely positioned to address these issues. Some cities have begun to use "racial equity tools" to increase the skill of staff members at identifying and eliminating structural inequality. Others have passed specific policies, such as limitations on the use of criminal background checks in employment decisions. This webinar will highlight the work being done in these cities and lay out an agenda for future efforts. It will feature an all-star lineup, including:

- Glenn Harris, City of Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative
- Betsy Hodges, Mayor, City of Minneapolis
- Dante James, City of Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights
- Nick Licata, Councilmember, City of Seattle and Chair of Local Progres
- john powell, UC Berkeley Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society
- Julie Nelson, Senior Fellow, UC Berkeley Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society (moderator)

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Income Inequality Symposium

March 27, 2014
Seattle, Washington, DC

Click here to register.

Re-Framing Urban Politics: A Local Progress Session with George Lakoff

March 11, 2-3:30 PM Eastern

National League of Cities Conference
Marriott Wardman Park, Washington, DC

As part of the National League of Cities conference, Local Progress will be co-hosting an afternoon session with George Lakoff. The session, entitled "Re-Framing Urban Politics," will help attendees improve the way in which they frame their work and the political debates in their communities.

Professor Lakoff, of UC Berkeley, is a cognitive linguist whose work as applied to politics was popularized in his book *Don't Think of an Elephant!: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate--The Essential Guide for Progressives*.

In this session, which will be co-hosted by Democratic Municipal Officials, Lakoff will discuss a number of high-profile public policy debates and explain how you can reframe your local conversations in order to win the support of voters, the media, and other decision-makers in your community.

Click here to RSVP.

New Local Progress Board Members

We are excited to announce the induction of our two newest board members:

Robin Kniech
Denver City Councilwoman

Gayle McLaughlin
Mayor of Richmond, CA

Progressive Cities Across the Country Stand Up for Workers' Rights

Along with the City of Seattle, Local Progress will co-host a one-day symposium on income inequality and the minimum wage. Seattle Mayor Ed Murray was elected in November 2013 on a platform that included raising the city's minimum wage to $15 per hour. Seattle's plans are part of a national movement of progressive cities to combat inequality by raising labor standards and empowering workers.

The symposium will feature research on the state of inequality and poverty in Seattle; the impacts that a minimum wage increase would have on workers, businesses, and the broader economy; and the experiences and plans of other cities around the country that are fighting to create good jobs.

To join us in Seattle, click here.

In Memoriam: Mayor Chockwe Lumumba

Local Progress mourns the untimely death of Jackson, Mississippi Mayor **Chockwe Lumumba**, a prominent human rights attorney who took office last July and this January led a successful

Crowd shows support for wage hike at Santa Fe County Commission meeting.

Municipalities have continued to be the strongest advocates of higher wages and better conditions for low-wage workers. Just this week, the **Santa Fe County Commission** voted unanimously to raise the minimum wage for all workers to $10.66 from $7.50 and tie the wage to inflation. Minimum wage efforts continue to gain momentum in other jurisdictions, including in **Seattle**, where elected officials and advocates are calling for a $15 minimum wage.

To RSVP for the Minimum Wage Symposium sponsored by Seattle City Council and Local Progress, please click here.

In **Jersey City**, paid sick leave is officially in effect, meaning that tens of thousands of employees don't have to worry about losing their jobs or paychecks when they get sick. And as more cities take action, states are following suit. Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Vermont are all considering new Paid Sick Days legislation. For more information, check out "Paid Leave Laws Catch On Across the Nation" a recent article on NPR, or Bill Moyer's article, "Why Paid Sick Leave is Good for Business."

Other cities are proposing supportive policies for workers, as well. In Denver, new Local Progress Board Member **Robin Kniech** fought hard for a new workforce housing development, which will provide affordable housing and facilities for workers.

New York City: Curbing Police Abuse & Expanding Immigrants' Rights

Advocates in NYC rally to call for the reform of bias-based policing tactics.

campaign to invest in the city's infrastructure funded through an increased sales tax.

Lumumba, whom Al Jazeera called "America's most revolutionary mayor" had, earlier in his life, been a leader in the Republic of New Afrika, which sought independence for southern states, and the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement. Lumumba died on February 26, at the age of 66.

Lumumba's early mayoral leadership in Jackson was hailed as a great success – creating more transparency in government, spurring equitable development, and beginning to rebuild the city's infrastructure. "He has done a great deal in the last couple of months to change the culture of government in Jackson," said City Council member Melvin Priester Jr.

"His young administration has been a great beacon of hope for so many of us," said Mississippi Democratic Party Chairman Rickey Cole. "He was just beginning to make an effective start tackling the long-neglected challenges faced by our capital city."

Cities and Technology

Local Progress member **Alex Torpey** hasn't even had his ten-year high school reunion yet. But he's already becoming one of the most

Local Progress member Bill de Blasio continues to make progressive strides as mayor of New York City. Earlier this month, the Mayor announced that the city would drop its appeal of a federal court's ruling against the police department's stop and frisk program, and he confirmed that the city would keep in place critical remedies curbing stop and frisk.

"The values and the strategies that keep people safe, and that really give us lasting safety, those values are not compatible with a broken and misused stop-and-frisk policy," said Mayor de Blasio.

And two weeks ago, de Blasio also introduced new proposed Municipal ID legislation, a policy that would provide government identification to all residents, regardless of their citizenship or immigration status.

"To all of my fellow New Yorkers who are undocumented, I say: New York City is your home, too, and we will not force any of our residents to live their lives in the shadows," said de Blasio.

Municipal IDs have been found to increase access to critical services for residents, including opening bank accounts, visiting medical professionals, signing leases, and registering children for neighborhood programs.

Local Progress member **Carlos Menchaca**, the immigration chair of the New York City Council, is a strong proponent of the program and said, "We want to make sure that this card is available to multiple constituencies in this city."

Preventing Recidivism in San Francisco by "Banning the Box"

Thanks to Local Progress members, **San Francisco** unanimously passed a new "ban the box" law earlier this month. Supervisors **Malia Cohen** and **Jane Kim**, both members of Local Progress, authored the legislation, which forbids most employers and housing providers from asking potential applicants or residents about their criminal history.

While the city has had a similar regulation in place for applicants for public employment since 2006, this new regulation is much more expansive. It is especially important for people in California, where 1 in 4 resident adults has a record of arrest or conviction.

"This was born out of a desire to provide real employment and housing opportunities for people with a conviction history," said Cohen. "Access to housing and employment is key to preventing recidivism and increasing public safety in our community."

Sustainable and Healthy Cities

Cities all over the nation are working to protect the environment and encourage a healthier lifestyle for their residents. **San Francisco** has introduced a soda tax proposal, which will be on the ballot this November. **Cincinnati** has started a bike share program, the first of

interesting young voices in local politics. He was just 23 when he decided to run for Village President of **South Orange**, NJ. He won by only 13 votes.

Today Torpey is in his third year in the job, and has been focused on transparency and tech innovation. He's put the town budget on OpenGov so that citizens can access it for easy analysis and is currently working on a new tech venture called Veracity Media. Torpey was recently featured in this Next City article about public service, innovative government, and the next wave of dedicated politicians.

And Torpey's not the only one interested in new ways to integrate technology into transparency and connecting with constituents. New York City Councilman **Brad Lander** has recently agreed to participate in a pilot program called AskThem.io. The website, which launched just last month, allows anyone to ask an elected official a question. If enough other users vote for a question, the elected official will then answer it publicly. Lander is one of the first few dozen elected officials to participate. If you'd like to sign up, go to www.AskThem.io.

And in more city and tech news, a recent Times article entitled "Technology is Not Driving Us Apart After All" cited sociologist Keith Hampton's recent study, which concluded that access to technology made city residents surprisingly more likely to spend time in public spaces and interact in groups.

its kind in the state.

And in **Los Angeles**, the City Council is considering something especially innovative. Just last week the Council decided to consider allowing backyard beekeeping within the city. Beekeeping has grown in popularity lately among citizens interested in urban farming and concerned about the health of honeybees.

Local Progress is a national municipal policy network. For more information please visit www.localprogress.org

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