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Thank you very much. I'm really struck how Mahdi Bray's approach is so much like Geno Baroni. And your testimony is certainly part of what you presented because in many respects, the notions and the approach, and the storytelling, and the exhortation, and the relationship that you brought to your presentation, is exactly the stuff that coalition building can happen in the context of that kind of presentation.

Now, unlike three of the presenters, I'm going to try to really focus on some of the strategies of coalition building. Mahdi Bray's presentation is what you need when you bring people together to form bonds of enthusiasm and convergent issues, that not only read sacred texts, but particular, painful issues, and particular senses of vision, that you expressed in every part of your presentation.

One of the things I also want to suggest is that the use of a board of newsprint, for your particular purposes, Congressman, invites us to be something that in many respects Geno was, a globally-thinking person. But the fact is that there is no one in Geno's universe or ours, except people who would see that as a foundational text for the meaning in their life, that in fact live in the world that you described. People live in particular places.

And in that respect, one of the fundamental dimensions of Geno's life that very, very few people have touched on, as we talk about his legacy and what he was involved in, is the dimension of ethnicity in the corpus of his thought, of his action, and also of the four kinds of healing ministry that I think he regularly worked on. And they were 77 types of ministry that related to particular fears, as you have diagnosed very, very accurately, fears.

But also, tremendous angers. The capacity to understand that middle-class rage was a reality in Geno's time, is something that very, very few people understand today, because the overwhelming sense of fear and immediacy, the struggle for the crisis of the moment, has in fact gobbled up most time and energy that could be devoted to the sort of community activity and coalition building, and new coalitions of action in America.

The other aspect of Geno's life that is very important to understand in terms of coalitions, is the notion of various sectors of American life were very dear to his worldview. And in that respect, I was struck that John Carr did something about poverty in terms of kind of remedies. But in some respects, the question of poverty I think might be understood in another way, coming out of Geno's framework. And that is that there is a poverty related to the economic sector of American life. And in that respect, economic 78poverty is a very important kind of anxiety that people have.

There is also a kind of anxiety that relates to one other sector of American life, and that's the political sector, the second sector. And there's no doubt that the economic sector, at its particularly strong dimensions in American life are very, very closely wedded to the political sector. That is, the economic sector at its heights and the political sector at its heights, are very tight. Large interest groups and political power are woven together into the texture of American life.

But there is a third sector of American life that Geno was very, very interested in, and it was a sector in which two other kinds of anxiety existed in his time, and in many respects still exist in our time. And that is social anxiety and cultural anxiety. So, if I was bold

enough to take the globalist view off of the board, I would, but I'll leave it there because I think in the light of pluralism and diversity, I'm not going to ignore and neglect, but acknowledge, but suggest that the 79 economic sector, the political sector, and the cultural human sector and social sector, are three forms of social organization that the American situation -- and perhaps every situation, but -- primarily, Geno's focus in this respect is worth looking at in terms of the four central anxieties that he tried to work on.

In many respects, the notion of empowering through a nongovernment organizations, community-based organizations, community development corporations, was an attempt to build some capacity into the third sector, the social anxiety and the cultural anxiety sector. But with very, very strong components to linking the organic base of populations to a large-scale human service delivery system, that in fact was not only sclerotic in Geno's time, but is even more so today. That is, the nonprofit sector is clearly divided into large nonprofits that in many, many respects act exactly like large-scale corporate economic structures, and large-scale bureaucratic structures.

And are small-scale committee based 80 sectors that operate quite differently, and I think that those sectors are important, and capacity building in those sectors I believe is going to be part of another panel, but I want to lay that out as what I see as an analytic that is important because fundamentally, Geno was driven by an approach that is very, very simple: the observation of reality is where you begin.

And out of that observation -- and in fact, through the process of observation, the question of deliberation and decision and judgment begins to take place. And where it takes place is crucial. On one part of Geno's operation, or operational form or idea or spirit, the notion of that third sector happening at a neighborhood level was the creation of place as the significant locus for building an institutional capacity to handle both economic, cultural, social, and political anxiety.

My sense is, however, that if Geno were here today -- and I don't want to confess this, but I guess I'm torn because well, Joe Duffy had the experience. My sense is I had 81 the experience as well. That is, we talked about this on the way in on the Metro. And my sense that Geno recognized that something very, very important had happened, that in fact there were no "comeback cities," and that it was important to continue at the neighborhood level to build action, but that in fact unless we began to think about the Metropolitan reality of urban life, we could not in fact recapture -- and here, Geno still doesn't get it.

The recapturing of the dream of American cities is not one that is recapture-able. The American city was always a reality that was foreign, that was alien, that was despised. And as soon as the major cultural forces of American life could get their hands on the breaking up of American cities, they did. They did that systematically. Anti-urbanism, and anti-immigrant, and anti-black is endemic to the American design of place, so that while we have to work at small places, we have to also work at the level of large metropolitan areas.

In that respect, the question of 82 decentralization and centralization is a very, very important dimension. And my sense is that Geno would be saying something like this to us today, that we have to rethink the institutional framework of political order, not simply policies, political order.

There are fundamental blood clots in the circulatory political system that make it very, very difficult, if not impossible, to overcome the tremendous instability, liability, and lack of power, at central places in American life, that are shifting now to what were perceived as first suburbs.

The lack of capacity to address significant social, cultural, economic problems in these areas, is in fact institutionally caused. And if there is some dimension that the crisis of the hurricane could bring to us, it is the refashioning of metro government, across the wide path of Louisiana, and across the wide path of the other states that were massively destroyed, and cities that were destroyed.

Because without regional action, the possibility of sharing and shaping the burden<sup>83</sup> and the benefits of an urban civilization, and cultural pluralism in America, is impossible. We need to find a public place where pluralism can flourish at the political level.

And our politics is fragmented and constrained by institutional blockages at the metro level.

Now, with that as the general thesis that I hope the conveners will allow me to elaborate in the paper as I develop this, I want to call attention to a couple of other dimensions of Geno's success in coalition building, that I think have to move into a second and third generation.

First of all, the success at the very end of the civil rights movement, to end the 1980s with a process that moved towards legitimating cultural variety and ethnicity in American consciousness. And the legitimation of ethnicity. And a coalition that Geno built with the help of certainly long-discredited Bobby Garcia, nonetheless a very important player that you remember well, I'm sure, on the Subcommittee on the Census, made it possible to begin to understand pluralism in<sup>84</sup> America as not simply a black-white issue. That Hispanic reality, the black reality, and by 1980, 197 ethnic groups make up American pluralism.

As Geno said, "If you're not counted, you don't count." And being counted is one of the deepest steps towards legitimating pluralism.

I talked with Stu just before he left about his interest in the Holocaust, and when that began, because I wanted to call something to his attention about some of the ways in which they use of ethnicity and the political determination of ethnic identity is a feature of American life.

It's very important to note that while a good deal of Geno's experience with the revival of ethnic traditions and the development of them began in the sixties, and in some respects it was within the Catholic orbit, a Catholic orbit that saw the Irish Catholic Church as a central power figure in the church. And perhaps, the German Catholic Church, but certainly muted. That was an internal fight within Catholics about participation and representation.<sup>85</sup> And in that respect, it postdated a very important national fight that very, very few people think about, because the uses of history for a usable past are not always as fully developed as they ought to be.

The awesome repression against the German Americans in the United States is an overwhelming feature of the early twentieth century. How so? A town in Texas named Frankfurt, about midpoint in World War I, the city Council says, "We are really

Americans. Why don't we change our name? We can't be Frankfurt." And they changed their name to "Old Glory."

Father Agostino, who regularly did psychological work in terms of persons trying to understand how it is that their ethnic identities shape their understanding of self: wrote a number of articles about how tremendously pressured German-Americans felt, not only in the twenties but throughout the entire Cold War period, for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was the tremendous growth and attention to the horrific action of the Holocaust. But also to the tremendous sense that Germany in part at least was a communist state, which was another tremendous negative symbol for American life.

But it's very interesting that by 1990, when the celebrations of ending World War II had become part of the rhetoric of unification, something very interesting happened. In '89, the census question was asked "what is your identity, what is your lineage, what is your ethnicity?" Amazingly, 11 million more German-Americans came on to the U.S. Census. Clearly, one million or immigrants, but 10 million decided collectively, because -- German organizations are not really organized for action -- they decided that it was kosher, it was legitimate, to be German again.

Now, ethnicity will come and go because it is a politically-framed identity. But in the United States, the question of how it becomes a political and cultural and social substance was one of the great problems I think that Geno laid out, and legitimated, and encouraged people to work on, and encouraged policy to take attentive care, that that kind of measurement would be available for us.

And it also offers us, now that these numbers are available and clearly, they were not available when Geno was around, but obviously I would suggest that he would be massively fascinated by the ways in which various congressional districts could be understood in terms of another very fundamental feature of what we now know about American ethnic groups, is they are notoriously clumped and clustered, in ways that make the whole notion of randomness and mix completely fallacious. There is a clustering of ethnic groups that is profound and meaningful, politically, at the congressional level.

I'll give you very quick numbers. African-Americans: for 141 congressional district, there's a concentration. Some of these concentrations are as high as 65 percent. But for a meaningful presence within 141 districts. American Indians, 14 districts. Asian-Americans, 105 districts. English-Americans -- hold your hats gang, 'cause the Anglo presence in America is very, very serious, 226 districts. French-Americans, 48. German-Americans, 186. Hispanic Americans, 127. Irish-Americans, 224. Italian-Americans, 135. And Polish Americans, 131.

Now, if we're going to talk about grassroots political organizations that will impact on transforming the connection of values to this town, then I propose two kinds of strategies.

One is to look at a cluster of these ethnic concentrations, and find ways of exposing, through organization, the processes of communicating the various cultural traditions and ethnic traditions that in fact have built within them the strongest senses of social justice, usually sanctioned by divine and sacred texts.

Using that approach to link religion and ethnicity in congressional districts is an important process of rebuilding the capacity of community power at a politically efficacious level of action.

The second approach, one that is equally important; there are about 39 congressional caucuses related to some kind of ethnic interest concern. And these are caucuses that work with congressional people, and some of them are staffed by congressional people. There are in Washington, there are also about 129 ethnic organizations that have some kind of presence in Washington, with some sort of national representation or power.

My sense is that in this town, a process of sharing ethnic agendas would be a place within which the sort of political messages and organizing messages, and value issue components -- that have been mentioned by your presentation, by John Carr, and also by you, Representative Edgar -- could become part of engaging these ethnic organizations in the process of moving themselves into mainstream politics, from a marginal interest group presence, into a way in which the conversion issues of culture and power could in fact be re-articulated.

Not the least of which would be a massively more informed process of understanding our relationships to other countries in this world. But competencies within the American population to understand other cultures at the grassroots level is a neglected and ignored dimension of power and talent that obviously, Geno was very, very interested in supporting. My sense is that some persons very close to Geno were also very interested in in fact building a new way of thinking about our relationship to Ireland, and our relationship to England.

And how did that happen? I would ask Stu that question very specifically, but my sense from the outside, it happened because Mario Biaggi was leader of the Irish-American caucus -- only in America, gang -- this Italian-American policeman -- also having some rough times over the years -- but the fact is that he brought a new dimension of legitimating within the halls of power a way of talking about Anglo power and the northern counties. And how the United States, with its special relationship with England, could in fact become much more culturally attentive to the questions of power, in a reasonable way.

That's only one example. The 91 correlations and caucuses that were very, very interested in ways in which Eastern Europe could be reorganized, in many, many respects, came out of relationships that were part of ethnic organizations in this town.

Clearly, there are other dimensions of ethnic relationships that have in fact complicated our life. And there are a range of these sorts of crises that relate to refugees, that we also have to be attentive to.

But in my final assessment, it seems to me that one of the twin features of Geno's relevancy for his time were two major pieces of legislation: the civil rights laws of '64, and the voting rights act of '65, and the immigration reform of '65. These two fundamental activities produced a transformation of the social reality in America that in fact brought, after more than 150 years, the participation of African-Americans into the legitimate participation that the Constitution excluded, and the new immigration brought

a new turn, away from a very narrow, Northern European perspective on 92 what America was, to a Southern, Eastern European, and Asian perspective, that makes it possible to understand America as a genuinely global cultural arena.

Not however -- and let me chastise you publicly -- of frail immigrants. Because my sense is that immigrants are the most energetic people in the world; leaving home, leaving friendships, leaving places, to strike off into new horizons, searching for liberty and justice, searching for making a better life for themselves and their families. To have Emma Lazarus remind us again and again about being the wretched refuse of Europe's teeming shores, my sense is get off my back with that kind of terrible literary ethnicity. I want to go with the real stories of people. And those stories included in the sharing and shaping the burdens and benefits of America. And in that sense of pluralism, grounded in ethnic traditions that are more than folkloric, but are discoverable in the deepest stories and mythologies, often woven almost inseparably with sacred texts as well, as you well know. 93 So that this notion of weaving texts of traditions that are ethnic and religious. In fact, it's very, very clear that the word "ethnicity" is also a Greek word that is translated into Latin, and most Latin texts, as "paganos." So, ethnic stuff is religious stuff, but just a different set of Gods, not quite as powerful as the text gods, they got that is part of the Abrahamic tradition.

But in that respect, the political gods that also make up America are one other aspect. Now, American pluralism may in fact prefer to find a secular form of discussion. My sense is, you can't get rid of the divine aspect in the human condition. The question is not being secular; the question is how is it that secularism became your god?

The question of political gods, of ethnic gods, of genuinely religious gods, is part of the mystery of pluralism that Americans have to work out.

They can work it out. They can deliberate, they can judge, and they can act together. I think that is what drove me to leave the various parts of my life behind, and 94 to say "yes" to Geno. And in that respect, I also said that "I love you." And I love him today again for the presence that he means to you. And in that sense of communion, we can move forward.