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Clayton County Board of Commissioners



PRESS RELEASE

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Clayton County Vice Chairman Wole Ralph Advises President Obama on Local Issues for State of the Union Address

January 12, 2012 – Jonesboro, GA - Clayton County Vice Chairman Wole Ralph joined a select group of young leaders to advise President Barack Obama on his State of the Union Address to be delivered on January 24, 2012. Hosts of the event included Danielle Gray, Deputy Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, and Jon Carson, Deputy Assistant to the President/Director of the White House Office of Public Engagement. President Obama's remarks during his speech in Osawatomie, Kansas, on rebuilding the economy "based on fair play, a fair shot, and a fair share" were used as the basis for discussion. Vice Chairman Ralph provided real-life stories from real Clayton County residents that highlighted these themes.

"Clayton County is seeking many options to give our citizens a fair shot. We understand that businesses choose to locate in communities with a highly-skilled, highly-educated workforce. To that end, Clayton County is seeking to put programs in place, such as Georgia Work Ready, that will offer our citizens the chance to learn new skills," said Vice Chairman Ralph. "We continue to work with Clayton State University to develop programs for our community, and encourage citizens to enroll in one of the University's many degree or certificate programs. Using our newly formed Film Office as an example, we are working creatively to bring more job opportunities to our citizens from industries that are experiencing an upsurge, such as the film industry in Georgia. Our economic times have changed, and we must offer our citizens the tools to adapt to these changes."

Vice Chairman Ralph has made numerous trips to the White House advocating for the citizens of Clayton County, and has attended policy briefings at the request of President Obama.

Ralph attended a White House Policy Briefing on June 17, 2011, where he was among a select group of young elected officials invited to join discussions with senior White House officials. Ralph advocated deepening the Savannah Harbor in order to increase cargo and create jobs in Clayton County and Savannah. Ralph also advocated saving the Community Development Block Grant from severe cuts that were expected in the next federal budget. Additionally, Ralph participated in the Georgia Chamber of Commerce's annual Washington D.C. Fly-In on September 13-14, 2011, and met with the Georgia Congressional delegation, members from the United States House of Representatives Leadership team, and numerous federal officials and their staffs. Vice Chairman Ralph was also invited to be a part of President Obama's "Gen44," a program created by President Obama to empower a rising generation of leaders in the Democratic party.

The mission of the Young Elected Officials (YEO) Network is to unite and support progressive elected leaders who share a passion for building communities that reflect values of freedom, fairness and opportunity.

The YEO Network supports elected leaders ages 35 and under, as they define issues, develop solutions, and respond to the needs of their communities. By exchanging ideas, developing leadership skills and connecting with policy development organizations, YEO Network members will be empowered to transform their political vision into progressive action.

Through these means, the YEO Network will connect the progressive agenda at community levels across the country, ultimately producing an enduring pipeline of well-prepared national and world class leaders.

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