

WINTER 2010

The Honorable Michael E. Busch, Maryland
President, NSC

The Honorable Robert W. Harrell Jr., South Carolina
1st Vice President, NSC

2010 Annual Meeting: *On to Maryland, the Old Line State*



Busch

This year, the [annual meeting of the National Speakers Conference](#) will be held in Annapolis, Maryland, hosted by [Speaker Michael Busch](#), the President of the National Speakers Conference for 2010. Since this is an election year the meeting will be held in June (16-20).

Speaker Busch and his staff are busy working on the schedule and have already landed two “superstars” for the program. On Thursday, June 17, we will be joined at lunch by baseball Hall of Famer [Cal Ripken, Jr.](#), longtime infielder for the Baltimore Orioles. During his almost two decade career with the Orioles, Ripken was selected for the All-Star team eighteen times, was the MVP of the All-Star game twice, the 1982 Rookie of the year, and two-time Gold Glove winner at shortstop. He also holds the major league record for the most consecutive games played at 2,632. Following his retirement from Major League Baseball in 2001, Ripken has remained active in public service in the Baltimore area.



Ripkin

On Friday night, following a reception at the Governor’s Mansion, Speakers and other participants will gather in the historic Maryland State House for dinner and a discussion with Pulitzer Prize-winning author and historian [David McCullough](#). McCullough is internationally recognized as one of the premier students of American history of this or any time. He has won Pulitzer prizes for *Truman* (1993) and *John Adams* (2002). McCullough's own voice was heard as the narrator of the *John Adams* film, of Ken Burns's *The Civil War*, of *The Johnstown Flood*, and as host of the public television series *The American Experience* and *Smithsonian World*.



McCullough

On Thursday evening, participants will enjoy a traditional Maryland crab feast, fireworks, and an historical reenactment of the defense of Fort McHenry (the battle that gave us Francis Scott Key’s *Star Spangled Banner*). In addition, we are considering a trip to the United States Naval Academy and a boat trip on the Chesapeake Bay.

And this is only the beginning. Watch for future announcements about additional panels and featured speakers at sllf.org and in mailings.



Speaker to Speaker

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2009 NSC Annual Meeting
Sea Island, Georgia, October 21-25
Speakers Gather to Discuss Politics, Policy and Position

More than 150 sitting Speakers, former Speakers, Chiefs of Staff and leaders from the corporate community gathered this past October in Sea Island, Georgia for the eighteenth annual meeting of the National Speakers Conference. Along with the other participants, current Speakers from thirty states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands met to share ideas, discuss issues and hear from some of the nation's foremost experts on politics and policy. The program was hosted by The Honorable Glenn Richardson, Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives and 2009 President of the National Speakers Conference.

Politics. Following a Wednesday night reception honoring previous NSC Presidents and those who founded the National Speakers Conference almost twenty years ago, participants began Thursday morning with an insightful discussion on the changing demographic, technological and political environment that is defining America at the beginning of the 21st Century. This discussion, entitled, "*The Dawn of a New Politics,*" was led by [Simon Rosenberg, Founder and CEO of NDN](#), a left leaning Washington, DC think tank. Examining recent and predicted changes in technology and demography, Rosenberg painted an intriguing picture of the political future of America where Hispanic and young technology-savvy voters will play a much more significant role in determining who wins and loses elections.

Rosenberg was followed by [Charlie Cook of the Cook Political Report](#), one of the nation's most respected commentators on American electoral politics. In "*Election 2010: A Reversal of Fortune?*" Cook offered some insight into the factors likely to have influenced the November 2009 gubernatorial elections in New Jersey and Virginia and the upcoming 2010 congressional and gubernatorial elections, suggesting that just as 2006 and 2008 were favorable environments for Democrats, the current context suggests that 2010 may be a good Republican year.



Policy. On Friday, our attention turned to two very significant public policy issues: education and the economy. [Bill Strickland](#), President and CEO of the Manchester Bidwell Corporation, offered a plan for dramatically altering the American education system based on his own experiences and successes. Using his own story to inspire, Strickland offered a very different picture of what education in America should be and look like, imploring participants to view all children as assets rather than liabilities and focusing as much on the educational environment as the curriculum and reminding the Speakers that making sure all children are prepared to succeed in the 21st Century is their responsibility.



Finally, as much as they might like to, program participants could not escape the political and economic reality of the national recession. Rather than ignore this challenge, we embraced it. Under the tutelage of [Dr. Donald F. Kettl](#), Dean of the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland, participants learned about the impact of the recession and the federal government responses to it that will define the immediate (and perhaps long term) futures in their states. He suggested that the economic crisis and its impact offered state leaders the unique opportunity to leave an historic and lasting legacy in their states.

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Position. Apart from these informative sessions, Speakers and Chiefs of Staff met separately to discuss and share ideas about the various issues, opportunities and challenges unique to the positions they hold. To no one's surprise, the faltering economy and declining revenues dominated both sessions, but other issues in the Speakers session included leadership challenges, partisanship, organizational concerns and various "hot" policy topics. The Chiefs of Staff shared advice about the diverse opportunities and challenges of their position, membership relations, and efforts to balance institutional and political obligations. [Dr. Kirk O. Hanson](#) of the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics led discussions in both sessions.

In the end, an educational and engaging time was had by all. Thank you Speaker Richardson and all of your fine staff!



Sitting Speakers from more than thirty states gathered at the 18th annual meeting of the National Speakers Conference to share ideas on politics, issues and the unique challenges they face as Speakers of the House.

Southern Hospitality, Georgia Style

In addition to taking part in insightful policy and political discussions, participants took time to enjoy a little southern hospitality with a unique Georgia flavor. On Wednesday night, participants enjoyed hamburgers and hotdogs with music of A1A: The Official and Original Jimmy Buffet Tribute Band as the backdrop for an outstanding evening.

After a day of meetings and political discussions, participants gathered on Thursday evening to eat some southern fried seafood and enjoy the sounds of country band Confederate Railroad, including their hits "Queen of Memphis," "Daddy Never Was the Cadillac Kind" and "When You Leave Like That You Can Never Go Back."

Finally, on Friday night, Speakers and other guests enjoyed dinner and music by the Singing Waiters, followed by an evening of dancing under the stars with The Coppertones: The South's Premier Party Band.

Speakers in the Spotlight



Chenault

Alaska Speaker Selected as 2nd Vice President of National Speakers Conference

At the recent meeting of the NSC Executive Committee, [Rep. Mike Chenault](#), Speaker of the Alaska House of Representatives, was nominated and unanimously elected the 2nd Vice President of the National Speakers Conference. Election to this position puts Speaker Chenault in line to host the NSC Annual meeting in his home state in 2012. Rep. Chenault was first elected to the Alaska House in 2001 and was elected Speaker in 2009. He currently Chairs the Committee on Committees and is a member of the Economic Development, Trade and Tourism Committee.



Oliver

New Jersey Speaker Makes History

When [Assemblywoman Sheila Oliver](#) was sworn in as the 169th Speaker of the New Jersey Assembly on January 12, 2010, she made history. She became the first African American female to hold that post in the history of the state of New Jersey and only the second African American female Speaker in America. She now shares that distinction with Karen Bass, the Speaker of the California Assembly. Oliver, a Democrat, will preside over a 47 to 33 Democratic majority in the New Jersey Assembly. Speaker Oliver was elected to the Assembly in November, 2005.



Thrasher

Former Florida Speaker Likely Next GOP State Chair

It appears that [Senator John Thrasher](#), who served as Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives from 1998-2000, is likely to be the next State Chairman of the Florida Republican party. If selected for the post at a special committee meeting on February 20, Thrasher's selection would signify a shift to the right, away from the more moderate politics and policies of Governor Charlie Crist. At present, two other Republicans have announced they will seek the post. Republican National Committeewoman Sharon Day of Broward County said an outpouring of support at the weekend conference persuaded her to seek the party chairmanship. State committeeman Mark Cross of Osceola County said he, too, will bid for the post.



Ralston

Georgia House Selects New Speaker, Leadership Team

In the wake of the resignation of Speaker Glenn Richardson and the decision of Speaker Pro Tempore Mark Burkhalter not to seek the Speaker's post or remain as Pro Tempore, the Georgia House of Representatives elected a new set of leaders on Monday, January 11. Republican [David Ralston](#) was selected by a majority of the body to be the new Speaker of the House and Rep. [Jan Jones](#), also a Republican, was selected as the Speaker Pro Tempore. Rep. Jones will be the first female to hold that post. Ralston promised change, "We must embrace change because business as usual in this chamber will no longer be tolerated."



Dillon

Michigan Speaker Dillon Said to be Testing Gubernatorial Waters

[Representative Andy Dillon](#), the Democratic Speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives, is said to be "testing the waters," for a possible run for Governor of that state. Dillon, now finishing his third year as Speaker, formed an exploratory committee two days after presumed Democratic frontrunner Lt. Governor John Cherry unexpectedly pulled out of the race. Dillon, who is termed out of the legislature at the end of 2010, is said to be evaluating the political and financial viability of a run at the state's top post.