

Policy Resolution
on
Rural Development
March 2005

- WHEREAS,** with quality education systems, low crime rates, small close-knit communities and numerous outdoor recreational activities available, Midwestern states and their rural communities continue to be an excellent place to live, work and raise a family; and
- WHEREAS,** even with this high quality of life, rural communities have challenges building and maintaining economic activity that supports high quality and well paying employment opportunities. They lack the resources and economies of scale to address pressing issues such as access to quality health care, educational attainment, and economic development; and
- WHEREAS,** rural development problems are compounded by federal programs designed for urban needs and high-density service delivery systems. More program flexibility is needed to mitigate these problems and allow states to address the needs of both rural and urban populations; and
- WHEREAS,** actions by the federal government to improve living conditions in rural areas have been piecemeal, and they have suffered from the significant need for a coherent policy for dealing with rural problems; and
- WHEREAS,** in recent years there has been growing recognition of the need for a broad and integrative rural policy and for the research necessary to develop such a policy; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** that the MGA supports an integrated approach to individual and collective rural health needs, including educating, placing, and retaining physicians and other medical professionals at the rural community level, and investing in communications technology and a quality improvement support system to assist rural health organizations and officials; and be it
- RESOLVED,** that the MGA supports federal policies that recognize the implicit challenges facing rural education and support cooperative solutions to funding challenges, teacher recruitment and retention, and No Child Left Behind reporting issues; and be it

- RESOLVED,** that the MGA supports education and other programs targeted toward addressing the specific needs of rural communities such as the school lunch program, the Schools and Libraries Universal Service Support Mechanism (E-rate) and the Rural and Low Income School Program; and be it
- RESOLVED,** that the MGA supports the continuation of the New Markets Tax Credit Program, which permits taxpayers to receive a credit against Federal income taxes for making qualified equity investments in designated Community Development Entities; and be it
- RESOLVED,** that the MGA supports a comprehensive evaluation of funding formulas for federal housing programs as they currently favor states in which the disparity in income between the rich and poor is great, thus negatively impacting Midwestern states in which the income disparity is low but the number of poor people is high; and be it
- RESOLVED,** that the MGA supports the continued partnership between federal, state and local governments in their efforts to implement programs aimed to ease the burden of updating critical infrastructure, including but not limited to water and sewer systems, elementary and secondary schools and affordable housing units; and be it
- RESOLVED,** that the MGA supports the funding and continued efforts of the Northern Great Plains Authority to provide assistance with rural development planning, coordination and implementation. Additionally, the MGA calls on the Administration to fill vacant appoints on the Great Plains Authority; and be it
- RESOLVED,** that the MGA strongly supports efforts by federal agencies that increase access to capital for rural businesses and economic development projects; and be it
- RESOLVED,** that the MGA supports federal policies that continue funding the access and affordability of broadband service and other telecommunications systems, such as telemedicine and distance learning to rural and poor areas.