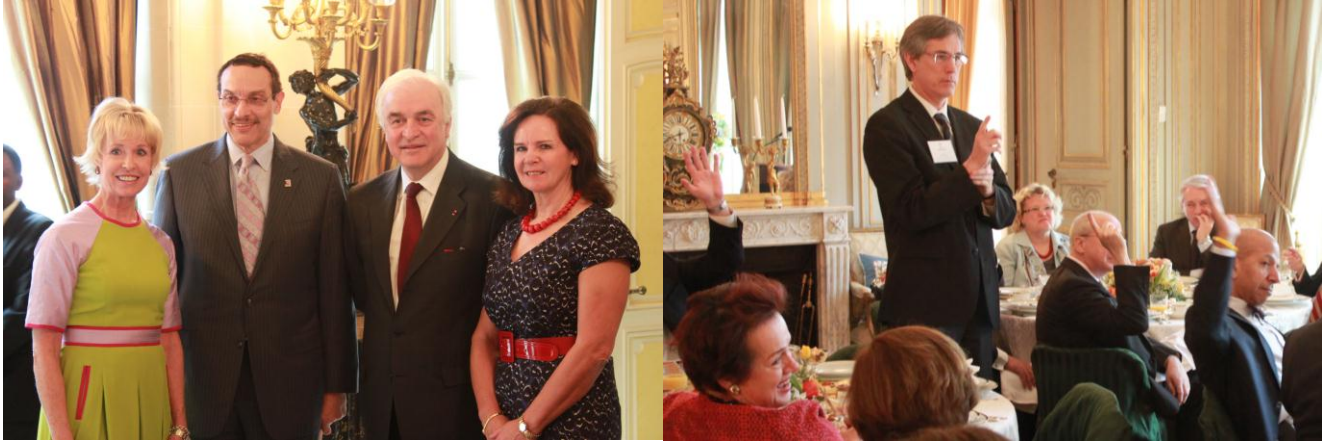




## IFE/INFO Special Guest: The Honorable Vincent C. Gray, Mayor of the District of Columbia

On March 9, 2012, IFE Diplomatic Steward H.E. Jan Matthysen, Ambassador of Belgium, hosted The Institute for Education for an exciting edition of the INFO Public Policy Roundtable series featuring District of Columbia Mayor the Honorable Vincent Gray. A warm welcome delivered by IFE CEO and Founder, Coach Kathy Kemper, and Amb. Matthysen, followed by an introduction from IFE Board of Stewards members former Mayor Anthony Williams and Beverly Perry set the stage for Mayor Gray's second address to the Institute since assuming office in January, 2011.



Mayor Gray addressed the Institute on the state of the District, recounting some of the challenges he faced upon taking office in the midst of a deep recession and budget deficit, and outlined his plan to bring vitality back to the city and its budget. Mayor Gray highlighted the unique opportunities the District faces — including a population influx unprecedented in its recent history. But with the promise of these opportunities, there remain significant and inter-related difficulties. Among them is a surging demand for more housing than the District has historically had available while accounting for decreasing family sizes. He also stressed the importance of providing pathways to sustainable development that ensure we maintain the character of our historic neighborhoods and city at large. Along with housing, the Mayor outlined the steps he is taking to make D.C. schools more competitive and expand opportunities in Charter schools and Community Colleges. Mayor Gray reinforced that many of these issues simply cannot be confronted without budget autonomy—ensuring that the elected officials of the District can spend taxpayer dollars, without seeking permission of a partisan Congress. Along with full democracy, including voting rights in Congress, housing and education remain central to the Mayor's agenda.



In attendance were luminaries of the diplomatic corps, industry, and thought leaders from around Washington, including H.E. Erlan Idrissov, Ambassador of Kazakhstan; H.E. Ritva Koukku-Ronde, Ambassador of Finland; H.E. Elena Poptodorova, Ambassador of Bulgaria; H.E. Jean-Paul Senninger, Ambassador of Luxembourg; H.E. Wegger Strommen, Ambassador of Norway; H.E. Namik Tan, Ambassador of Turkey; and IFE Board of Stewards members the Hon. Tom Davis, Jerry Jasinowski, Marci Robinson, and Judge William Webster. Also attending the breakfast was a diverse group of IFE interns and fellows.

*By Joanne Ke, IFE Fellow*



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