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National Service Memo Feb 95

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TO: STEVE
FARMER

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
February 15, 1995

We are thinking about
encouraging high-level
group of leading citizens
to support
national
service
and believe it would
be most helpful if you
could

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: RICK ALLEN RA

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT BUSH AND AMERICANS FOR NATIONAL SERVICE

As you know, President Bush presided over a precursor of national service (including creation of the Points of Light Foundation, and funding of demonstration programs that included City Year). As we assemble a broad-based citizens group in support of national service for the imminent Congressional battles over budget and existence, we think President Bush's participation would be helpful in emphasizing the truly bi-partisan nature of your initiative. We would request that you explore the President's receptivity to being a co-chair of "Americans for National Service".

Bush's

This entity would be independent of our Corporation, but operate in harmony with it. It would include major business leaders (as an example, both Lou Gerstner of IBM and Jack Welch of GE have been personally involved in their corporations' significant involvement in AmeriCorps -- they would be the caliber of business leaders we would enlist as co-chairs or members of the effort); heads of major charities (such as the United Way, the YMCA, Habitat and the American Red Cross) with the latter obviously being the most difficult; other former elected officials such as David Durenberger and Tom Kean; heads of major foundations; and a string of other notable Americans, from former Joint Chiefs Chair David Jones to Father Hesburgh, Dave Winfield to LA Police Chief Willie Williams. (We believe each of these individuals would serve in such an effort -- but we have not yet made a formal request. We would agree not to make President Bush's participation public until some critical mass were reached, if that would make him more comfortable.)

Americans for National Service would exist as an outside validator for AmeriCorps. Certain of its members would sign op-eds, some might testify and/or contact Members privately, and all would sign on to general support letters.

Two other points of interest: First, President Bush is, as you know, committed to his Points of Light Foundation; your budgets have continued federal support every year (despite the original Congressional intention to privatize it by this point). The Foundation's funding comes through the Corporation, so our futures are linked. Second, Eli is meeting today with Governor Bush in Texas; that state has the largest number of AmeriCorps Members, in impressive programs that have bi-partisan support. This will be our first official contact with the new Governor, although Eli had a good brief chat with him at the White House Dinner for the NGA.

You may also wish to discuss the subject with President Ford; although he does not have the same personal involvement in service, he might be amenable, and because President Carter should be interested (particularly given Habitat's close partnership with AmeriCorps), we could land a trifecta.

February 15, 1995

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