

# FOIA MARKER

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**Collection/Record Group:** Clinton Presidential Records

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**OA/ID Number:** 1284

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**Folder Title:**  
["Youth Corps" Suggestions] [loose]

**Stack:**

**S**

**Row:**

**66**

**Section:**

**2**

**Shelf:**

**5**

**Position:**

**1**

National Service Correspondence Coding Sheet

Coder: V.S.  
Date: 6/1

I. Purpose of Letter:

- ☐ Wants to Participate
  - ☐ Summer of Service
  - ☐ National Initiative
  - ☒ General Commentary
    - ☐ Pro
    - ☐ Con
    - ☒ Suggestions for Programs
- ☐ ~~Requesting~~ General Information
  - ☐ Summer of Service
  - ☐ General Program
- ☐ Offering their Services
  - ☐ Volunteer
  - ☐ Internships
  - ☐ White House
  - ☐ National Service (Jim)
  - ☐ Employment

II. Writer Information:

- A. Age (Circle One):  
Under 17   17-25   Over 25   Unspecified
- B. Education Level (Circle One):
  - 1. Student:
    - ☐ Elementary
    - ☐ Secondary
    - ☐ College
    - ☐ Graduate
  - 2. Non-Student (Level Completed):
    - ☐ Secondary
    - ☐ College
    - ☐ Graduate

III. Re-route to Other Departments

- ☐ Commission
- ☐ (Personal, service organizations,  
or business proposals)
- ☐ Scheduling/Gloria
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

IV. ☐ Certified Mail

MY  
SLPCLM

2470 North Grant Blvd.  
Milwaukee, WI 53210  
May 7, 1993

Mr. William Clinton, President  
The White House  
Washington D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

One of the most notable contributions that President John F. Kennedy made to our civilization was the Peace Corps. We think that you could have the opportunity to make an even greater contribution to our society, if you think that the ideas described below have merit and can be implemented in the form of a "Youth Corps."

The news in any of the larger communities in this country is full of stories of teenage murders, of drive-by shootings, of fashion crimes, of gang violence, of drug usage and drug related crime, of crack houses and of deteriorating neighborhoods, of dysfunctional families, of failing kids and failing schools.

I teach rural/suburban students at a small two-year campus of the University of Wisconsin. My wife teaches at an elementary school in the inner city of Milwaukee. Her school was recently rated as the "second worse" elementary school in the city. A few years ago we both got involved in M.I.C.A.H. (Milwaukee Inner city Congregations Allied for Hope). M.I.C.A.H. created four task forces to deal with the tremendous problems facing our city and the citizens who live here:

- Drugs and crime
- Education
- Housing
- Economic development

We have come to believe that these four areas cannot be separated but are instead, inextricably related. Without a good education and the job skills that a



good education provides, you cannot get a good job. Without a good job you cannot afford good housing. Without a decent house in a decent neighborhood, you and your children cannot avoid drugs and crime and crime and drugs. Without a stable neighborhood, you don't have safe streets and you don't have good schools. Because your children cannot avoid crime and drugs, they do not stay in school. Nor do they get a good education. As a result they are not eligible for meaningful employment, and they cannot support their children.

For too many of our children, our elementary schools represent the only safe haven that they have. My wife reports that many of the students at her school cry when summer vacation comes! For many, Monday is their favorite day of the week. She and her colleagues are increasingly frustrated by having to turn the students out into those unsafe streets (and unsafe homes!) at the end of each school day, and to deal the next morning with students who have been neglected, abused, raped, or exposed to gunfire the night before. Indeed one of our local educators has proposed a residential school for our "problem children" from our dysfunctional "families" or homes as the only hope we have of saving many of our children. It has been said that half of our young black men (18 to 25) are in prison, and many of our inner city youth despair of living to age 25. Many educators say that "parental involvement" is sorely lacking in education today, and they name it as a major cause of low test scores. "If only parents would turn off the TV and read with their little children or provide a quiet, scheduled homework time and place, students would learn." So complain many frustrated teachers. "If only we had better attendance, we could teach more consistently," they say. but the truth, as Governor Thompson's Learnfare program has shown, is that many parents have no control over their children's activities at home, or over their attendance at school.

In our years of working with M.I.C.A.H. we have tried to think of ways of breaking the cycle of violence, poverty, welfare and despair. Most of these ideas must be rejected as violating basic human rights: [forced contraception? forced education? forced job training/work? taking children away from their parent(s)? Search and seizure of all guns and drugs?]. But what can be done to save those beautiful baby (boys) that their mothers adore from ages 1 to 6, that they can't control from ages 6 to 16, and that they all too often loose to death or prison before age 20? Current programs, that send troubled youth who have been arrested several times back to their families and schools and neighborhoods, do not work. The parents in these homes have demonstrated their inability to be responsible for the actions of their offspring. They often verbalize their frustrations and their lack of coping skills, and yet the courts return these children

to these dysfunctional family units. Unable and unqualified to deal with the problems of these troubled children, the entire family unit suffers irreparable harm when the behavior patterns begin again. Foster homes are only short-term solutions and often are no improvement over the original home situation.

Recent news stories about the planned closing of military bases and about cutbacks in funding for our national parks, combined with consideration of the problems described above, lead us to make the following proposal:

1--In the best of Democratic traditions, create a national "youth corps", utilizing several of the surplus military bases and training centers.

2--Send all children, ages ten to sixteen, who have been arrested three times, to one of these installations to live and study until they have completed high school. (Children under the age of ten are too young to be removed from their homes; those over the age of sixteen have too few years of schooling left to benefit from this program.)

3--Provide these children with a thorough, technical education, strongly based on mathematics and the sciences, that can prepare them either for college or for the technical careers that will predominate in the next century.

4--Use eight months of the year for schooling. Use the other four months of the year for working in our national parks and state parks, for working with their hands, for building trails and cabins and handicapped facilities, so that all of these youth will have the opportunity to learn what work is, and to learn the satisfaction and the dignity that comes from meaningful work and from the pride of accomplishment.

5--Staff for these installations could be recruited from and trained by our military trainers as our military downsizes. The training methods and the discipline that the military have used so successfully to train their personnel would have the best chances of success in teaching our threatened youth. [A number of years ago I had the opportunity to tour the Naval Training Centers at Jacksonville and at Great Lakes, and to see the kinds of educational programs that they offer. To what better use could we put these facilities, as our nation's military downsizes!]



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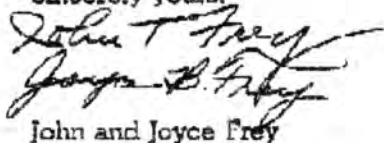
Removing these troubled children from our neighborhood schools will not only ensure their chances for a productive life but it will also increase the chances that the remaining children have for a safe, thorough and efficient education.

We must get these young people out of our decaying central cities and into our beautiful countryside if they are to have any hope of growing up to be productive citizens. Urban or rural, we must find an effective alternative to returning troubled children to dysfunctional families. In state after state we have learned that we cannot build prisons fast enough to cope with our exploding populations of drug-related criminals. A recent article by Colman McCarthy of the Washington Post states that our prison populations have tripled since 1973, that many states have been ordered by the courts to eliminate crowding and inhumane conditions in their prisons, and that seventy-five percent of the people in prison in New York state lack high school diplomas.

The "war on poverty" in the days of President Lyndon Johnson did not work. The "war on drugs" under Presidents Reagan and Bush has not worked. We have got to come up with something more effective than "Just say NO". We have the physical resources available NOW. Five years from now they will no longer be there. The long term financial costs will be much less than the \$30,000 it cost to keep a person in prison for one year!

Is there a better way to help our kids? Is there a better way to reduce the impact on our communities of the impending closing of our surplus military bases? Is there a more important way to utilize the experience and the training of our fine men and women who will be leaving our military service as we downsize our military and they seek employment in our civilian economy? Is there a better way for us to invest in our future? Is there any other way to break the vicious cycle of crime and drugs and poverty and ignorance and military expenditures? We would appreciate hearing your reactions to these ideas.

Sincerely yours,

  
John and Joyce Frey

c.c.: Senator Herbert Kohl  
Senator Russ Feingold