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Subseries:

OA/ID Number: 24221

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USDA [Department of Agriculture]/AmeriCorps - Clinton Library Copies - Internal Management
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February

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~~CONFIDENTIAL DRAFT~~

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February 28, 1995

To: Eli Segal
From: Joel Berg
Subject: Why Fighting Hard for Federal Programs Will Help All of AmeriCorps

Given the concentrated conservative attack against the Federal agency role in AmeriCorps, I fully understand why many people believe that the Federal agencies are the "Achilles heel" of AmeriCorps. However, there are 14 solid reasons --- ten political and four policy --- why I believe fighting hard to maintain and expand Federal programs will boost the entire AmeriCorps program.

The reasons are based mostly on my knowledge of USDA programs, but should hold true for most Federal agency AmeriCorps programs.

Political Reasons

1) The services performed by Federal programs are among the most defensible of all services provided by AmeriCorps. USDA projects repairing trails on National Forests, boosting rural fire protection, protecting shorelines, or keeping businesses from re-locating to Mexico, or Department of Justice programs fighting crime, or Environmental Protection Agency projects protecting water quality are carrying out non-controversial service that is perceived as vital by most mainstream Americans. Almost all USDA projects meet what I call the "Jesse Test; that is, they are performing service that would be supported by everyone from Jesse Jackson to Jesse Helms. For example, as documented in our first quarter report, in the first two months of full operation, USDA AmeriCorps projects maintained 61.3 miles of hiking and horseback riding trails, cooked and prepared meals for over 6,000 people at soup kitchens and sorted over 93,000 pounds of commodities at food banks, repaired and restored dozens of flood-damaged areas, helped farmers and ranchers in six different states find economical ways to decrease their groundwater pollution, saved a company with 600 employees from having to re-locate to Mexico, and helped communities in three different states improve their efforts to prevent and combat fires. No one can seriously characterize many Federally-run projects as left-wing advocacy work.

2) Many Federal programs specifically help middle class families. Most USDA programs are fully diverse --- including a large representation of Members from solidly middle class families. In addition, many USDA programs also perform service in middle class and suburban areas.

3) Key Republican Members of Congress already support specific USDA projects in their states. Republican Senators Jeffords and Hatfield (the Senate Appropriations Committee Chair) and Congressman Bereuter have already praised specific USDA projects.

4) Many USDA projects are in rural and suburban Districts represented by Members of Congress who may hold the swing votes on re-funding and re-authorizing AmeriCorps. Conservative rhetoric aside, it is a given of Congressional politics that members will be more likely to support projects in their districts. For instance, Congressman Sonny Bono just told a newspaper in his district that he does not currently know enough about AmeriCorps to decide yet whether or not to support it. USDA happens to have an excellently-running National Forest project in Bono's District that --- once we educate the Congressman about --- may help him decide in our favor. Additionally, USDA runs the only AmeriCorps programs I know of in Gingrich's and Jerry Lewis' Districts. In contrast, most non-Federal AmeriCorps projects tend to be placed in urban Districts represented by liberal Democrats who already support AmeriCorps -- such projects do not win us many votes in Congress we do not already have.

5) Federal programs are partnered with many different community-based organizations, some of whom have many conservative supporters. One of our California projects is managed in partnership with a local Soil and Water Conservation District which is headed by a person who serves on the State Republican Party Central Committee. One of our projects in Oregon, which has repaired public buildings in surrounding communities, is supported by a local Republican County Commissioner who describes himself as conservative. Throughout the nation, our projects are partnered-up with community colleges, non-profit organizations, youth corps, soil conservation districts, county governments, school districts, etc.

6) The best way to defend and expand AmeriCorps is for us to define our programs ourselves, rather than let our opponents define our programs for us. If we don't define our programs, the opposition will. The opposition will continue to harp on Federal programs, and, if we concede the field of debate to them, they will succeed in defining the programs as wasteful and expensive additions to the Federal bureaucracy. If, however, we aggressively define these programs on our own terms, we can succeed in communicating their immense benefits. We have a very powerful message to deliver: Federally-run AmeriCorps projects are incredibly cost-effective models of reinventing government that are based on mainstream values and "get things done" throughout the country in grass-roots partnerships with community-based organizations.

7) The Administration should stand behind the significant commitment of resources and prestige that it has already committed to Federally-run AmeriCorps projects. If we back away from programs in which the Administration has already provided so many resources, that would be viewed by the public as a reversal. In my judgement, the American people are anxious to see the Administration stand up and fight for programs in which we really believe.

8) Federally- run projects will help AmeriCorps win the "outside" game. The attacks against Federal agencies will not resonate well beyond the Beltway if we focus on our specific projects. Americans are not opposed to the mere existence of Federal agencies -- they are opposed to fat and bloated Federal bureaucracies that do not respond to their needs. However, in hundreds of counties across the country in which USDA has projects, local residents have expressed their pleasure that their government is finally doing something they like. As demonstrated by the 60 different press clips from around the country contained in the USDA first quarter report --- including some glowing articles and editorials from politically conservative newspapers --- our Americorps projects across America are widely popular and non-controversial. Even Trent Lott told one of our Members (it is unclear whether he knew she was an AmeriCorps Member) that he supported her work in Mississippi fighting against teen-age pregnancies. The attacks against Federal agency programs are being orchestrated by a small band of libertarian extremists who do not believe many of our agencies should exist at all. Just because the attacks against agency programs are among their most frequent attacks doesn't mean they are among the most effective attacks.

9) A strong defense of Federal AmeriCorps projects would bolster the President's general defense of reinvented programs that are working. The President and Vice-President have themselves focused on cutting programs that are outdated while expanding and reinventing programs that do work, such as AmeriCorps. Said Clinton about our project in San Bernardino, California: "If you look at what this national service project does --- they're working in the San Bernardino National Forest; people who are helping to clean-up the forest, maintain it, strengthen it, keep it there for our children and our grandchildren, make sure it's an important resource... These are the kinds of things that are going on all over America, and I think it emphasizes what I'm saying. For a small amount of Federal money we have increased opportunity with no bureaucracy. This is all done at the grass roots level." If however, if we ask the President to change his tack and agree to eliminate Federally-run AmeriCorps projects, we would only bolster the Republican argument that the Federal government can not do anything right.

10) Federally-run programs have the clearest AmeriCorps identity and give the most direct credit to President Clinton.

Unlike many sub-grantees, the Federal programs clearly and consistently identify themselves as AmeriCorps. Furthermore, unlike programs which are funded through state commissions and therefore can be credited to Governors, President Clinton receives full and unfiltered credit for all Federally-run AmeriCorps projects.

Policy Reasons

1) If CNCS does suffer through recisions, and if agency AmeriCorps programs can somehow escape major recisions, then our programs provide the best hope for continued expansion. Federal agencies still provide some of the greatest resources and infrastructure for the long-term expansion of AmeriCorps.

2) Federal AmeriCorps programs are real models of reinventing government. The AmeriCorps programs provide daily lessons to all our Departments about how we can find new ways to better and more cheaply deliver our services.

3) Many AmeriCorps projects run by Federal agencies exemplify the proper role of the Federal government. Who else should run projects on Federal lands --- such as Forest Service lands --- other than Federal agencies?

4) Federal AmeriCorps programs provide taxpayers with double the "bang for the buck." Most Federal programs are simply utilizing funds that would already be spent by the agency. For instance, USDA Forest Service projects are using some funding from existing trail repair budgets. Not only are the AmeriCorps Members repairing more trails than would be repaired by private contractors, they are also bring communities together, promoting personal responsibilities, and helping earn their own way through college --- all for the same budget that normally would just fund the trail repair.

How to Fight Back

My sense is that CNCS is now ambivalent about the future of Federally-run programs, appreciating their policy successes but worrying that, in the end, they may be political albatrosses that will sink the entire AmeriCorps program.

I believe such ambivalence is the worst possible option, and will inevitably lead to the slow death of such programs. Simply not talking much about the Federally-run projects in public will not make the political opposition to them go away. In the last year, we were able to create large 'stealth programs' in Federal agencies without much Congressional scrutiny. Now that the "lid is off" on our work, we can either defend the projects or let them be terminated.

I believe a firm decision must be made to either fully fight for or to agree to "bargain away" Federally-run programs. Or perhaps there is some way we could transfer funding and management to the state commissions rather than just eliminate all our projects.

Yet if the President and yourself come to the ultimate conclusion that Federally-run programs are ultimately a political detriment to all of AmeriCorps and thus must be sacrificed in order to save the rest of the program, I will support that decision fully, even if it means the end of the entire USDA program. However, this decision should be made quickly and should be communicated firmly, yet compassionately, to the agencies.

If, however, the President and yourself agree with the arguments made above and thus agree we should fight to maintain federally-run programs, I believe we should give such a fight every bit of our energy. I understand that neither your staff nor the White House have the resources for such a fight, and that is why I recommend that you empower the agencies with such programs to save their programs themselves.

I volunteer to work closely with Rick Allen, Susan Stroud, Gene Sofer, Jay Toscano, and Steve Selby to immediately set-up a "war room" or task force on Federal agency programs. While we certainly would not violate any legal restrictions against lobbying, we can play an energetic role in better informing the Congress, the media, and the public about our programs.

Such a "war room" or task force should be comprised of staff from various agencies within the agency offices of Congressional affairs, communications, intergovernmental affairs, and public liaison.

I would greatly appreciate any feedback you have on my suggestions, as well as specific guidance about how you would like me to proceed.

Thank you for your consideration.

CC: Rick Allen, Susan Stroud, Gene Sofer, Jay Toscano, Steve Selby

DRAFT

February 22, 1995

To:

USDA AmeriCorps Project Managers and Facilitators

From:

Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

Subject:

Primary Challenges Identified in Our First Quarter Reports

I have now had the opportunity to thoroughly review all your quarterly reports and to discuss their contents with your agency's AmeriCorps coordinators here in Washington. The program is going incredibly well after only few months of operations, and all of you are to be congratulated heartily for the accounts chronicled in your reports about how USDA/AmeriCorps is "Getting Things Done" in a highly impressive fashion throughout the country. These reports are summarized in our Department-wide quarterly AmeriCorps report.

However, we also asked you to provide an honest assessment of the challenges, difficulties, and problems you faced --- and most of you responded frankly yet thoughtfully. It is important for you to know that our request for such information was NOT pro-forma, and, in fact, we believe such insight is absolutely vital to our efforts at Total Quality Management and continuous improvement of AmeriCorps.

The following quote from Corporation for National and Community Service Chief Executive Officer Eli J. Segal is appropriate to this process:

"In AmeriCorps, the only forgivable sin should be complacency. If one manager says, 'Everything's going great' and the second says 'here's two problems and here's how we want to fix them,' I will go with the second every time."

Therefore, summarized below are your most-frequently cited challenges. They are broken down --- in order of frequency mentioned --- by issues that primarily need to be dealt with by either the Corporation for National and Community Service, by USDA here at the Washington level, or by you and your Members at the local and state level.

In each case, provided are a few word description of the problem cited, a number representing how many reports cited this as a problem, and, most importantly, a brief description of how we may be able to address the problem.

Corporation for National and Community Service Issues

Confusion about child care	2
Difficulty obtaining child care	11
Confusion about health care	3
Problems with loan deferment	4
Educational benefits taxed	1
Members have no uniforms or improper uniforms	16
Lack of AmeriCorps signs	2
Six week replacement rule	2

USDA Washington Office Issues

Payroll not flexible enough	1
Member have no access to computers	15
Communication between state office and field	3
AmeriCorps vision at odds with agency mission	1
Workmen's Compensation confusion	1
Not enough budget for training	1
Not enough budget for travel	5
Lack of or difficulty obtaining equipment	5
Members wanting cluster time/ time with other Members	5
Project managers say too much cluster time	3
Want to talk to other Members nationally	2
Members not used to Federal government	5
Need training about all USDA agencies	2
Lack of funding for project work	5
Not enough time to prepare reports/paperwork	6
Too much time preparing reports	3
Lack of stationary	1
Difficulty in recruitment/short time frames	8

Local Project Manager/Facilitator/Member Issues

Supervisor took buy-out	1
Lack of orientation for Members	1
Members not used to residential camp	1
No phones and/or desks for Members	5
Supervisor too far away from Member	1
Not enough supervision	2
Members unclear of what of what to do	5
Supervision too time-costly	3
Members need computer training	12
Turnover in local elected officials	2
Need grant writing training	6
Work ethic of Members/difficulty with diverse Members	5
Members not getting critical information from office	2
Personal leave time is not enough	1
Different USDA agency regulations confusing	1
Members dropping out to obtain other employment	4
Lack of flexibility on number of Members in state	1
USDA employees resent AmeriCorps	1
Cultural mistrust between local leaders	2

DRAFT

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Local lack of interest after not getting EZ/EC	2
Problems in RD with partners lack of interest/trust	10
Lack of support from offices/doing grunt work	5
Transportation to job site/lack of vehicles	2
Weather conditions prevent planned work	3
Friction integrating with pre-existing youth corps	1

I hope this process helps you better understand how we are dedicated to constantly improving this program, based on constant and serious self-assessment. We hope you will come to realize that not only are we sincere when we asked for criticism. This process has provided us all with concrete ways we can do better.

Thank you once again for your role in building AmeriCorps and written a vital new chapter in American history.

CC: Corporation for National Service
USDA Washington Office AmeriCorps Coordinators

(File) memos From Joe)

February 21, 1995

To: USDA AmeriCorps Working Group
From: Joel Berg JB
Subject: New Application Deadlines

The Department's application is now due to the Corporation for National and Community Service on April 28, 1995 ---- as is our second quarter report, upon which our renewal will heavily depend.

So that we can begin recruiting in earnest before colleges let out for the Spring, please have your final agencies proposals to me by April 15.

As you will recall, the 2nd quarter reports --- for the quarter that ends March 31, 1995 --- are due to my office by April 10. Please remind all your field offices of this deadline and stress that their reports must be in on time.

Please, please, please, please, please, (with sugar on top), provide both your applications and second quarter reports in the electronic formats we have previously discussed.



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

February 15, 1995

To: USDA AmeriCorps Project Managers, Facilitators, and Members
From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA JB
Subject: President Clinton Specifically Praises USDA AmeriCorps Project

You might be interested to know that, in a speech yesterday in San Bernadino, California, President Clinton specifically praised the USDA AmeriCorps project on the San Bernadino National Forest. The ninety Members of that project attended the President's speech.

Said Clinton:

"If you look at what this national service project does --- they're working in the San Bernadino National Forest; people who are helping to clean-up the forest, maintain it, strengthen it, keep it there for our children and our grandchildren, make sure it's an important resource... These are the kinds of things that are going on all over America, and I think it emphasizes what I'm saying. For a small amount of federal money we have increased opportunity with no bureaucracy. This is all done at the grass-roots level."

I believe the President's comments are applicable to all USDA AmeriCorps projects. Congratulations on all of your hard work and success!

THE WHITE HOUSE
OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY
(San Bernardino, California)

For Immediate Release

February 14, 1995

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO STUDENTS AND FAMILIES OF THE
SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY COLLEGE COMMUNITY

San Bernardino Valley College
San Bernardino, California

5:45 P.M. PST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you for that wonderful, wonderful welcome. (Applause.) Thank you, Dr. Singer, for your introduction. I know the Secretary of Education, Secretary Riley, has already spoken; I'm glad to be here with him. And I thank the Mayor for being here, and Dr. Bundy. And let's give the Etiwanda High School Band a hand. Didn't they do a great job? (Applause.) Great job. Thank you. (Applause.) When I heard them playing Hail To The Chief outside I thought they'd transported the Marine Band from the White House here, they were so great. They were great. (Applause.)

I'd also like to recognize a couple of other groups that are here. First of all, I want to thank the members of our national service program, AmeriCorps, who are here. They're over there. (Applause.)

And I want to thank a representative group of incredible people who just spent about an hour with me, talking to me about this institution, how it has affected their lives and your community and the remarkable partnerships that are being made, and the dreams that are being made to come true. I'd like for all the people who were just in the little roundtable discussion with me to be recognized. They're over here somewhere. Where are they? There they are. (Applause.) Thank you. They were great. (Applause.) I feel that I know a lot more about you now because I listened to all of them. And, believe me, they put you all in a very good light.

I want to talk to you today about the importance of this community college and education in general not only to your future, but to the future of our country -- what it means and what we should be doing about it. I met a lot of folks already here today that represent what I think America is all about -- people who are coming together around the idea of education without regard to their race, their income, their background, what country they were born in, what situation they're in now just because they want to make the most of their own lives and make a contribution, live up to the fullest of their God-given

abilities. And I really think that's what we ought to be supporting.

The reason I worked so hard for the national service program that you see all these young people in is because I believe that we ought to be helping young people to find ways to earn money for education and contribute to the strength of their communities at the same time. (Applause.)

I ran for President because I was worried, as we come to the close of this great century, that we wouldn't be able to guarantee the American Dream for all people moving into the 21st century, and we wouldn't be able to make sure America was the strongest country in the world; and I believe those are the two jobs the President has to do. And I believe the way we should do that is what I have called the New Covenant. We should create more opportunity; we should insist on more responsibility from all of us; and we should work to build our communities at the grass-roots level, where the real strength of America is. (Applause.)

Now, there's been a lot of debate in our country now in two separate elections -- in 1992 and 1994 -- about what the role of government is and whether government is bad or good inherently. My answer to you is that we need a different kind of government for the 21st century, and that your national government has three major jobs.

One is, we should expand opportunity while shrinking the federal bureaucracy and the burden it imposes. (Applause.) Two, we should recognize that the government can't support everybody, but it should work to empower people to make the most of their own lives. (Applause.) And three, we should work to enhance the security Americans feel not only in terms of what goes on beyond our borders, but here at home as well. More opportunity, more empowerment, more security -- that is what we should be about in the national government. (Applause.)

Now, if you look at what this national service project does -- they're working in the San Bernardino forest; people who are helping to clean up the forest, maintain it, strengthen it, keep it there for our children and our grandchildren, make sure it's an important resource. Last year there were 89 young people in this program in South Texas who immunized 102,000 infants to help them live. (Applause.) And all of them earned money on their education -- 16 of these young people work at Berkeley, helping 750 of their classmates to tutor

middle-school students. These are the kinds of things that are going on all over America, and I think it emphasizes what I'm saying. For a small amount of federal money we have increased opportunity with no bureaucracy. This is all done at the grass-roots level. (Applause.)

We have certainly empowered these young people to make more of their own lives, and we are clearly going to be a stronger country because we have more people getting an education and more people preserving the environment, making our kids healthier, making our country stronger at the grass-roots level. That is what I am trying to do. And I want to talk to you today about what that means for education in general, and especially for community colleges like this one, which are the key to the future of the American economy and the ability to preserve the American Dream for all people. (Applause.)

Let me give you an example of what we're trying to do in another area on security, and then I'll come back to education, because I want to make sure that you understand exactly how I'm thinking about this. I welcome the call of the new Republicans in the Congress to cut the government, but I --now, wait a minute, you all don't get into a partisan fight already; wait until the end of the speech. (Laughter.) For the last two years, we've been doing it without any help. I'd like some help. (Applause.) I'd like some help. But what is the purpose of this? That's what I want you to think about.

Now, there are now over 100,000 fewer people working for the federal government than there were the day I took office. We have shrunk the federal government. If they don't pass a single law this year, we will reduce the size of the federal government by over a quarter of a million because of the budgets adopted in the first two years of my term, and we'll make the federal government the smallest it's been since John Kennedy was President. (Applause.)

Now, what do we do with the money? What are we doing with the money? We cut, already, over \$600 billion from the deficit, and we're going to cut more. I've just sent a budget to the Congress that cuts more spending from the deficit. What are we doing with the money? We propose, first, to reduce the deficit, and secondly, to increase investments in the areas that I mentioned -- to increase investments that would create more opportunities, jobs; that would empower people more, education; and that would enhance security.

Things like the crime bill. If you just take the crime bill, for example, I said when I ran for president -- I came to California and campaigned -- vote for me and I will reduce the size of the federal bureaucracy by 100,000 and we'll put another 100,000 police officers on the street. And that's

exactly what we've done, except we reduced the size of the federal government by 270,000, and used it to pay for police officers, prisons and prevention. We passed that crime bill last year with a bipartisan majority. After six years of partisan haggling and scrapping around and people throwing words at each other, we actually passed a bill. And since October, we have put -- (laughter) -- well, I only was there a year and a half, you

understand -- (laughter) -- but since October, we've put 16,000 police officers out -- 16,000. (Applause.)

And we've got 17 right here in San Bernardino, new police officers. (Applause.) Listen to this -- we did it with a one-page form, eight questions that could be faxed in; nobody had to hire consultants and of all the communities in America with police officers, every size, including those with just one -- one-half of all the communities in America have already applied for help under this program because it's a good program, it works and there's no hassle in it. That's the kind of government we ought to have -- a leaner, not a meaner government that makes sense and makes people more secure. We're under budget, ahead of schedule, moving forward. (Applause.)

It took six years to pass the bill. I started working on it when I got elected; we got it done. In only six weeks of this new Congress, the new majority in the House of Representatives is trying to wipe out the crime bill and pass two block grants; to cut back on the money that goes to police and to prevention; to put it all in one package, send it to the states and say, you all do whatever you want to with it; and to put more money into the prison system. Now, here's the interesting thing -- wait a minute, don't get into a partisan fight, just listen to me make my piece. (Laughter.) Every police organization in the country, including those that are overwhelmingly Republican, has endorsed our position to leave it alone and let it work. (Applause.) This is not a partisan issue.

So the people in the House said, I don't care what the police said; I don't care what the people working in the community said; I don't care what the evidence shows; this is what we're going to do; we're determined not to spend any money on prevention; if the states want to do it and not put police on the streets, that's their business; and here's the money, build the prisons, or else. Now, what I believe is that we still have a chance to keep this a bipartisan issue. And I'm going to do my best to go into the Senate and to work with people who understand law enforcement, who will listen to people who are out here on the streets every day trying to save these kids and save our communities and save our streets and keep this Bill intact so we can put the police on the street and have the prevention programs. (Applause.)

But I will not -- I will reiterate what I said Saturday -- if I have to, I will veto any bill that attempts to undermine the commitment that we made last year after six years. (Applause.) But it need not be a partisan issue; it ought to be an American issue. (Applause.) And that's what I say to you about education. What are we going to do in this day and time? What is our job in Washington that affects you way out here in the Inland Empire when it comes to education? What is our job when

it comes to helping to raise middle-class incomes and let people in the underclass work themselves into the middle class? What is our job and what is the problem?

You know, if anybody told me two years ago that we would be able, in the space of two years, to bring the deficit down over \$600 billion and have a hand in creating almost six million new jobs, I would have been very happy to hear that. In 1994, we had the best year for economic growth in a decade and the first year in a long time when all 50 states, including California that's been through so much, had economic growth. What is the problem?

The problem is, a whole lot of people have jobs but their incomes aren't going up; they don't feel secure at work; they're afraid they can't keep their health insurance or they don't have it now. We had 8.5 million people worried about their retirement until we passed a reform of the retirement guaranty system late last year. So in this global economy the good news is, there are more people in America becoming millionaires than ever before; that's good news. The good new is, there are more people with an education doing exciting things than ever before. The bad news is, if you don't have the skills you need, you can work harder and harder and harder for less and less and less, right? (Applause.)

So when you have a good news-bad news story, you have two choices: you can tell a joke about it, but if you're President, that doesn't seem to be a particularly good option. (Laughter.) The other choice you have is to try to make more good news and less bad news. And the only way to do that, I would argue to you, is to make sure we give all of our people access to the education and training they need to compete and win in this global economy, so when they work harder, they'll be rewarded and not punished for it. That is what we have to do. (Applause.)

Now, I want you to focus with me just for a minute, therefore, on two big issues -- what we ought to do in this year and what we should not do. I think we ought to give some tax relief to hardworking middle-class people who haven't felt the benefit of the recovery. (Applause.) But the question is, what kind and will we pay for it? I do not think we should increase the federal deficit. That's been a big problem. We've gotten it down; we ought to keep bringing it down, not exploding it.

Secondly, I think that the best tax relief is embodied in what I call the Middle Class Bill of Rights because it rewards work and family. It gives tax relief for people raising young children, and it gives tax relief for the cost of all education after high school, which I think is important. (Applause.)

You think about it -- you can deduct the cost of interest on your home if you have a home. But in the information age, if you don't have an education, you may never get to a home. So why shouldn't we let people deduct their education costs? It's a

good investment. We also propose to let more people get an IRA and withdraw from it tax-free for the cost of education. I think that's what we ought to be doing. (Applause.)

And finally, I had a lot of questions earlier about unemployment -- one gentleman talked about his father being unemployed. We have scores of different federal training programs that you have to wonder, are you really qualified for or not. And what we propose to do is to create a GI Bill for America's workers by taking 70 of these programs, putting them in one big pot and saying, if you're unemployed or if you're working for a really low wage and you're eligible for federal help, instead of having to figure out how to enroll in one of these programs, qualify; we'll send you a voucher; show up at this community college; we'll send them a check. That's the way it ought to be done. (Applause.)

We're also taking the savings from cutting out all of these programs. In the Education Department alone, Secretary Riley has abolished 13 programs, reduced 38 others, and consolidated 70 more -- in the Education Department. We took the savings and put it into more funds for Head Start, more funds for apprenticeship programs for people who don't go on to four-year colleges.

I met a young woman today and a police officer who is working with her, who is one of these programs that we now see people desperately trying to set up all over the country, training young people in high school, giving them work experience, letting them see what it's like, giving them a chance to look forward to a job in the workplace. (Applause.)

You know, not everybody has to go to a four-year college, but everybody needs to get out of high school and have access to at least two years of further education, and one way to do it is to abolish the artificial distinction between learning and work by bringing the workplace into the school, the education into the workplace, and doing it everywhere in America, so we've put some more money into that. (Applause.)

The other thing we have sought to do is to make available college loans on better repayment terms and lower costs to more people, through the so-called direct loan program. (Applause.)

This is an amazing thing. I want you all to -- this is an amazing thing. When I became President, I discovered that we were spending about \$3 billion a year in your money because of people defaulting on their college loans. I discovered we were spending a fortune because the college loan program was a guarantee program. So you'd go to a bank, and if you qualified, the bank would give you a note and if you didn't pay it back, we'd give them the money.

So they didn't have much incentive to see that you paid it

back, because we were going to give them the money. And we discovered if we started loaning the money to people directly, these good things would happen, if it could be properly managed. We discovered we could loan the money sometimes at lower interest rates and always at lower fees, we discovered that we could give people a lot of options about how they repaid it so that when you get out of school if you take a job that doesn't pay much money and you've got a lot of loans, you could pay it off as a percentage of your income instead of having to pay an amount you couldn't afford to pay. (Applause.) We discovered we could cut the bureaucratic paperwork and hassle for the colleges by more than half, and we discovered, miracle of miracles, if we didn't have to pay a middleman and we started collecting on these student loans, we could actually lower the cost to the taxpayers.

It almost doesn't make sense -- lower costs to students, lower costs to taxpayers. But this plan has already saved in the budget about \$5 billion, and if we can send it to all colleges and universities in the country, it can lower the deficit by \$12 billion and lower the cost of loans to every student in America with a student loan. That's one of the most important things we have done, and we need to do it. (Applause.)

Now, here's the political problem that you need to be a part of. We're having a big debate up there -- everybody wants to cut the size of government; everybody wants to reduce the deficit; and everybody has got a different idea for a tax cut. But some people in the new Congress believe that one of the ways they can reduce the deficit is by increasing the cost of student loans to people who don't have to pay interest on the loan while they're in school now. You know about the loan subsidy -- a lot of you are probably eligible for that. That will add 20 percent to the cost of student loans.

I'm against it. That is not the way to cut the budget. That is not the way to pay for a tax cut, to increase the cost of going to college to people. We need more people going to college at lower costs, not fewer people going to college at higher costs. (Applause.) And I hope you will support that. (Applause.)

The other idea -- this is unbelievable to me -- is we got this program working to lower the deficit, lower the cost of student loans, and there are some people in the Congress who want to limit the number of students in this country who can get these direct loans to 40 percent of the colleges in America. Why? Because the people who are in the middle who get the money don't like losing it. I mean, it's not a bad deal -- I loan you money; you don't pay me back; I get a check from the government. But it didn't work very well.

Secretary Riley, since he's been there as Secretary of Education, has cut the cost to the taxpayers of college loan defaults from \$2.8 billion a year to \$1 billion a year. We're

collecting the loans. We're doing it right, and we ought to keep going. (Applause.)

So what I want to ask you to do is, without regard to your party, and maybe -- especially if you have never voted before -- I want to tell you something: You've got a big stake in this debate that's going on in Washington. And it is a good and healthy debate in some ways. We do need a less bureaucratic, more creative, more entrepreneurial, more flexible government in Washington as we move into the 21st century. We do need more responsibility put down to the state and local levels. What's the best institution you know? The community college. Nobody from Washington is telling you what programs to have, what to do, who to sign up for. Nobody -- you're doing this. It's a community-created institution. We do need to change the nature of the federal government. We do have to keep cutting federal spending.

But the key to our future is whether we educate everybody so we don't need to cut investment in education and we do need to do things -- I will say again -- that enhance security, empower people to make the most of their own lives, and expand opportunity. That is education, education, education. We should not turn back on it. (Applause.)

Thank you very much. God bless you. We need your help. Please support it. (Applause.) Thank you. (Applause.)

END6:15 P.M. PST



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

February 15, 1995

To: USDA AmeriCorps Members, Project Managers, and Facilitators

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA JB

Subject: **Recent Public Developments Affecting AmeriCorps**

Many of you have asked for copies of the President's remarks about AmeriCorps in the State of the Union Address, as well as news articles discussing whether the program will be continued. Both are attached, as is a recent speech by Eli Segal, who oversees AmeriCorps on behalf of the President.

In addition, many of you have requested clarification about the kinds of activities AmeriCorps Members are allowed to engage in to generate political support for AmeriCorps. The following policy, based on advice given to USDA by the Office of General Counsel of the Corporation for National Service, will be added into the AmeriCorps USDA operations manual.

"AmeriCorps Members are free to contact Members of Congress and other elected officials to express their support of --- or opposition to --- AmeriCorps. The contact must be undertaken at his/her own initiative as a concerned private citizen and on his/her own time (not at the request of the AmeriCorps program or during AmeriCorps service hours). The AmeriCorps Member should be clear that s/he is speaking as a private citizen, but may reference the fact that s/he is part of AmeriCorps."

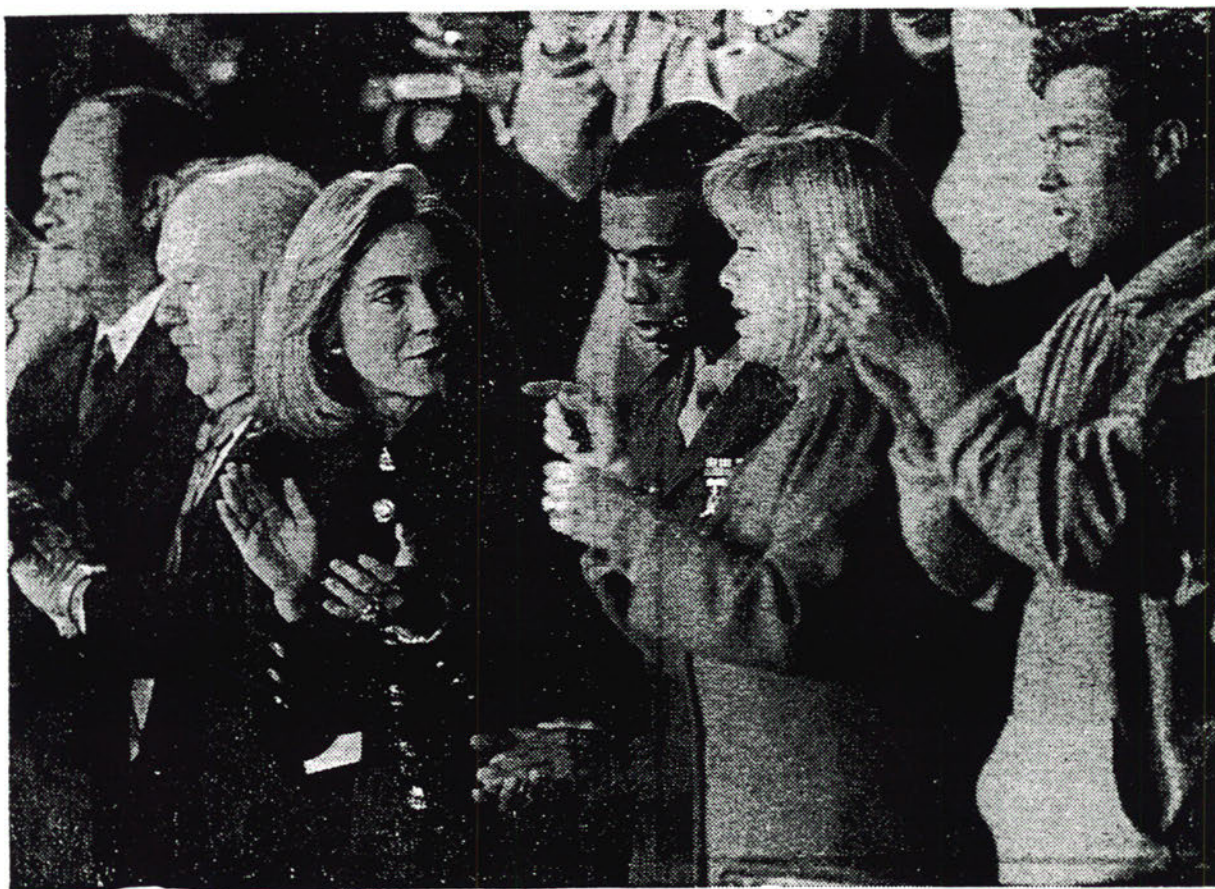
Moreover, as long as Members are not specifically "lobbying" by asking others to specifically support or oppose AmeriCorps, Members should feel free to explain the AmeriCorps philosophy and the details of their own projects to anyone --- including the media, elected officials, family members, project sponsors, friends, and community residents.

On a personal note, I look forward to meeting those of you I have not previously met as I travel to the USDA AmeriCorps sites throughout the nation. I know you are "getting things done" all across America as you promote community, responsibility, and opportunity. You should take great personal pride in the service you are performing, and never forget that you are making history every day as you build a new and exciting movement transforming the nation.

The Washington Post

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 1995

STATE OF THE UNION



BY RAY LUSTIG—THE WASHINGTON POST

National Service Corps

I'd like to talk about a couple of other issues we have to deal with. I want us to cut more spending, but I hope we won't cut government programs that help to prepare us for the new economy, promote responsibility, and are organized from the grass roots up, not by federal bureaucracies. The very best example of this is the national service corps, Americorps.

It passed with strong bipartisan support, and now there are 20,000 Americans, more than ever served in one year, in the Peace Corps [sic], working all over this country, helping people person-to-person in local, grass-roots volunteer groups, solving problems and in the process, earning some money for their education. This is citizenship at its best. It's good for the Americorps members, but it's good for the rest of us too. It's the essence of the New Covenant, and we shouldn't stop it.

All Americans, not only in the states most heavily affected but in every place in this country, are rightly disturbed by the large numbers of illegal aliens entering our country. The jobs they hold might otherwise be held by citizens or legal immigrants; the public service they use impose burdens on our taxpayers. That's why our administration has moved aggressively to secure our borders more by hiring a record number of new border guards, by deporting twice as many criminal aliens as every before, by cracking down on illegal hiring, by barring welfare benefits to illegal aliens. In the budget I will present

to you, we will try to do more to speed the deportation of illegal aliens who are arrested for crimes, to better identify illegal aliens in the workplace as recommended by the commission headed by former congresswoman Barbara Jordan. We are a nation of immigrants, but we are also a nation of laws. It is wrong and ultimately self-defeating for a nation of immigrants to permit the kind of abuse of our immigration laws we have seen in recent years, and we must do more to stop it.

Lauding Successes

Cindy Perry teaches second-graders to read in Americorps in rural Kentucky. She gains when she gives. She's a mother of four. She says that her service inspired her to get her high school equivalency last year. She was married when she was a teenager. Stand up, Cindy. She was married when she was a teenager. She had four children, but she had time to serve other people, to get her high school equivalency, and she's going to use her Americorps money to go back to college.

Steven Bishop is the police chief of Kansas City. He's been a national leader. Stand up, Steve. He's been a national leader in using more police in community policing, and he's worked with Americorps to do it. And the crime rate in Kansas City has gone down as a result of what he did.

POLL: Backing for Clinton on Crime, Welfare and Taxes

Continued from A1

guaranteeing Mexican loans in an effort to stem the crisis that has forced a massive devaluation in the peso.

Indeed, the loan guarantees find little support from any point along the ideological or partisan spectrum: More than three-fourths of Democrats, independents and Republicans oppose the idea.

The Times Poll, supervised by John Brennan, surveyed 1,353 adults nationwide from Jan. 19 through Jan. 21. The results have a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

Nothing is more intriguing in the polling than the tension between the public's broad ideological preferences, which generally lean toward the GOP, and their opinions on specific issues, which often bend toward positions held by Clinton and Democrats.

In a broad sense, the public emphatically endorses the Republican argument that government must be restrained. In the survey, nearly two-thirds said that they prefer a smaller government with fewer services, while just over 1 in 4 wants "a larger government with many services."

Likewise, the poll finds extensive support for the general idea of shifting power away from Washington: 70% of those polled said that state and local governments do the best job of spending tax dollars (just 12% endorsed the federal government).

And the poll makes clear that many Americans have invested their faith in the new Republican congressional majority. Almost twice as many of those polled said that they expect to be better off than worse off as a result of the GOP takeover (though the largest group, almost 2 in 5, said they expect no change in their condition). By a 35% to 31% count, those polled said that Republicans, rather than the President, have the best ideas for solving the country's problems. And most said that they want Clinton to compromise with the GOP rather than draw lines in the sand against Republican ideas.

Several Republican priorities drew substantial support in the survey: Almost 7 in 10 said that they like the GOP proposal to require three-fifths congressional approval for all tax increases; roughly the same number endorsed the line-item veto backed by both the GOP and Clinton; three-fourths backed the GOP-driven constitutional amendment to limit congressional terms to 12 years.

Those ideas now on the edge of the GOP radar also show strong support: roughly three-in-four



President Clinton on Monday signs law making Congress subject to the same federal laws governing workplace as the rest of the country.

wanted to ban all racial preferences in hiring decisions. House Majority Leader Dick Armey's proposed 17% flat tax draws 40% support (48% oppose it), a strong showing for an idea not familiar to many Americans.

But on an array of other specific choices, the public endorses positions held by the Democrats, according to the poll. Should Congress have to specify where it would cut the deficit before passing a balanced-budget amendment? Congressional Republicans say no, but 86% of those polled said yes. Should term limits apply retroactively to sitting members of Congress? Congressional Republicans generally say no, but, like the White House, three-fourths of those polled said yes.

Many House Republicans are mobilizing for an effort to repeal the ban on assault weapons approved as part of last year's anti-crime bill. But two-thirds of Americans, including three-fifths of both Republicans and conservatives, said that the ban should be maintained. Likewise, House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) has criticized Clinton's national service program, which lets young people earn college grants by performing community service. But more than 7 in 10 of those surveyed, including more than 60% of Republicans and conservatives, like it.

In tonight's State of the Union

Address, Clinton is likely to continue his effort to contrast his domestic proposals with the GOP plans. The poll tested attitudes toward those contrasting agendas by asking Americans to choose between the competing proposals in five distinct areas—but not identifying the alternatives as Clinton or Republican ideas.

In all but one instance, those surveyed backed the Clinton alternative by margins of 2-to-1 or greater. And in most cases that support was consistent across racial, income, gender and ideological lines.

On crime, 72% of those surveyed said that they support the provisions in last year's crime bill that funded prison construction, additional police officers and prevention programs; just 20% supported the idea, advanced by Senate Republicans, of shifting all the prevention money to pay for more prisons and police officers. More than 3 in 5 Republicans and conservatives—even 3 in 5 Republican men—preferred the existing approach.

On welfare, President Clinton has proposed requiring recipients to work after two years on the rolls but would provide public service jobs if none are available in the private sector. House Republicans want to let states cut off recipients after two years without giving them a job. By 66%, those surveyed preferred Clinton's

approach. A majority of both Republicans and conservatives preferred Clinton's policy.

To try to reduce out-of-wedlock births, House Republicans want to cut off all welfare benefits to girls under 18 who bear children out of wedlock; Clinton has proposed instead requiring the mothers to live at home as a condition of receiving aid. By 58% to 28%, those surveyed prefer Clinton's approach.

On taxes, 55% backed Clinton's proposal of a deduction for college tuition and a tax credit for families with children and incomes under \$75,000; 23% back the House GOP combination of a children's tax credit for families with incomes up to \$200,000 and reductions in capital-gains taxes. Americans in every income bracket, every spot on the ideological spectrum—Democrats, independents, Republicans, supporters of Ross Perot and President George Bush in 1992—prefer Clinton's approach.

Only on Social Security did the public prefer the House Republican blueprint, with a 49% to 43% plurality endorsing the contract's call to roll back Clinton's 1993 tax increase on upper-income seniors.

On the question of "unfunded mandates," there is a similar collision between abstract preference and specific application. With both chambers considering legislation to restrict the federal government's capacity to impose obligations on

the states, nearly two-thirds of those polled said that they want to limit unfunded mandates. But larger majorities support two specific mandates on the states: requiring local governments to meet federal clean water standards by building sewage treatment plants and mandating local school districts to provide special education facilities for mentally disabled students.

In several respects, the poll found the public mood improving in the wake of last fall's election. More than a third of Americans now say that the country is moving in the right direction, while 55% say that it is on the wrong track. Those are numbers hardly overflowing with optimism, but they constitute the most upbeat assessment of the nation's direction since last January.

Attitudes about the economy are brightening more unambiguously: Nearly half of those surveyed said that the country is not in a recession and just 11% said the country is suffering from a serious economic reversal. Those are the sunniest economic assessments of Clinton's presidency.

Good feelings about the economy appear to be lifting some of the gloom over the White House. In the survey, 51% said that they approve of Clinton's economic performance—up from 43% in November. On foreign policy, Americans remain divided over

Clinton's performance, with 46% of those polled approving and 44% disapproving. Clinton's overall performance won approval from 54%, while 40% disapproved. Those are his best showings since last spring. Since last fall, Clinton has registered his strongest gains among independents and moderates.

Those numbers compare favorably with the new Republican leadership. By a 41% to 28% count, Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole also enjoys positive favorability ratings. But House Speaker Gingrich, who has been entangled in a series of ethical and policy disputes since election day, has quickly emerged as a polarizing and unpopular figure: Just 26% express favorable opinions toward Gingrich, compared with 39% unfavorable.

What Clinton, Dole and Gingrich—and their allies and adversaries in both parties—share is the continued weight of obdurate public skepticism. Trust in Congress and the government in Washington remains anemic, with four-in-five Americans expressing only some or very little. And the public remains divided on whether Clinton and the new GOP legislative majority are offering true reform—with just as many respondents saying each side is offering "business as usual" as believe they are working for "fundamental change" in government.

Los Angeles Times

A Times Mirror Newspaper
Daily Founded Dec. 4 1881
VOL. CLXIV NO. 51

Eastern Editorial Offices
Washington (202) 493-4650
New York (212) 371-1200
Eastern Advertising Offices
New York (212) 692-7170

Delivery Information 1 (800) LA TIMES
Principal Location: Times Mirror Square, Los Angeles, CA 90053

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IN TODAY'S PAPER
3 Sections, 30 Pages
Section A
World, Nation, Editorial
Section B
California, Business, Calendar, Life & Style
Section C
Local Report

Pennies to Save Lives From the Trash Bin

I REALIZE that Newt Gingrich has a right to speak any words he wishes — after all, he's speaker of the House. But why is he so opposed to thinking before he speaks?

This week, for instance, he said the national service program, the one called the domestic peace corps, should be abolished completely because, in his opinion, "It is coerced voluntarism . . . It's gimmickry."

Well, a lot of people have seen this "gimmickry" and almost unanimously they are impressed. They say it works. They include me.

I've become familiar with City Year, one of the groups that inspired President Bill Clinton to create the federal service umbrella, known as AmeriCorps. Campaigning in Boston in 1992, he visited City Year and came away saying he wanted to use it as a model for a national program. A year later, after shepherding that model through Congress, he signed into law the National Service Trust Act of 1993.

Here's what it does. It puts 20,000 young volunteers to work all across the country in 350 nonprofit organizations, helping themselves and others. The three-year goal is to expand the volunteer force to 100,000.

The age group is 17 to 23. They come from every background — Ivy League graduates, inner-city youths seeking their General Equivalency Diploma so they can make it to college, high school graduates taking a year off to do some good and learn community leadership skills, former gang members, single mothers, whites, blacks, Latinos, Asians.

Does every young corps member turn into a winner? No, not every single one. But the success rate is very, very high.

City Year, the group I've seen, was founded in Boston about six years ago by two Harvard Law School graduates, Alan Khazei and Michael Brown. They began with about 50 young people. Now they have more than 300.

What they do is renovate old buildings, serve as teachers' aides and tutors in schools, fix up parks and playgrounds, provide assistance to the elderly, build food banks and soup kitchens in church basements, work with the homeless and conduct school workshops on violence prevention and on drug and AIDS awareness.

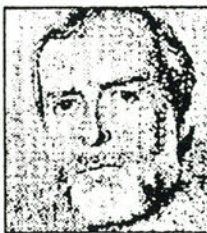
In the first three years of its existence, City

Year existed entirely on private funds. Corporations like Timberland and Reebok and many others became sponsors. The first federal funding became available in the Bush administration. Clinton's AmeriCorps added measurably to that and has made expansion possible.

City Year alone, by dispatching youths already trained, has opened programs in five other cities. Other groups, like Habitat and YouthBuild, are doing the same.

SYDNEY H. SCHANBERG

*I wish the speaker
would go
look at
these
young
people and see
what they do.*



An aide to Speaker Gingrich, explaining his boss' opposition, said "it is a program that spends a lot of money for few benefits. This is an employment program, not national service where work is voluntary." I wish the speaker would go look at these young people and see what they do. If he'll agree, I'll personally take him to Boston and have him meet them. I don't know if the experience will change his mind about funding the national program, but I'm willing to bet his spirits will be raised.

The federal spending now on AmeriCorps is about \$200 million a year — hardly a burp in the national budget. Thousands of lives are being saved from the trash bin, thousands of young people are getting on-the-job street training in coping with serious social problems. The volunteers are getting a lot out of it — and so are we as a nation.

Since Gingrich objects to the spending, let us look at what the volunteers are paid. At City Year originally, they got about \$100 a week. If they stayed the full year, they received an additional \$5,000 for college or job training. Those who had already finished college received a smaller bonus.

Now under the AmeriCorps program, volunteers are expected to commit for two years, receiving \$7,500 as an annual living stipend and \$4,725 a year toward further education. Like every other taxpayer, I'm aware that a fair amount of government money gets wasted. But I've seen how this national service money is used. It's anything but a waste; it's a pure investment in the United States of America.

The reason I've seen how City Year works is that one of my daughters, Rebecca, is part of it. She graduated from Stanford in 1993 and is in her second year in the Boston program. The first year, she was a team member. Now she's a leader of a team.

Her team is as diverse as our nation has always been — Brooks Emanuel from Atlanta and Jenny Evert from Minnesota and José Cermeno from Dorchester out of Puerto Rico and Robert Hannaford from North Quincy and Sherwin McCollon from Lynn and Darrell Greene from Mattapan and Natalie Pierre of Trinidad and now Dorchester and Yessenia Alvarado from Chelsea via El Salvador and Len Swartz from Hull.

You'll find them most days at a school in Chelsea, one of those struggling communities that ring Boston. The school, housed in the tired Chelsea High School, is called Early Childhood Program, which runs from prekindergarten through the second grade. If you sit for just a few hours and observe the City Year team members working with these 3- to 8-year-old black and Latino and Vietnamese and Cambodian kids, you will learn many things, not least of which is how much these volunteers are needed.

I sincerely hope the House speaker will see them.

The Washington Post

TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1995

C

M

E. J. Dionne Jr.

Back to Citizenship

House Speaker Newt Gingrich performed a huge service for President Clinton last week. No, this isn't about that book deal. It's about Gingrich's attack on Clinton's national service program. By forcing the president to defend national service, Gingrich has given him a chance to shift the political debate from a moldy contest over "more" or "less" government to one about prior questions: What should government do in the first place, and what obligations do democratic citizens have toward each other?

The service program is certainly worth defending in its own right, and the best arguments for it have been made over the years by conservatives. It's true, as conservatives have said, that bureaucratic charity is not the preferred solution to social problems. Far better to have citizens engaged in helping each other, person-to-person, and to do so through local, voluntarily established institutions.

One of the most useful pieces of work done by conservative intellectuals over the last two decades was a 1977 essay, "To Empower People," by sociologist Peter Berger and the Rev. Richard John Neuhaus. They argued that if government relentlessly took over all charitable functions, it would endanger soci-

ety's "mediating structures"—the institutions created by families, communities and churches—that nurture individual virtue and "mediate" between government and the individual. Government, they argued, should make strengthening these institutions a central goal.

That, roughly, is what the service program does. The volunteers for AmeriCorps, as the main service agency is called, do not work for a federal bureaucracy. They work for already established local institutions that are trying to solve problems: preventing crime, teaching literacy, immunizing kids against disease, helping the homebound elderly, curbing teen pregnancy. The main function of the program's Washington arm, the Corporation for National and Community Service, is to monitor the programs—not for their adherence to bureaucratic rules but simply to make sure they're doing broadly what they claim to be doing.

Why spend any federal money on this sort of thing? Because the voluntary sector needs strengthening, and because federal money spent supplementing voluntary activities has a big payoff. A lot of volunteer organizations are having trouble finding people. Many parents—both parents—necessarily spend so much time working and then raising

their kids that they don't have a lot of time left over. Eli Segal, who heads the service program, sees it as "an effective way of filling in the holes" in the voluntary sector and a recognition of "the chords that bind us together as a people."

This last point is why the broader argument raised by the service program is so important. The idea of democratic citizenship inherent in the program is the one idea capable of answering the problems of two other ideas that are gaining currency in American politics: radical individualism and extreme multiculturalism.

Both ideas start at reasonable places. Almost all of us are individualists in that we value autonomy and freedom. But radical individualism suggests that we are completely free agents, thus denying the reality that our freedom depends on preserving a community that is civil, just, tolerant and nurturing of the other values on which freedom depends. Apart from such a community, freedom withers.

Multiculturalists started out with the fair argument that too little attention was paid to the contributions, ideas and interests of groups other than affluent white males—women, African Americans, Hispanics, working class people

and others. But pushed to the extreme, multiculturalists argued that the only forms of solidarity that counted were those within these particular groups.

Those who value the idea of democratic citizenship argue, against the radical individualists, that preserving freedom is a cooperative enterprise that carries burdens of responsibility. We can't just walk away from social problems. Against extreme multiculturalism, advocates of democratic citizenship argue that our sense of solidarity needs to transcend all our particularisms. Whites need to vindicate the rights of blacks, blacks the rights of whites, men those of women and women those of men.

The Clinton administration has been obsessed with its failure to "communicate" its achievements to the American people. This is the wrong obsession. It implies that the American people are too dumb or too bamboozled by Republican propaganda to "understand" all that the president has been doing.

What the administration should worry about instead is that it is losing the political argument. Americans have surveyed what they see as a series of messes—crime, family breakup, stagnating living standards for many in the middle—and a majority has decided (tentatively) that the best way to deal

with all of them may be for government to do little more than throw the book at criminals. This is not the product of selfishness but a retreat from government that is seen as ineffective, intrusive in the wrong places and insufficiently concerned with nurturing civic responsibility.

There is a corresponding retreat into enclaves. Suburbanites, to pick one example, are tempted to give up on the inner cities, figuring they have enough problems of their own. Think of it as the suburban (or male or white) answer to multiculturalism.

Clinton and the Democrats won't win the argument unless they reverse these trends. One worthy way of doing so is to preach the rewards—and the obligations—of democratic citizenship. A government based on this idea does not pretend to have all the answers. Still less does it claim the right to replace the civic institutions of a free people with its own. But neither is it an indifferent government, because it recognizes that government either strengthens or saps the ability of citizens to live together, solve problems and accept their moral obligations to each other. In this telling, government is not some alien structure out there. It is the realm of us all.

FLORIDA TIMES-UNION

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NATIONAL SERVICE

Americorps designed to complement armed forces

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As an active supporter of the Americorps national service program and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I strongly disagree with the Times-Union's recent editorial charging that Americorps damages military recruiting.

The armed forces offer far greater benefits than national service. Military salaries are much higher than the minimum wage allowance of Americorps members.

As was noted in the editorial, "college tuition of \$20,000 to \$30,000 can be earned for an Army hitch." Americorps' maximum education award for a year of service is \$4,725.

In fact, the Americorps award was set significantly lower than GI bill awards in recognition of the greater sacrifice made by those who serve in our armed forces. Moreover, under the national service law, veterans are encouraged to join Americorps and earn its benefits without diminishing those earned while in the military.

More than 2 million recruits currently serve in our armed forces. Americorps fields 20,000 members.



The program was designed so as not to impair military recruiting and to reflect the diversity of citizens seeking to serve our nation.

Americorps meets its much smaller need by drawing from a larger recruiting universe, including people of all ages, people with disabilities and many others who do not meet the requirements for military service.

Each year, Army recruiters turn

away more than 100,000 people who want to serve but fail the physical examination. For many of them, Americorps offers an opportunity to get things done for their country.

Americorps' commitment to work in partnership with our armed services has resulted in major programs that it operates with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and organizations such as the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans.

Americorps is designed to complement, not detract from, the great work of the armed forces. Protecting freedom at home and abroad, our men and women in uniform give all that a nation can ask of its citizens.

Inspired by that greater sacrifice, Americorps members work with communities to solve basic problems, get results and reap the opportunities of our free society.

DAVID C. JONES
Arlington, Va.

Bowling for Virtue

Kill the welfare state, but save national service

BY JOE KLEIN

WEEKS LATER, LIBERALS REMAIN MYSTIFIED BY NEWT Gingrich's inaugural speech to the House of Representatives. Why all the compassionate talk about the poor? (No Democrat could get away with that.) Has Gingrich changed his stripes? Has he moved to the center? Become a statesman? In a word: no. He's been talking this way for years, outraged by the violence, anarchy and despair in the slums—which he believes are largely caused by liberal programs. He wants to eliminate the "bureaucratic welfare state." He wants to replace it with ... charity. He really means to do this. He proposes a "Wesleyan revival," in which virtuous Americans would feel morally reinvigorated, and give time and money to uplift the poor. "If every American spent three hours a month helping someone who needed it," he said last week, "a lot of these problems would disappear."

Gingrich, as always, offered a reading list: "The Tragedy of American Compassion," by Marvin Olasky, which chronicles an explosion of charitable giving in the late 19th century. He might easily have added Gertrude Himmelfarb's new book, "The De-Moralization of Society," which argues that Victorian attitudes toward charity—and poverty—were not only admirable but quite successful. Such views are easily mocked. Dickens trumps Himmelfarb. But one wonders what Dickens would have done with Joycelyn Elders, Donna Shalala and your local, insensate welfare office. Poverty seems more desperate, intractable and amoral now than it did a hundred years ago—when, as Himmelfarb shows, rates of pauperism, crime and illegitimacy were in steady, long-term decline. The old ways—a society-wide insistence on moral behavior and exemplary acts—may be the best way to lift the poor. But there is a problem: the Victorian charitable explosion occurred at a moment when living standards were soaring and when there were far fewer distractions. We don't seem to have the time, or the inclination, for altruism anymore.

Indeed, we seem to be moving in the opposite direction: the number of volunteers for groups like the Boy Scouts and Red Cross has plummeted in the last 20 years. PTA participation is way down. The fraternal orders are waning. Even bowling leagues are in decline—people prefer to bowl alone—Harvard professor Robert Putnam writes in an elegant article for the *Journal of Democracy*. Putnam attributes these phenomena to several factors: less time (women go to work now), increased mobility (people are less likely to put down social roots) and of course—television. Gingrich disagrees. He believes the aggrandizement of the bureaucracy has made families and communities less relevant. "People don't go to PTA meetings," he says, "because they don't like professional bureaucrats telling them how useless they are. When you emasculate citizens, you can't expect them to be very enthusiastic about participating."

But even if you empower citizens—as Gingrich might say—Putnam's other factors won't go away. This isn't the 19th century. And where's Wesley? If the welfare state is to be scrapped and privatized, civil society will need steroids. Gingrich wants a tax credit for charitable contributions. Fair enough. But more will be needed. No doubt, state and local governments can "nonprofitize" many services—that is, pay private charities to do things formerly done by bureaucrats. There is no reason social workers need to be public employees. But perhaps the most creative—indeed, virtuous—role government can play would be to provide charitable institutions with a steady stream of young, altruistic, energetic, exemplary (and cheap) workers. In fact, a government program recently has begun to do just that, and with great promise: national service.

"Everyone talks about unfunded mandates—things Washington requires the states and cities to do," says Eli Siegal, the director of Americorps. "We're the exact opposite: a funded nonmandate." The states decide whether to participate, and which local programs to fund. There are now about 20,000 young people working (at minimum wage, while repaying \$4,725 in college loans per year of service) in 350 nonprofit programs nationally.

Last week, I called around to various private groups who've been using the volunteers, and their reports were uniformly enthusiastic. "They've come into the community and done far more than we asked or expected," says Dawn Taylor of the Storm-break Youth Shelter in State College, Pa. (which runs, among other things—Newt should note—a group home for troubled teens). "Their job is to tutor the young people, but they're not content with that. They've helped with fundraising telethons and lots of other programs," expanding the scope of charitable activities in the county. "They are so enthusiastic and energetic. And there are a lot more ways we'd like to use them, if we could." Unfortunately, she can't: Americorps volunteers can't supplant existing public employees, a regulation that Republicans should jettison if they

choose to continue this program. (There is no reason why national service shouldn't bite off great chunks of the civil service.)

But the Republicans may not continue it. "I am totally, unequivocally opposed to national service," Gingrich says. "It is coerced voluntarism ... It's gimmicky." These are spurious, knee-jerk arguments. National service is *induced*—not coerced—voluntarism, just as his tax credit for charity would be. And, gimmicky? As if term limits and balanced-budget amendments weren't polyester legislative shortcuts. Programs that work are miracles, not gimmicks. There will be a fight over this. But expect the House Appropriations Committee to follow the speaker's lead and kill national service—which seems the political equivalent of drowning a puppy.



RAY F. HILLSTROM JR.

Beleaguered: No time for society?

Conservatives seem to want Victorian charity, but who has the time?

10TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

January 30, 1995, Monday, HOME FINAL EDITION

SECTION: VIEWPOINTS; Jesse James; Pg. 11A

LENGTH: 749 words

HEADLINE: Hey, Newt, quit picking on Americorps

BYLINE: Jesse James

BODY:

I will get things done for America to make our people safer, smarter and healthier. I will bring Americans together to strengthen our communities. Faced with apathy, I will take action.

Faced with conflict, I will seek common ground. Faced with adversity, I will persevere. I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond. I am an Americorps member. And I'm going to get things done."

Twenty-three thousand energetic, mostly young people have taken that oath and are in fact getting things done in hundreds of communities across the country including Dallas. They are the members of President Clinton's national service program, Americorps.

The Americorps participants work full- or part-time at community agencies for minimum wage. They can work up to two years in one of four areas: education, environmental protection, public safety, or health and human services. In return, they receive \$ 4,725 annually to help offset college or vocational training costs.

Mr. Clinton introduced one Americorps member during his State of the Union address last week. A high school dropout who had gotten married and had four children, Cindy Perry has since received her high school equivalency certificate and will use her Americorps money for college.

In mentioning Ms. Perry, the president was sending the strongest possible message that his national service program not only will change communities for the better, it also will improve the lives of those who are lending a hand.

Mr. Clinton is touting the year-old program because House Speaker Newt Gingrich and other budget-conscious Republicans have targeted it. Mr. Gingrich, in a recent interview with Newsweek, put the administration on notice: I am totally, unequivocally opposed to national service. It is coerced voluntarism. . . . It's gimmickry."

Nonsense. The members aren't coerced. Members come to the program primarily because they want to help their communities. If they didn't, they wouldn't work for minimum wage. And, excuse me, but \$ 4,725 didn't go too far toward getting a college degree the last time I checked.

Individuals voluntarily sign up for our armed forces and the Peace Corps because they want to serve. Our military personnel are paid for their

THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS, January 30, 1995

service, and rightly so. Peace Corps volunteers are paid a stipend as well. Americorps is no different. So what is the gimmick?

Still, Republicans like Sen. Charles Grassley of Iowa are critical of the program because, he says, it seeks to federally bureaucratize voluntarism, thereby standing the concept on its head." In truth, only 100 people work for the Corporation for National and Community Service, which administers the program.

Americorps is a model of decentralization. A third of the program's funding is doled out to several national nonprofit groups, while the remainder goes to state commissions. The states in turn award grants to local organizations, which recruit and hire the Americorps members. Locally, the Greater Dallas Community of Churches has hired 49 people to tutor, teach alternatives to violence, improve access to health care and reduce hunger.

The decentralized aspect of the program is what prompted 16 House Republicans to send a letter to their colleagues in 1993 asking them to support legislation establishing the program. The president's proposal is structured as a Republican would have structured it, and . . . it deserves broad Republican support," the letter said.

Mr. Grassley also claims the program is too expensive, arguing that the per-member cost is at least \$ 30,000. Yet the head of the Corporation for National and Community Service, Eli Segal, says the annual expense is actually less than \$ 20,000. That includes a \$ 7,200 living allowance, the \$ 4,725 scholarship and roughly \$ 7,000 in health care, child care and other administrative costs.

All told, Americorps is expected to cost \$ 1.5 billion during the next three years. Sure, that sounds high at first. But let's consider the benefits of the program like immunizing 104,000 Texas children, as 80 members did, or providing a second chance for kids who have been on drugs or dropped out of school. No other single program can buy as much for the money.

That is the kind of cost-benefit analysis Republicans ought to be doing. That is the kind of cost-benefit analysis that can get things done in this country.

Jesse James is an editorial writer and columnist for The Dallas Morning News.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE-MDC: January 31, 1995

MEDIA ADVISORY



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JANUARY 23, 1995

CONTACT: J. TOSCANO
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AmeriCorps National Service

CORPORATION
FOR NATIONAL
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CONGRESSIONAL PEACE CORPS ALUMNI & ELI SEGAL WELCOME AMERICORPS MEMBERS TO CAPITOL

Eli Segal, Assistant to the President and CEO of the Corporation for National Service (CNS), will be joined by a bipartisan group of U.S. Representatives who once served in the Peace Corps, to welcome four AmeriCorps Members and the Kansas City, MO Police Chief to the U.S. Capitol on the day of the President's State of the Union address. The five will be guests of the White House for the address.

"These members of Congress come from both sides of the aisles and all walks of life. What they share is a personal knowledge of how service builds character while it rebuilds communities," said Segal. "Likewise, these AmeriCorps Members come from all across our country. This 'domestic Peace Corps' has enabled them to give a hand to their communities, and get a hand paying for college. Taking responsibility and earning opportunity -- that is what AmeriCorps is all about."

WHO: The Honorable Eli Segal, Assistant to the President and CNS CEO; Representatives Mike Ward (D-KY), Christopher Shays (R-CT), Tony P. Hall (D-OH), James T. Walsh (R-NY), and Sam Farr (D-CA).

They will be joined by Kansas City, MO Police Chief Steven C. Bishop; and AmeriCorps Members Laron Field from Kansas City, Missouri; Cindy Perry from Simpson County, Kentucky; Colin Yost, from Portland, Oregon, and Philip Wu, originally from Staten Island, New York, now living and working in Miami, Florida.

WHAT: News Conference

WHERE: House triangle, U.S. Capitol

WHEN: 2:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 24th, 1995

WHY: To introduce the AmeriCorps Members and Kansas City Police Chief who will be guests of the White House at the State of the Union address, and for Congressional Peace Corps alumni to comment on their support for AmeriCorps.

AmeriCorps is the new national service program created with bipartisan support in 1993. Through AmeriCorps, Americans of all ages and backgrounds engage in educational, environmental, public safety, and human service and earn awards of nearly \$5000 per year to help pay for college or job training. To date, nearly 200,000 people have expressed an interest in service.

AmeriCorps is not a mandate for states, communities, or individuals: it is a voluntary partnership with 50 states and 450 community organizations around the country, including the Red Cross, Children's Health Fund, the YMCA, and the New York Police Department. AmeriCorps Members work as partners with teachers, pastors, and police officers who are already improving our communities.

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Editor
Letters to the Editor Page
The Wall Street Journal

VIA FACSIMILE (212) 416-2658

Gentlemen:

In an otherwise thorough article on AmeriCorps in your January 18, 1995 edition there is an inaccurate assertion that AmeriCorps national service programs has per-participant costs ranging as high as \$70,000. No AmeriCorps program costs anything approaching that amount; in fact, AmeriCorps' average cost is less than \$20,000 per member, including the nearly \$5,000 educational scholarship (or student loan repayment) earned through a full year of service.

The article's reference to a \$70,000 cost was with respect to an AmeriCorps program which in fact costs the federal government 7% of that amount. Through the program, AmeriCorps members -- lawyers from among the City's best law firms -- will provide full-time, free legal assistance to those without the capacity to afford counsel. The AmeriCorps members will work for half of their normal salaries, which their law firms will pay, while letting the lawyers work for the public good, rather than for private clients. The federal government pays only \$4,911 per AmeriCorps member (the educational award and minimal program support) and no portion of even the reduced salaries.

The AmeriCorps*Philadelphia Bar Foundation program is an outstanding example of leveraging each tax dollar. To confuse contributions with "costs" not only misstates the facts about AmeriCorps, but misses the entire principle behind this effort -- communities getting things done in a highly cost-effective way.

As a businessman and long-time *Journal* reader, I also pay attention to the "benefit" side of the cost-benefit equation. Right now, more than 20,000 AmeriCorps members are benefiting communities all across our country. They are not federal employees, but critical resources for local non-profits, and national organizations like the YMCA, the National Council of Churches, Habitat for Humanity and the Red Cross. AmeriCorps members are walking the police beat in Brooklyn and closing crack houses in Kansas City; they are raising reading scores by three grade-levels for a rural county's second graders in Kentucky; and they are in the forefront of disaster relief, whether it is Houston's floods, Los Angeles' earthquake or Idaho's fires. In thousands of different ways, AmeriCorps is changing America for the better.

Sincerely,



Eli J. Segal
Chief Executive Officer



AmeriCorps National Service

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WASHINGTON POST
1/29/95

George F. Will

Two Liberal Losers

President Clinton's turbid State of the Union address was a metaphor for modern government—sprawling, metastasizing, undisciplined, approaching self-parody. It underscored the fact that his administration now is politically almost harmless, but is aesthetically excruciating.

The address was heavily larded—exactly the right word, that—with semi-conservative words about cutting taxes, spending and regulations. However, regarding two matters Clinton considers crucial—the AmeriCorps “national service” program and the minimum wage—the address was half-baked and half-hearted liberalism.

AmeriCorps, says Clinton, will revive American volunteerism. The approximately 80 million Americans who volunteer their time to religious and civic organizations may wonder who needs reviving and how much it matters whether AmeriCorps eventually produces 100,000 more volunteers. Today 2.9 million of America's 80 million volunteers are ages 18 to 25, the ages of AmeriCorps “volunteers.”

To Americans who use the English language to communicate thoughts rather than parody them, the use of the word “volunteer” in connection with AmeriCorps’ recruits must seem like the latest redundant evidence that Washington is stark raving mad. To plain-speaking Americans, a volunteer is someone who contributes his or her unpaid labor. Clinton’s “volunteers” will be paid a \$7,400 annual stipend, plus \$9,450 worth of college expenses over two years. And this is not all that Clinton’s little puddle of government-manufactured “volunteers”—little relative to the 80 million true volunteers who need neither financial incentives from, nor organization by, government—will cost taxpayers.

In addition to the health and child-care entitlements for AmeriCorps members, and AmeriCorps’ Washington bureaucracy, money is spent to locate “volunteers” to take AmeriCorps money. The Omaha World-Herald says that AmeriCorps gave Nebraska’s state government a \$457,622 grant to recruit 23 AmeriCorps members. That \$19,896.60 per recruit calls into question the effectiveness of the \$1.7 million AmeriCorps paid a Washington PR firm for national advertising.

According to the New Citizenship Project, a conservative advocacy group, of AmeriCorps’ first 20,000 “volunteers,” 1,200 are working for agencies of the federal government. The New Citizenship Project warns that AmeriCorps is ripe for politicization, citing a Washington Monthly report that a 1993 pilot project became an exercise in identity politics and political correctness, developing ethnic and homosexual caucuses. And the Los Angeles Times reported that a 1994 pilot project in San Francisco used its “volunteers” to protest “three-strikes-and-you’re-out” crime legislation.

Clinton calls AmeriCorps the achievement “I would say I was most proud of.” No minimum wage increase will be rival for that title.

In 1992 candidate Clinton endorsed increasing the minimum wage. During 1993 and 1994, when he had a congressional majority that would have done it, he did not ask for it, primarily because some sensible Democrats told him it was a dumb idea. Al From, head of the centrist Democratic Leadership Council, which once advertised Clinton as a New Democrat, says of the minimum wage proposal: “It’s anachronistic, it’s a loser, it’s got no bite with the middle class. And it screams old Democrat.”

Now that there is a Congress that Clinton knows will not enact an increase, he calls it urgent. However, during Tuesday night’s oration, when he was pitilessly detailed about almost everything, he remained reticent about how much the minimum wage should be increased. Leaving aside the unwisdom of government telling employers what to pay employees, it is generally true that when you increase the cost of something, people buy less of it. There is evidence that is true of labor at the low end of the wage scale.

The first federal minimum wage—25 cents an hour—was enacted in 1938. Since then, the longest time between increases was from 1981 to 1990. During that span, teenage unemployment (teenagers are a third of all minimum wage earners) fell from 23.2 percent to 15.5 percent, and black teenage unemployment fell from 48 percent to 31 percent. Then the forces of compassion struck, raising the minimum wage twice, in 1990 and 1991. In 1992 teenage unemployment was up to 20 percent.

Now, it is problematic establishing causation for any phenomenon as complex and varied as joblessness. And some studies, including one by associates of the current secretary of labor, purport to show that the minimum wage can be increased somewhat without increasing unemployment. However, the question is academic because a former academic—Rep. Dick Armey, the ex-professor of economics who now is majority leader—says he will oppose an increase “with every fiber of my being,” and he will have much company.

But this is of more than academic interest: The minimum wage is now \$4.25 an hour. Clinton is said to be thinking about seeking \$5 an hour. The New Citizenship Project calculates that AmeriCorps “volunteers”

January 31, 1995



MEMORANDUM FOR FRIENDS OF NATIONAL SERVICE

FROM: RICK ALLEN *RA*

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO GEORGE WILL'S COLUMN

AmeriCorps National Service

CORPORATION
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SERVICE

Mr. Will's January 29, 1995 column ("*Two Liberal Losers*") contained factual errors and misinterpretations. Eli Segal has written to Mr. Will, correcting his assertions and inviting him to join Eli in visiting AmeriCorps programs. This memorandum sets the record straight and includes the items Eli brought to Mr. Will's attention.

- Mr. Will repeated an old and inaccurate claim that the San Francisco Summer of Safety program organized a rally against the Clinton Crime Bill. We've looked into it and have written assurance from the program and the City agency that supervised it that no one from the program organized, encouraged or was known to have attended such a rally. Furthermore, the program certified what the law and our regulations make crystal clear: advocacy and political activities aren't part of AmeriCorps and will lead to a cut-off in funding if they occur. And more important -- the program worked. We have received letters from the City's Mayor (a former police chief) and its current Police Chief, indicating that the effort helped reduce gang tensions and make the City safer.
- Mr. Will repeated another old and inaccurate assertion that Nebraska spent an excessive amount to recruit 23 AmeriCorps Members. In fact, the state spent less than \$1,000 in recruiting. Mr. Will lumped together the full grant amount made to a Nebraska program (including living allowance, program support and all other items -- which at \$13,853 per AmeriCorps Member amounts to nearly exactly the national average), together with the legislatively-mandated administrative start-up support for the State Commission (responsible for more than AmeriCorps) and mislabelled the aggregate "recruiting".

Then there are Mr. Will's arguments which, although not demonstrably false, are clearly misleading:

- He cited the maximum education award of \$9450 -- but that's for two full years of service, and that's the exception, not the rule.
- He referred to a "Washington bureaucracy". The entire federal portion of AmeriCorps' operations, including clearly non-overhead operations such as evaluations and training, constitutes 5.1% of FY'95 funding. We have merged and downsized existing federal agencies, and devolved the bulk of decision-making and responsibility to the states. (Incidentally, AmeriCorps is a funded, non-mandate: no state, non-profit organization or individual must participate and those states which elect to compete for AmeriCorps Members are provided with the administrative funds to fulfill their responsibilities.)

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- He characterized our contract with the Ogilvy firm as "advertising" and doubted its efficacy. In fact, Ogilvy does far more than advertise: our toll-free information line handled more than 200,000 inquiries from interested Americans last year. As a point of comparison, the advertising and recruiting budget for the Department of Defense is \$1.8 billion (1000 times greater, to recruit 20 times more members than AmeriCorps).
- He claimed that applying the term "volunteer" to compensated service like AmeriCorps does violence to plain English. We use the term "Member" -- not "volunteer". AmeriCorps Members provide focused and trained service, usually full time.
- He belittled the potential of 100,000 AmeriCorps Members in a sea of millions of uncompensated volunteers. Ironically, Mr. Will has written eloquently about the ability of a small number of Americans, drawn together by commitment and vision, to make an enormous difference. And let's see what AmeriCorps Members have already accomplished:

-- In the 1993 Summer of Service, 87 participants in Texas put together the state's first full-scale immunization outreach campaign. In 8 weeks, 104,000 children were protected from preventable diseases that each year have taken the lives of Texas babies.

-- In the 1994 Summer of Safety, the NYPD reports that recreation areas and public pools policed by the Cadet Corps were free of assaults for the first time in memory. At the same time, the program in Kansas City shut down 12 crack houses and reclaimed a neighborhood's only park from gangs. That's why Kansas City's Police Chief Steven Bishop says "the partnership of national service and community policing is a winner in Kansas City."

-- In one natural disaster after another, whether it was the floods in the Mississippi River valley, or in Houston, or in California; or the forest fires of Idaho or the earthquake in Los Angeles, AmeriCorps Members were there. FEMA's Richard Krimm has written, "They have helped literally thousands of victims pick up the pieces of their lives." And they're still there, long after the waves of initial volunteers have had to return to their own jobs.

-- And AmeriCorps is getting things done outside the city limits as well. In rural Simpson County, Kentucky, AmeriCorps Members are tutoring half of the County's second graders. After only four months, they are well on their way to raising reading scores from two grades behind official standards to one grade above.

This brings us to Mr. Will's central argument that the existing volunteer ethic does not need the resources that AmeriCorps represents. His is a view rejected by the Independent Sector, which has stated that the nation's social challenges exceed their capacity, and by the action of many of the nation's premier charities, which compete to join AmeriCorps. From the YMCA to the Multiple Sclerosis Society, from the Red Cross to Habitat for Humanity, America's most respected non-profits have recognized that the focused efforts of full time, trained and committed AmeriCorps Members help them accomplish more -- and let them deploy part-time, sporadic volunteers more effectively.

Habitat for Humanity provides a perfect case in point. AmeriCorps Members have been trained by the program in all facets of home construction and now train and supervise the temporary (and uncompensated) volunteer talent that they attract -- from college students on Spring Break to professionals on the weekends and retirees in the afternoons. As a consequence, the AmeriCorps team will build 90 homes for working families in Homestead, Florida this year. That's why Habitat's Jerry Bass says "we could not do the job without them."

These are important achievements, and they are not unique AmeriCorps stories. We do not maintain that AmeriCorps will end hunger or illiteracy or pollution or crime. But AmeriCorps members are making a real difference, every day. Our challenge is to match the enormous good that the Peace Corps has accomplished in its 34 years and the equally dramatic achievements of the CCC 60 years ago. We are working hard to be just as effective.

Intelligent criticism can make AmeriCorps better. We need to invite critics and others to come see AmeriCorps in action. The AmeriCorps National Service Network consists of 350 programs all over the nation. So, when people ask about -- or criticize -- AmeriCorps and the work of its Members, give them the facts and ask them to call our offices. We'll arrange for them to see a program near them. This isn't about debating points or political jousting. It's about getting things done for the country we all love.

**Remarks of Eli J. Segal
"Strengthening the Partnership"
December 6, 1994**

Welcome everybody. A special welcome to the folks here with us for the first time, our State Commission chairs and the representatives of the new Governors.

I'd like to begin with a story . . .

A few weeks ago, I travelled to South Philadelphia to visit a tremendous YouthBuild program there. It's a real model for building up low-income housing in the streets, and building up lives in the community. On the walk over, an elderly man named [John] Ryan introduced himself as a ward committeeman who'd served in South Philly for thirty years. He knew my name, and he knew all about AmeriCorps. Because he had served in the Civilian Conservation Corps 60 years ago.

Mr. Ryan and I went to YouthBuild and met with four people in the program. I talked to the kids a little bit about their great work, which they seemed plenty eager to get back to. But then I introduced Mr. Ryan and when he started to talk about his experiences a half century earlier, the eyes of those AmeriCorps Members locked on to him, their bodes froze, and they connected like long-lost family. Together they talked about what service meant to them: contributing to their communities, taking responsibility for themselves, and doing their families proud. And When I casually asked Mr. Ryan whether he still had his CCC uniform, he paused, pulled out his wallet, and dug out his enrollment card from the Civilian Conservation Corps. The year was 1935.

I tell that story to help all of us see the forest through the trees: National service is special, and it unites people like nothing else. Service helps our communities become whole. And it helps each of us as individuals become whole as well.

But if Mr. Ryan speaks to our collective conscience, he also speaks for our collective doubt. This man brought memories from 1935 to forge a bond across four wars and eleven Presidents with people one-quarter his age. We have to ask ourselves: Will the young people serving today be able to stretch the ties that bind to the year 2055? And unlike the CCC that ended with World War II, will AmeriCorps grow as they do?

If our uncertainties are high, for me the hopes are higher still. We have a lot to be proud of in 1994. Not long ago, national service was just an inspiring promise of an obscure Governor from Arkansas. But with President Clinton's leadership, we have taken AmeriCorps from the poetry to the prose.

Today, there are 20,000 diverse AmeriCorps Members in the streets of America.

Today, there are 47 state commissions tapped into a powerful network of grass roots groups.

Today, 91 percent of the American people like the idea of AmeriCorps. More and more are seeing us succeed every day.

So we should be very proud. As I told the President a few days ago, we owe much of our success to the close partnership among the people in this room. But now is not the time to rest on our laurels. A successful start-up is a case study, not a success. The real test comes in roll out: to spread what works, correct what doesn't, and make AmeriCorps an integral part of American life.

The November elections only make this work more urgent. It's true that some in the new congressional majority just dismiss national service.

But there are many who strongly support AmeriCorps, and many more who like the idea, worry about the details and are waiting to see the results. And if we don't deliver--getting things done, building community, and encouraging responsibility, all in a cost-effective manner--if we don't do that, we can all go home. In fact, if we don't do that, we will all be sent home.

I used to ask people to imagine testifying before Senator Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas. Well, I won't ask you to imagine that any more. I'll ask you to prepare. She is a tough but fair Senator, yet a year ago, she said she feared AmeriCorps would become, quote, *"too costly and too bureaucratic."* We have got to allay her fears--every single day.

It will be a challenge. But we should welcome the challenge as an incentive to excellence. After all, our theme today is partnership, not partisanship. The partnerships in this room today can yield partnerships in Congress for years to come.

But in the very next year, we'll face two fundamental challenges. Let me focus on those.

The first is raising quality. Throughout this process, we've consciously focused on making AmeriCorps better rather than making it bigger. That's a political imperative, because Congress won't stand for a weak program. But quality is also a **moral** imperative, because Americans

deserve better than make-work assignments, bored participants, and wasted dollars. Americans deserve a program working block-by-block, neighborhood-by-neighborhood, truly changing America.

Let me name three things we mean by quality.

First: Getting things done. AmeriCorps has to be about doing real work, meeting serious needs, and demonstrating clear results. We have to show that this thing works--with higher test scores, lower crime rates, more kids who are immunized, fewer houses that are unsafe.

You'll hear a lot about getting things done today and tomorrow. For now, it means results. And it means a recruitment and retention plan which emphasizes both diversity and careful matching of skills and experience. And it means a strong fundraising plan which emphasizes community buy-ins.

Second: Quality means a compelling Member experience. Customer satisfaction is the term they use in business, and businesses with unhappy customers close up shop. Every Member should be able to recommend AmeriCorps to a friend.

Third: Quality is cost-effectiveness. Once again, it would be politically disastrous and morally wrong for AmeriCorps to spend precious tax dollars on things that aren't part of our core mission. What we can't achieve with dollars, we'll have to get with desire, hard work, and creative management.

If raising quality is one part of our challenge this year, the other is building national identity. It doesn't do us any good if a program is known for its good work, but isn't known as an AmeriCorps program. There are AmeriCorps Members out there who don't even know they are AmeriCorps Members. I consider every one a horror story. And the press is still writing stories about our programs without mentioning our name. That will not do.

My friends, this is not about public relations. It's about survival, plain and simple. Because we will not survive if people do not know who we are. This will never be a national movement for service unless Americans see the national unity of our efforts. And this will never be a sustainable enterprise unless Washington sees it as a whole that's worth sustaining. As Bill Clinton likes to say, we will rise or fall together.

And that is why our partnership is so important. Here in Washington, our goal is to steer the Corporation between the Scylla and Charybdis of government agencies: we don't want to be an absent, invisible grantmaker completely cutoff from the communities in which we're investing on the one hand, but we refuse to become a hidebound

bureaucracy on the other hand. I can't claim we've found the right balance yet, because we haven't.

In fact, there's no shame in saying we're going through the normal stresses of every start-up. For every one of you who said we were too hands on around the launch, there is another who wanted even more guidance. MTV lost \$50 million in its first two years. 3-M's "post-it," the kind you find everywhere in your office--that "post-it" failed its first testmarket miserably. And colonel Sanders burned hundreds of drumsticks before he put together one solid recipe.

My friends, someday AmeriCorps can be the Kentucky Fried Chicken of government programs. Mistakes are a sign of our humanity, not our failure. The sign of our success will be finding those mistakes and fixing them quickly.

In AmeriCorps, the only unforgivable sin should be complacency. If one manager says, "*Everything's going great*" and the second says, "*here's two problems and here's how we want to fix them,*" I will go to the second every single time.

Let me talk a little bit about what we are doing on our end to practice what Peter Drucker calls the habit of continuous learning. We've taken your feedback very seriously, and we are making changes right now to meet your needs:

- o First, we've extended the deadline for quarterly reports to February first.
- o Second, we've delayed the application deadline for renewal programs to May 1st.
- o Third, we've eliminated the "*six week rule*" for recruitment and replacement.

- o And fourth, we are re-examining other program requirements that many of you find troubling. Right now we're looking at the "80/20" rule on direct service. And we'll put other issues on the table as you raise them.

We are able to make these changes because we've heard from you about what's working and what's not. But if you don't tell us, we can't help you. I know the paperwork can be a pain. Trust me: when I was in business, there was nothing I hated more than forms. But right now, when a Congressman asks us what we're doing in his district, we can't always answer. For us, it just means we look foolish, but for you, it means you don't get the credit you deserve.

Each of you has a role to play in raising the quality of our programs. For the state directors, you will have to keep doing the things you've always done--running AmeriCorps* VISTA, our largest AmeriCorps program, and running the National Senior Service Corps, the largest service program in America. But your real challenge now is to do more--to become true partners with your state commissions. You can act as an information clearinghouse, a source of technical assistance, and much more. And you, too, are key partners with us at headquarters in ensuring quality. That's why we are taking a careful look at how we allocate VISTA resources, introducing an element of competition that will help raise quality throughout the program.

Part of enhancing quality also means continuing to work closely with the State Commissions. I don't have the Platonic ideal for the good relationship between the State Commission and the state office. Again, that's the nature of start-ups. But uncertainty doesn't equate to paralysis. There is no

problem in one state that some other state hasn't begun to address. Our role here is going to be helping you learn from each other. That's why we've compiled a list of 37 ways that states are already making this relationship work. You'll hear Shirley Sagawa talk more about it over Wednesday's lunch.

Now let me turn to our state commission chairs. You have three vital roles in this process. The first is making

sure your state commission keeps its eyes on the prize called quality. While the executive director gets the details right, you have to stay focused on the big picture. Second, you have the most visible spokesperson for AmeriCorps in your state. You can communicate a stirring vision to the public. And third, you are a terrific resource for your commission. The skills and relationships you bring from the rest of your life can be put to work for the rest of your commission.

Finally, let me say a word to our State Commission Executive Directors. You and your staffs are our primary assurance of program quality. Monitoring. Offering training and TA. Setting up continuous evaluation mechanisms. You are the linchpin.

There you have it. Our partnership of state directors, executive directors and commission chairs. For it to succeed, it will need to be an ongoing conversation, not an occasional meeting. Here in Washington, we have some terrific people ready to work with you. Our program staff is committed to helpful site visits and appropriate technical assistance. Our training and TA unit is ready to supplement your work with specialized help. And our External Affairs staff can work with you so that the Congress, the public, and the press delight in your success.

In short, we--the 200 of us here today and our staffs in Washington and all over America--are the delivery system of national service. We don't see AmeriCorps members perform every day. We don't see Mr Ryan, or

the eyes of the young people touched by him. We have the less visible, more pedestrian responsibilities.

But we have elected to be here today because we all know Mr. Ryans. And regardless of our backgrounds--regardless of our experience, our political party or our approach to service--we are here because we believe that our people engaged with a responsive government can make a difference in an age of skepticism.

As we perform our tasks, all of us should carry inside us the warmth of those five young men and women with Mr. Ryan: not just because of what they felt, but also because of the work they did. I didn't mention it before, but those five AmeriCorps Members are building a house where five families will have apartments and which will

change dozens of lives for years to come. Their work will be an enduring monument to our own--and to hope.

There is a national service program [City Year] whose motto is something like, "*Never judge another until you have walked a mile in her moccasins.*" I know that you may not wear moccasins, but all of us in Washington are trying very hard to remember what it's like to be in your shoes. I hope you will think about what it's like to be in ours. If we will keep each other's needs in mind, then the only limits to our future will be our demands from ourselves.

Thank you.

February 15, 1995

To: USDA AmeriCorps Members, Project Managers, and Facilitators
From: Director of National Service, USDA
Subject: **Recent Public Development Affecting AmeriCorps**

Many of you have asked for copies of the President's remarks about AmeriCorps in the State of the Union Address, as well as news articles discussing whether the program will be continued. Both are attached, as is a recent speech by Eli Segal, who oversees AmeriCorps on behalf of the President.

In addition, many of you have requested clarification about the kinds of activities AmeriCorps Members are allowed to engage in to generate political support for AmeriCorps. The following policy, based on advice given to USDA by the Office of General Counsel of the Corporation for National Service, will be added into the AmeriCorps USDA operations manual.

"AmeriCorps Members are free to contact Members of Congress and other elected officials to express their support of --- or opposition to --- AmeriCorps. The contact must be undertaken at his/her own initiative as a concerned private citizen and on his/her own time (not at the request of the AmeriCorps program or during AmeriCorps service hours). The AmeriCorps Member should be clear that s/he is speaking as a private citizen, but may reference the fact that s/he is part of AmeriCorps."

Moreover, as long as Members are not specifically "lobbying" by asking others to specifically support or oppose AmeriCorps, Members should feel free to explain the AmeriCorps philosophy and the details of their own projects to anyone --- including the media, elected officials, family members, project sponsors, friends, and community residents.

On a personal note, I look forward to meeting those of you I have not previously met as I travel to the USDA AmeriCorps sites throughout the nation. I know you are "getting things done" all across America as you promote community, responsibility, and opportunity. You should take great personal pride in the service you are performing, and never forget that you are making history every day as you build a new and exciting movement transforming the nation.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Office of
Communications

Washington, D.C.
20250-1300

(File)

February 14, 1995

MEMORANDUM

TO: UNDER SECRETARIES, ASSISTANT SECRETARIES, AND AGENCY HEADS

THROUGH: Ali Webb, Director *AW*
Office of Communications

FROM: Joel Berg *JB*
Director of National Service

SUBJECT: AmeriCorps Media Policy and Site Visits

First, let me congratulate you on the excellent AmeriCorps national service program that you and your agencies have helped fund and manage nationwide. After six months of existence, written and oral reports, as well as site visits, attest to tremendous accomplishments in multiple USDA mission areas.

As the AmeriCorps/USDA program achievements continue to increase, so does the media coverage. My staff, operating out of the Department's Office of Communications, has developed a national media policy to ensure a uniform message consistent with the USDA mission areas. AmeriCorps/USDA, as a Departmental initiative, must follow the Office of Communications policy with regard to Departmental press releases. Consequently, any press releases about AmeriCorps --- even those produced at the local level --- must be approved by my office before distribution to the media. Unfortunately, because some field offices have not followed this policy, misinformation about our program has been released. I would greatly appreciate your assistance in conveying the importance of this policy to your AmeriCorps project managers.

In addition, I want to extend an open invitation for each of you to schedule visits to our sites when you are traveling in the vicinity of any one of our AmeriCorps/USDA projects located in 38 states. Such visits would provide you an excellent opportunity to learn more about the program first-hand, as well as to communicate with the public about one of the Administration's most successful initiatives. Attached is a map of the counties in which we have sites. Ms. Elizabeth Jones, who can be reached at 690-3507, is available to help your office find specific site locations, arrange your schedule, produce background briefings, contact the media, and conduct any other activities related to your visits.

I thank you once again for all your assistance.

February 13, 1995

To: Catherine Jovicich, San Bernadino Site Advance
From: Joel Berg, USDA, 720-6350, h 387-8221 JB
Subject: Background on AmeriCorps Project in San Bernadino

7 pages, including this cover

The AmeriCorps Member with whom the President will be speaking at the roundtable tomorrow in San Bernadino is Monique Patton, who is a Member of the USDA Forest Service site in San Bernadino. Monique left a higher-paying job to join AmeriCorps so she could serve her country.

It is also important to note that Cesar Ocampo, a crew leader for the San Bernadino AmeriCorps program, died recently while rock climbing on his day off. Cesar was an inspirational leader who gave tirelessly to the program. (The President might want to mention him in his comments.)

Attached is a two page summary of the work performed in the San Bernadino project in the first quarter. You will note that, in the first month of work, the 80 Members of the program helped rehabilitate an amazing 12,000 acres of forest lands damaged by fires.

Also attached is a one-page newsclip about Acting Secretary of Agriculture Rominger's recent trip to the San Bernadino AmeriCorps site; said Rominger, "All of you have taken government and made it your own. You've turned a concept into some solid, practical action ... It's people pulling together to solve community problems. This is what government should be about." The President might want to point to this USDA AmeriCorps project as model of reinventing government that is filling critical environmental needs while promoting community, opportunity, and responsibility.

Also attached is a two-page summary of all the USDA AmeriCorps projects in California and a one page summary of our entire program.

February 13, 1995

To: Phil Kaplan, White House

From: Joel Berg, USDA, 720-6350, 387-8221 

Subject: Background on AmeriCorps Project in San Bernadino

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USDA AMERICORPS

AmeriCorps is the President's national service initiative to achieve direct results in addressing the nation's critical education, human service, public safety, and environmental needs at the community level. AmeriCorps provides yearround opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their country in organized efforts, fostering citizen responsibility and building their communities. The benefits include a living stipend of \$7500 for anti-hunger and public lands and environment team and \$12,000 for the rural development team (which requires a bachelors degree) during service, an educational voucher for college or vocational training (\$4725) for one year of service, basic health insurance and child care allowance (if eligible). Americans age 17 or older can make a substantial commitment to their country and earn education awards for college or vocational training in return.

United States Department of Agriculture is running three nationwide AmeriCorps Teams: an Anti-Hunger, Public Lands and Environment and Rural Development team. Anti-Hunger program is using community service to improve and expand the use of Federal anti-hunger programs and increase access to nutrition and food safety information. Public Lands and Environment program is helping communities reduce environmental hazards and work on public lands to conserve, restore, and sustain natural habitat. The Rural Development Program is creating teams of professional and paraprofessional members who assist in rural communities in identifying needs and resources available for economic, human, and environmental well-being.

1/28/95 THE SUN (SAN BERNARDINO)

Agriculture chief praises AmeriCorps in area visit

By DAVID WAHLBERG
Sun Staff Writer

LYTLE CREEK — Dion Trujillo led acting U.S. Agriculture Secretary Richard Rominger along a nature trail that Trujillo and other AmeriCorps members had built.

"We're learning about a lot of new things, like forestry and biology," said Trujillo, 28, of Rialto.

"That's what (AmeriCorps) is all about," Rominger said. "Learning while you're working."

Rominger visited the Lytle Creek Ranger Station on Friday to tout AmeriCorps, the federal service program created by President Clinton that has come under Republican criticism in recent weeks.

AmeriCorps members build

hiking trails, design nature centers, repair fire-ravaged areas and plant vegetation for a year. In return, they get \$4,725 education grants. About 20,000 people are participating around the country.

Rominger, who tentatively replaced former Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy this month after Espy resigned, addressed about 80 AmeriCorps members gathered in a circle outside the ranger station.

"I feel like I left Washington, but I came home to the best of government," he said.

More than 400 people applied for the 80 AmeriCorps jobs in the San Bernardino National Forest, he said.

"I don't think anyone can call

See AMERICORPS/A2

Americorps: Trujillo offers praise

Continued from A1

that coercive volunteerism," he said.

Newt Gingrich and other Republican Congress leaders have criticized the program on those grounds.

"All of you have taken government and made it your own," Rominger said. "You've turned a concept into some solid, practical action."

The trail that Trujillo's crew

built outside the ranger station will display various plants of the national forest, from desert brush to mountain wildflowers.

"It's going to be a nice little place to visit and learn from," said Scott Gorman, 22, a crew member from Pomona. "We're going to be able to take our kids back here someday and say, 'We did this.'"

Lauren Whitechurch, 24, an AmeriCorps member from San Bernardino, said he joined the program to learn more about for-

estry.

"It's a chance to learn about the environment and what we can do to help."

Beth Anglin, who belongs to an AmeriCorps crew in Palm Springs, said she signed up because she was tired of babysitting and telemarketing.

"This gives me a chance to work outside," said Anglin, 19. "I love the outdoors."

Rominger said he hopes AmeriCorps gains enough bipartisan support to continue.

"It's people pulling together to tackle community problems," he said. "This is what government should really be about."

USDA/AMERICORPS PROJECTS IN CALIFORNIA

AmeriCorps is a program that engages diverse groups of Americans in performing critical service to meet human, environmental, public safety, and educational needs in return for vouchers for education, vocational training, or loan repayment.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is running three types of AmeriCorps teams, composed of approximately 1,200 members, at 42 urban and rural sites nationwide: an Anti-Hunger Team, a Public Lands and Environment Team, and a Rural Development.

In the Anti-Hunger Team, members are working to help thousands of low-income families and individuals improve their diets and move toward self-sufficiency.

In the Public Lands and Environment Team, members are helping communities reduce environmental hazards and are working on public lands to conserve, restore, and sustain natural habitats.

The Rural Development Team groups members in regional and state clusters of 20 paraprofessionals who are assisting rural communities in identifying needs and resources necessary for economic, human, and environmental well-being.

USDA Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) Flood Relief and Rural Development Team

Number of AmeriCorps Members: 30

In **San Bernadino County**, AmeriCorps members are working with tribal leaders at the Morongo Indian Reservation to address that community's flood-related damage. The reservation is experiencing severe eroision which is threatening homes. AmeriCorps members and their NRCS technical experts are surveying and documenting damage with the goal of designing solutions for preventing the mud flow into the homes.

In addition, NRCS is sponsoring Rural Development Teams in a number of counties in California.

The AmeriCorps members in **Apple Valley** have been working with local agencies and groups to streamline the permit process for soil scientist to be able to analyze the soil for mapping. They also have completed an update of the prime farmlands map for San Bernardino County to identify those aras that are considered to be either prime farmland, farmlands of statewide importance, or unique farmlands.

The AmeriCorps members in **Auburn** are working on a project to reduce the possibility of catastrophic wildfires.

The AmeriCorps members in **Lancaster** are working with residents of the 1993 Kinneloa fire area in Los Angeles County on mitigation plans to protect residents and their property along the rural/urban interface of the fire area.

In **Petuluma, Santa Rosa, and Ukiah**, the six AmeriCorps members are working on watershed projects such as assisting dairy farmers in learning to use test kits to test water quality.

USDA Food and Consumer Services
Anti-Hunger Team

Los Angeles

Number of AmeriCorps Members: 40

Run in partnership between the Los Angeles Interfaith Hunger Coalition and USDA, this project will focus on nutrition education, food program outreach, earthquake relief, and community garden expansion. The project will hold promotional campaigns throughout Los Angeles public schools to increase School Breakfast and Summer Food Service Program participation by 10%. The project will also establish three farmers markets to provide healthy and inexpensive food to low-income residents on a regular basis.

USDA Forest Service
Public Lands Teams

San Bernadino National Forest, San Bernadino, CA

Number of AmeriCorps Members: 80

Participants will provide environmental and ecosystem management education programs to school children throughout the Southern California community. Participants will also build children's outdoor environmental education center at the National Children's Forest, when children and families can visit to experience environmental education practices.

Six Rivers National Forest, Eureka, CA

Number of AmeriCorps Members: 20

Participants will maintain recreational facilities forest-wide which could include the following types of work; replace/repair picnic tables in campgrounds and day-use areas; reconstruct/install rail fences around campgrounds and day-use areas; install parking barriers at recreational sites; paint restrooms, recreational area site signs and reduce fire hazards in campgrounds and around other recreational facilities.



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

February 3, 1995

To: Meg Maguire
From: Joel Berg JB
Subject: New Projects to Begin in February

As you can tell from our preliminary first quarter report, USDA is still a little short of our goal (and your allocation) for engaging 1,200 AmeriCorps members in our first year.

Therefore, NRCS is proposing a series of projects that would start this month, perform service full-time through the Fall, and allow new Members to earn a part-time voucher by serving 900 hours. Both projects would be part of the Rural Development Team. Attached are proposals and community service objectives for California and Indiana.

The California project would add 12 Members to already existing sites and would focus for the first three to four months on flood relief. The remainder of the year the Members would focus on installing conservation measures, providing environmental education to local schools, and working on salmon and fisheries recovery.

The Indiana project would create a new Rural Development Team cluster in the Indianapolis metropolitan area focused on urban environmental education. Coincidentally, Senator Lugar of Indiana is the new Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

Given that both projects will "get things done" meeting critical local needs, I highly recommend their approval. We would like to start recruitment immediately.

Next week, it is likely that I will recommend adding Members to our Maryland site.

CC. Lloyd Wright, Paul Jones, NRCS

USDA AMERICORPS CALIFORNIA EMERGENCY FLOOD TEAM
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Objective Components	Objective #1 Emergency Flood Recovery Work	Objective #2 Conservation Measures	Objective #3 Conservation Education	Objective #4 Salmon and Fishery Recovery
What is the work to be done?	Flood prevention & restoration i.e. stream & channel clearing, sandbagging, erosion control, debris removal.	Assist landowners to install conservation measures.	Work with students in conservation education.	Work on watershed teams to advise, educate and apply conservation practices to restore & protect streams, rivers and land.
What is the desired result?	Restore the environment & protect life and property from further damage.	Protection of top soils and improved water quality. Protection for citrus economy.	Increase the awareness of school children about the importance of conserving natural resources.	Reverse the decline of salmon and increase fish and wildlife habitat. Improve local environment and economy.
How will you measure the quality and the impact of the work?	Inspection of damage repair according to plans, specifications and NRCS technical guide.	Inspection of conservation measures according to NRCS technical standards.	Students will receive pre-tests and follow up visits and post-tests to measure increased understanding of natural resources.	Inspect restored habitats and watersheds according to specific site plans.
What is the standard for success?	80% of requests for land and resident services are treated as planned. 10 EWP projects are completed.	20 plans prepared for installing conservation measures on 10 properties.	60% of the schools will receive follow up visits. Students will show an increase in information retained.	20 properties will have installed 70% of conservation measures as planned.
How many individuals will receive the benefit of the work?:	Residents of 38 Presidentially declared California disaster counties.	Approximately 50 residents will receive direct assistance. Est. 1,000 receive downstream benefits.	200 students	Residents of 5 communities.
How many members will work on this objective?	12 Rural Development Corps (RDC) members	the same 12 members	5 RDC members	7 RDC members
What is the cluster site for this group?	Redlands and Eureka, CA	Redlands and Eureka, CA	Redlands, CA	Eureka, CA

Indiana

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE
COMMUNITY SERVICE OBJECTIVE

GRANTEE: USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

SITE: Marion, Hendricks, and Hamilton Counties.

Components of Objective Statement: To work with schools and local civic clubs and groups to provide natural resource education and projects that transfer education to the land.

1. What work will be done? What activities will your participants engage in?

Participants will contact schools, clubs, local community organizations to provide youth and adults natural resource education. Education will be provided through direct instruction as well as through organizing and gathering resources to identify and complete activities that promote natural resource conservation.

2. What is the hoped for result of the work/activities described above?

A large community of urban students and adults will be reached and informed about natural resource conservation such that current and future land use decisions will have natural resource conservation considered.

3. How will you measure the quality of your product or impact of your service?

Local community groups will continue to identify and complete projects that protect natural resources. Students will become involved in community projects and consider natural resource education options as they continue their education.

4. By what standard will you gauge success?

Participants will complete 75% of identified educational and project demonstration activities.

5. How many individuals will receive the benefit of the work your participants perform?

20 schools and 25 local community groups will benefit from full-scale presentations.



Indiana

The metropolitan Indianapolis Americorps team will emphasize natural resource education. Two team members will be located at the Indianapolis field office, one member at the Hamilton County field office, one at the Hendricks field office and one at the Indianapolis NRCS state office. The team members would act as team leaders in providing natural resource education to students and adults. They would plan, develop, and gather resources (volunteers and financial) for local projects that apply the teaching of natural resource conservation. Such activities would include assisting 4-H clubs in providing soil and water conservation education, scouting organization activities, constructing outdoor environmental labs at elementary, junior and senior high schools, organizing local groups in cleaning parks, developing nature trails, or seeding roadbanks to prevent erosion. Other activities would include: gathering information related to local government contacts that deal with erosion problems and other natural resource concerns, note the steps each group takes in making decisions, and gathering data related to the land use within watersheds within the project area.

The emphasis is education in an highly urban area that does not normally recognize natural resource concerns in decision making. The youth will be introduced to a entire occupational field that they may direct future education. Youth as well as adults will become more cognizant of the impact decisions have on resources.

February 2, 1995

To: Dee
From: Joel *JB*
Subject: Formatting for Next Year's Application

The best format for your applications would be for you to enter most of the data directly into our Paradox database. This way, we would be able to use the information for objective documents and quarterly reports without ever having to re-enter. Please work with Ron so we can set up both the software and our particular database on your machine.

For each site, we should enter the following information in the database:

- 1) Team Type (PL&E or RDT, or combined)
- 2) Region (if RDT - Four Corners, Appalachia, etc.)
- 3) State of Duty Station
- 4) County of Duty station
- 5) Cluster name (if RDT)
- 6) Names of counties served by members (up to 15 counties)
- 7) Congressional District of duty station
- 8) Name of site supervisor (at the local or county level)
- 9) Address, phone number, and fax number of site supervisor
- 10) Name of state project manager
- 11) Address, phone number, and fax number of state project manager
- 12) Number of Members in PL&E
- 13) Number of members in RDT
- 14) Overall budget for project
- 15) Budget request to NRCS
- 16) Community service objective #1 (include for all sites)
- 17) Community service objective #2 (include for PL&E site)
- 18) Community service objective #3 (include for PL&E site)
- 19) Community service objective #4 (include for PL&E site)
- 20) Community service objective #5 (include for PL&E site)

In addition, for each site, we need the following information for each site on a disk in Word Perfect 5.1 and in a hard copy, double spaced:

- 1) One page summary
- 2) Narrative (not more than 7 pages)

Also, please provide a budget sheet for each site both on hard copy and on a Lotus spreadsheet Ron will provide.

February 2, 1995

To: Paula
From: Joel *RB*
Subject: Remaining Clarification Needed on California Proposals

The California objectives you sent me yesterday are certainly clearer, and most of the work seems to meet important community needs. However, there are still some major concerns that need to be resolved before I can forward our proposal to the Corporation for National and Community Service for approval and before they can recruit Members:

- 1) The Members will be Rural Development Team Members, yet the objectives imply that they will be doing the manual installation labor themselves. If they will be doing such work themselves, why are we paying them as Rural Development, instead of Environmental, Team Members? If, however, they will not be doing the installations themselves, who will be doing that work?
- 2) Hershel Read's letter states that the Members will be completing the work in the attached objectives **after** the flood recovery work is performed. Please ask them to provide actual objectives for the flood recovery work itself.
- 3) The letter states, "One Member will be hearing impaired." How can we know one of the Members will be hearing impaired before we have publicly announced our recruitment? All slots must be openly competed
- 4) "Due to concern about field and construction site safety," the disabled Member will basically do office work. First of all, it may violate the Americans with Disabilities Act to automatically restrict someone from field work because of a hearing problem. Secondly, the Corporation for National Service's regulations prohibit any Members --- including disabled Members --- from spending their year in AmeriCorps performing the type of office or support work proposed. Additionally, they should not spend the bulk of the year preparing an "information campaign" --- again, none of our Members should be focused primarily on public affairs work.
- 5) The environmental education Member is expected to help 200 students. Yet, assuming an average class size of 25 students, that's only 8 presentations for an entire year. Can this target number of students be increased significantly?

*Memo
From
Joel*

February 1, 1995

To: USDA AmeriCorps Working Group
From: Joel Berg JB
Subject: Forms Outstanding to the Corporation

Attached is the Corporation's print-out --- as confusing as it is --- listing the Participant Enrollment Forms (PEF) and the National Service Trust Enrollment Forms (NSTEF) still missing by state. As you know, these forms were due to the Corporation immediately following the launch.

Additionally, to date, none of our sites have submitted the new Operating Site Form, which was due to the Corporation January 20. Please have your field staff send this form directly to the Corporation, but also send you a copy. I would appreciate receiving a complete set of this form (one for each site) as soon as you have them.

The Corporation is frantic about their need for these forms. (Unfortunately, they can not tell us which USDA agency's forms are missing in each state.)

I appreciate any help you can give. Thanks.

Mon Jan 30

Number of Participants by Program Site

page 1

ST CODE	NAME	Exp	Act	PEF	NSTEF
AR 94ADFDC0100001	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	1	1	1
AR 94ADFDC0100002	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
AZ 94ADFDC0100003	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	2	2	0
CA 94ADFDC0100004	USDA - Rural Development Team	6	0	0	0
CA 94ADFDC0100005	USDA - Rural Development Team	6	0	0	0
CA 94ADFDC0100006	USDA - Rural Development Team	0	0	0	0
CA 94ADFDC0100007	USDA - Rural Development Team	6	0	0	0
CA 94ADFDC0100008	USDA - Rural Development Team	7	0	0	0
CO 94ADFDC0100009	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	6	6	6
IA 94ADFDC0100010	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
IA 94ADFDC0100011	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
IA 94ADFDC0100012	USDA - Rural Development Team	6	0	0	0
IA 94ADFDC0100013	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
IA 94ADFDC0100014	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
MN 94ADFDC0100015	USDA - Rural Development Team	3	0	0	0
MN 94ADFDC0100016	USDA - Rural Development Team	6	0	0	0
MN 94ADFDC0100017	USDA - Rural Development Team	6	0	0	0
MO 94ADFDC0100018	USDA - Rural Development Team	15	0	0	0
MS 94ADFDC0100019	USDA - Rural Development Team	10	19	18	18
MS 94ADFDC0100020	USDA - Rural Development Team	7	0	0	0
ND 94ADFDC0100021	USDA - Rural Development Team	0	2	2	2
NE 94ADFDC0100022	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	7	7	7
NE 94ADFDC0100023	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
NE 94ADFDC0100024	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
NE 94ADFDC0100025	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	1	1	1
NM 94ADFDC0100026	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	2	2	0
NY 94ADFDC0100027	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	1	1	1
OH 94ADFDC0100028	USDA - Rural Development Team	6	0	0	0
OR 94ADFDC0100029	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
SC 94ADFDC0100030	USDA - Rural Development Team	8	23	23	22
SD 94ADFDC0100031	USDA - Rural Development Team	20	0	0	0
TN 94ADFDC0100032	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
TN 94ADFDC0100033	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	25	25	25
TN 94ADFDC0100034	USDA - Rural Development Team	9	0	0	0
UT 94ADFDC0100035	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
VA 94ADFDC0100036	USDA - Rural Development Team	3	1	1	1
VA 94ADFDC0100037	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
VT 94ADFDC0100038	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	5	5	5
WI 94ADFDC0100039	USDA - Rural Development Team	8	26	25	26
WV 94ADFDC0100040	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	1	1	1
CA 94ADFDC0100042	San Bernadino National Forest	77	81	79	76
		314	203	199	192

Mon Jan 30

Number of Participants by Program Site

page 8

ST CODE	NAME	Exp	Act	PEF	NSTEF
CA 94ADFDC0460001	Southern California InterFaith Hunger Co	40	0	0	0
DC 94ADFDC0460002	DC Service Corps	15	47	46	44
MS 94ADFDC0460003	Greater Jackson Youth Service Corps	15	0	0	0
VT 94ADFDC0460004	Office of Economic Opportunity	40	11	0	11
WI 94ADFDC0460005	Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee	40	0	0	0
WI 94ADFDC0460006	Milwaukee Community Service Corps		0	0	0
		150	58	46	55

Number of Participants by Program Site

ST CODE	NAME	Exp	Act	PEF	NSTEF
AR 94ADFDC0470001	Public Lands and Environmental Team	22	7	7	0
AZ 94ADFDC0470002	Public Lands and Environmental Team	12	46	45	42
AZ 94ADFDC0470003	Public Lands and Environmental Team	45	0	0	0
CA 94ADFDC0470004	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	0	0	0
CA 94ADFDC0470005	Public Lands and Environmental Team	77	0	0	0
CA 94ADFDC0470006	Public Lands and Environmental Team	30	0	0	0
CO 94ADFDC0470007	Public Lands and Environmental Team	13	0	0	0
DC 94ADFDC0470008	Public Lands and Environmental Team	30	23	11	21
GA 94ADFDC0470009	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	0	0	0
IA 94ADFDC0470010	Public Lands and Environmental Team	9	0	0	0
IL 94ADFDC0470011	Public Lands and Environmental Team	9	10	10	6
IL 94ADFDC0470012	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	0	0	0
KS 94ADFDC0470013	Public Lands and Environmental Team	29	24	23	24
LA 94ADFDC0470014	Public Lands and Environmental Team	23	10	10	0
MA 94ADFDC0470015	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	0	0	0
MA 94ADFDC0470016	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	0	0	0
ME 94ADFDC0470017	Public Lands and Environmental Team	30	0	0	0
MI 94ADFDC0470018	Public Lands and Environmental Team	10	0	0	0
MN 94ADFDC0470019	Public Lands and Environmental Team	30	0	0	0
MO 94ADFDC0470020	Public Lands and Environmental Team	9	0	0	0
MS 94ADFDC0470021	Public Lands and Environmental Team	22	0	0	0
MS 94ADFDC0470022	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	0	0	0
MS 94ADFDC0470023	Public Lands and Environmental Team	15	2	2	2
ND 94ADFDC0470024	Public Lands and Environmental Team	9	0	0	0
NE 94ADFDC0470025	Public Lands and Environmental Team	9	5	5	4
NH 94ADFDC0470026	Public Lands and Environmental Team	32	0	0	0
NJ 94ADFDC0470027	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	6	6	4
NM 94ADFDC0470028	Public Lands and Environmental Team	12	0	0	0
NY 94ADFDC0470029	Public Lands and Environmental Team	70	0	0	0
OH 94ADFDC0470030	Public Lands and Environmental Team	10	6	6	0
OK 94ADFDC0470031	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	1	1	0
OR 94ADFDC0470032	Public Lands and Environmental Team	35	0	0	0
OR 94ADFDC0470033	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	0	0	0
OR 94ADFDC0470034	Public Lands and Environmental Team	21	0	0	0
SC 94ADFDC0470035	Public Lands and Environmental Team	37	16	15	15
SD 94ADFDC0470036	Public Lands and Environmental Team	9	0	0	0
TN 94ADFDC0470037	USDA Public Lands and Environmental Team	26	0	0	0
TX 94ADFDC0470038	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	0	0	0
TX 94ADFDC0470039	Public Lands and Environmental Team	30	0	0	0
UT 94ADFDC0470040	Public Lands and Environmental Team	13	0	0	0
VA 94ADFDC0470041	Public Lands and Environmental Team	27	0	0	0
VT 94ADFDC0470042	Public Lands and Environmental Team	40	0	0	0
VT 94ADFDC0470043	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	0	0	0
WA 94ADFDC0470044	Public Lands and Environmental Team	22	37	37	36
WA 94ADFDC0470045	Public Lands and Environmental Team	32	13	13	12
WI 94ADFDC0470046	Public Lands and Environmental Team	9	0	0	0
WV 94ADFDC0470047	Public Lands and Environmental Team	27	0	0	0
		1105	206	191	166

February 1, 1995

To: USDA AmeriCorps Working Group
From: Joel Berg
Subject: Memorandum for our Members

I would like to send the following memorandum and newsclips to all our Members, project managers, and facilitators. I would also like to include the "lobbying" policy in the revised operations manual.

Please gives me any comments this week, or at next Monday's meeting.

DRAFT

February 6, 1995

To: USDA AmeriCorps Members, Project Managers, and Facilitators

From: Director of National Service, USDA

Subject: **Recent Public Development Affecting AmeriCorps**

Many of you have asked for copies of the President's remarks about AmeriCorps in the State of the Union Address, as well as news articles discussing whether the program will be continued. Both are attached, as is a recent speech by Eli Segal, who oversees AmeriCorps on behalf of the President.

In addition, many of you have requested clarification about the kinds of activities AmeriCorps Members are allowed to engage in to generate political support for AmeriCorps. The following policy, based on advice given to USDA by the Office of General Counsel of the Corporation for National Service, will be added into the AmeriCorps USDA operations manual.

"AmeriCorps Members are free to contact Members of Congress and other elected officials to express their support of --- or opposition to --- AmeriCorps. The contact must be undertaken at his/her own initiative as a concerned private citizen and on his/her own time (not at the request of the AmeriCorps program or during AmeriCorps service hours). The AmeriCorps Member should be clear that s/he is speaking as a private citizen, but may reference the fact that s/he is part of AmeriCorps."

Moreover, as long as Members are not specifically "lobbying" by asking others to specifically support or oppose AmeriCorps, Members should feel free to explain the AmeriCorps philosophy and the details of their own projects to anyone --- including the media, elected officials, family members, project sponsors, friends, and community residents.

On a personal note, I look forward to meeting those of you I have not previously met as I travel to the USDA AmeriCorps sites throughout the nation. I know you are "getting things done" all across America as you promote community, responsibility, and opportunity. You should take great personal pride in the service you are performing, and never forget that you are making history every day as you build a new and exciting movement transforming the nation.

The Washington Post

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 1995

STATE OF THE UNION



BY RAY LUSTIG—THE WASHINGTON POST

National Service Corps

I'd like to talk about a couple of other issues we have to deal with. I want us to cut more spending, but I hope we won't cut government programs that help to prepare us for the new economy, promote responsibility, and are organized from the grass roots up, not by federal bureaucracies. The very best example of this is the national service corps, Americorps.

It passed with strong bipartisan support, and now there are 20,000 Americans, more than ever served in one year, in the Peace Corps [sic], working all over this country, helping people person-to-person in local, grass-roots volunteer groups, solving problems and in the process, earning some money for their education. This is citizenship at its best. It's good for the Americorps members, but it's good for the rest of us too. It's the essence of the New Covenant, and we shouldn't stop it.

All Americans, not only in the states most heavily affected but in every place in this country, are rightly disturbed by the large numbers of illegal aliens entering our country. The jobs they hold might otherwise be held by citizens or legal immigrants; the public service they use impose burdens on our taxpayers. That's why our administration has moved aggressively to secure our borders more by hiring a record number of new border guards, by deporting twice as many criminal aliens as every before, by cracking down on illegal hiring, by barring welfare benefits to illegal aliens. In the budget I will present

to you, we will try to do more to speed the deportation of illegal aliens who are arrested for crimes, to better identify illegal aliens in the workplace as recommended by the commission headed by former congresswoman Barbara Jordan. We are a nation of immigrants, but we are also a nation of laws. It is wrong and ultimately self-defeating for a nation of immigrants to permit the kind of abuse of our immigration laws we have seen in recent years, and we must do more to stop it.

Lauding Successes

Cindy Perry teaches second-graders to read in Americorps in rural Kentucky. She gains when she gives. She's a mother of four. She says that her service inspired her to get her high school equivalency last year. She was married when she was a teenager. Stand up, Cindy. She was married when she was a teenager. She had four children, but she had time to serve other people, to get her high school equivalency, and she's going to use her Americorps money to go back to college.

Steven Bishop is the police chief of Kansas City. He's been a national leader. Stand up, Steve. He's been a national leader in using more police in community policing, and he's worked with Americorps to do it. And the crime rate in Kansas City has gone down as a result of what he did.

POLL: Backing for Clinton on Crime, Welfare and Taxes

Continued from A1
guaranteeing Mexican loans in an effort to stem the crisis that has forced a massive devaluation in the peso.

Indeed, the loan guarantees find little support from any point along the ideological or partisan spectrum: More than three-fourths of Democrats, independents and Republicans oppose the idea.

The Times Poll, supervised by John Brennan, surveyed 1,353 adults nationwide from Jan. 19 through Jan. 21. The results have a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

Nothing is more intriguing in the polling than the tension between the public's broad ideological preferences, which generally lean toward the GOP, and their opinions on specific issues, which often bend toward positions held by Clinton and Democrats.

In a broad sense, the public emphatically endorses the Republican argument that government must be restrained. In the survey, nearly two-thirds said that they prefer a smaller government with fewer services, while just over 1 in 4 wants "a larger government with many services."

Likewise, the poll finds extensive support for the general idea of shifting power away from Washington: 70% of those polled said that state and local governments do the best job of spending tax dollars (just 12% endorsed the federal government).

And the poll makes clear that many Americans have invested their faith in the new Republican congressional majority. Almost twice as many of those polled said that they expect to be better off than worse off as a result of the GOP takeover (though the largest group, almost 2 in 5, said they expect no change in their condition). By a 35% to 31% count, those polled said that Republicans, rather than the President, have the best ideas for solving the country's problems. And most said that they want Clinton to compromise with the GOP rather than draw lines in the sand against Republican ideas.

Several Republican priorities drew substantial support in the survey: Almost 7 in 10 said that they like the GOP proposal to require three-fifths congressional approval for all tax increases; roughly the same number endorsed the line-item veto backed by both the GOP and Clinton; three-fourths backed the GOP-driven constitutional amendment to limit congressional terms to 12 years.

For ideas now on the edge of the GOP radar also show strong support: roughly three-in-four



Reuters

President Clinton on Monday signs law making Congress subject to the same federal laws governing workplace as the rest of the country.

wanted to ban all racial preferences in hiring decisions. House Majority Leader Dick Armey's proposed 17% flat tax draws 40% support (48% oppose it), a strong showing for an idea not familiar to many Americans.

But on an array of other specific choices, the public endorses positions held by the Democrats, according to the poll. Should Congress have to specify where it would cut the deficit before passing a balanced-budget amendment? Congressional Republicans say no, but 86% of those polled said yes. Should term limits apply retroactively to sitting members of Congress? Congressional Republicans generally say no, but, like the White House, three-fourths of those polled said yes.

Many House Republicans are mobilizing for an effort to repeal the ban on assault weapons approved as part of last year's anti-crime bill. But two-thirds of Americans, including three-fifths of both Republicans and conservatives, said that the ban should be maintained. Likewise, House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) has criticized Clinton's national service program, which lets young people earn college grants by performing community service. But more than 7 in 10 of those surveyed, including more than 60% of Republicans and conservatives, like it.

In tonight's State of the Union

Address, Clinton is likely to continue his effort to contrast his domestic proposals with the GOP plans. The poll tested attitudes toward those contrasting agendas by asking Americans to choose between the competing proposals in five distinct areas—but not identifying the alternatives as Clinton or Republican ideas.

In all but one instance, those surveyed backed the Clinton alternative by margins of 2-to-1 or greater. And in most cases that support was consistent across racial, income, gender and ideological lines.

On crime, 72% of those surveyed said that they support the provisions in last year's crime bill that funded prison construction, additional police officers and prevention programs; just 20% supported the idea, advanced by Senate Republicans, of shifting all the prevention money to pay for more prisons and police officers. More than 3 in 5 Republicans and conservatives—even 3 in 5 Republican men—preferred the existing approach.

On welfare, President Clinton has proposed requiring recipients to work after two years on the rolls but would provide public service jobs if none are available in the private sector. House Republicans want to let states cut off recipients after two years without providing them a job. By 66% to 34%, those surveyed preferred

approach. A majority of both Republicans and conservatives preferred Clinton's policy.

To try to reduce out-of-wedlock births, House Republicans want to cut off all welfare benefits to girls under 18 who bear children out of wedlock; Clinton has proposed instead requiring the mothers to live at home as a condition of receiving aid. By 58% to 28%, those surveyed prefer Clinton's approach.

On taxes, 55% backed Clinton's proposal of a deduction for college tuition and a tax credit for families with children and incomes under \$75,000; 23% back the House GOP combination of a children's tax credit for families with incomes up to \$200,000 and reductions in capital-gains taxes. Americans in every income bracket, every spot on the ideological spectrum—Democrats, independents, Republicans, supporters of Ross Perot and President George Bush in 1992—prefer Clinton's approach.

Only on Social Security did the public prefer the House Republican blueprint, with a 49% to 43% plurality endorsing the contract's call to roll back Clinton's 1993 tax increase on upper-income seniors.

On the question of "unfunded mandates," there is a similar collision between abstract preference and specific application. With both chambers considering legislation to restrict the federal government's capacity to impose obligations on

the states, nearly two-thirds of those polled said that they want to limit unfunded mandates. But larger majorities support two specific mandates on the states: requiring local governments to meet federal clean water standards by building sewage treatment plants and mandating local school districts to provide special education facilities for mentally disabled students.

In several respects, the poll found the public mood improving in the wake of last fall's election. More than a third of Americans now say that the country is moving in the right direction, while 55% say that it is on the wrong track. Those are numbers hardly overflowing with optimism, but they constitute the most upbeat assessment of the nation's direction since last January.

Attitudes about the economy are brightening more unambiguously: Nearly half of those surveyed said that the country is not in a recession and just 11% said the country is suffering from a serious economic reversal. Those are the sunniest economic assessments of Clinton's presidency.

Good feelings about the economy appear to be lifting some of the gloom over the White House. In the survey, 51% said that they approve of Clinton's economic performance—up from 43% in November. On foreign policy, Americans remain divided over

Clinton's performance, with 46% of those polled approving and 44% disapproving. Clinton's overall performance won approval from 54%, while 40% disapproved. Those are his best showings since last spring. Since last fall, Clinton has registered his strongest gains among independents and moderates.

Those numbers compare favorably with the new Republican leadership. By a 41% to 28% count, Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole also enjoys positive favorability ratings. But House Speaker Gingrich, who has been entangled in a series of ethical and policy disputes since election day, has quickly emerged as a polarizing and unpopular figure: Just 26% express favorable opinions toward Gingrich, compared with 39% unfavorable.

What Clinton, Dole and Gingrich—and their allies and adversaries in both parties—share is the continued weight of obdurate public skepticism. Trust in Congress and the government in Washington remains anemic, with four-in-five Americans expressing only some or very little. And the public remains divided on whether Clinton and the new GOP legislative majority are offering true reform—with just as many respondents saying each side is offering "business as usual" as believe they are working for "fundamental change" in government.

Los Angeles Times

A Times Mirror Newspaper
Daily Founded Dec. 4 1881
VOL. CXXV NO. 51

Eastern Editorial Offices
Washington (202) 293 4650
New York (212) 371 1200

Eastern Advertising Offices
New York (212) 692 7170

Delivery Information 1 (800) LA TIMES
Principal Location: Times Mirror Square, Los Angeles, CA 90053

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IN TODAY'S PAPER
3 Sections, 30 Pages
Section A
World, Nation, Editorial
Section B
California, Business, Calendar, Life & Style
Section C
Sports and Report

Pennies to Save Lives From the Trash Bin

I REALIZE that Newt Gingrich has a right to speak any words he wishes — after all, he's speaker of the House. But why is he so opposed to thinking before he speaks?

This week, for instance, he said the national service program, the one called the domestic peace corps, should be abolished completely because, in his opinion, "It is coerced voluntarism . . . It's gimmickry."

Well, a lot of people have seen this "gimmickry" and almost unanimously they are impressed. They say it works. They include me.

I've become familiar with City Year, one of the groups that inspired President Bill Clinton to create the federal service umbrella, known as AmeriCorps. Campaigning in Boston in 1992, he visited City Year and came away saying he wanted to use it as a model for a national program. A year later, after shepherding that model through Congress, he signed into law the National Service Trust Act of 1993.

Here's what it does. It puts 20,000 young volunteers to work all across the country in 350 nonprofit organizations, helping themselves and others. The three-year goal is to expand the volunteer force to 100,000.

The age group is 17 to 23. They come from every background — Ivy League graduates, inner-city youths seeking their General Equivalency Diploma so they can make it to college, high school graduates taking a year off to do some good and learn community leadership skills, former gang members, single mothers, whites, blacks, Latinos, Asians.

Does every young corps member turn into a winner? No, not every single one. But the success rate is very, very high.

City Year, the group I've seen, was founded in Boston about six years ago by two Harvard Law School graduates, Alan Khazei and Michael Brown. They began with about 50 young people. Now they have more than 300.

What they do is renovate old buildings, serve as teachers' aides and tutors in schools, fix up parks and playgrounds, provide assistance to the elderly, build food banks and soup kitchens in church basements, work with the homeless and conduct school workshops on violence prevention and on drug and AIDS awareness.

In the first three years of its existence, City

Year existed entirely on private funds. Corporations like Timberland and Reebok and many others became sponsors. The first federal funding became available in the Bush administration. Clinton's AmeriCorps added measurably to that and has made expansion possible.

City Year alone, by dispatching youths already trained, has opened programs in five other cities. Other groups, like Habitat and YouthBuild, are doing the same.

SYDNEY H. SCHANBERG

*I wish the speaker
would go
look at
these
young
people and see
what they do.*



An aide to Speaker Gingrich, explaining his boss' opposition, said "it is a program that spends a lot of money for few benefits. This is an employment program, not national service where work is voluntary." I wish the speaker would go look at these young people and see what they do. If he'll agree, I'll personally take him to Boston and have him meet them. I don't know if the experience will change his mind about funding the national program, but I'm willing to bet his spirits will be raised.

The federal spending now on AmeriCorps is about \$200 million a year — hardly a burp in the national budget. Thousands of lives are being saved from the trash bin, thousands of young people are getting on-the-job street training in coping with serious social problems. The volunteers are getting a lot out of it — and so are we as a nation.

Since Gingrich objects to the spending, let us look at what the volunteers are paid. At City Year originally, they got about \$100 a week. If they stayed the full year, they received an additional \$5,000 for college or job training. Those who had already finished college received a smaller bonus.

Now under the AmeriCorps program, volunteers are expected to commit for two years, receiving \$7,500 as an annual living stipend and \$4,725 a year toward further education. Like every other taxpayer, I'm aware that a fair amount of government money gets wasted. But I've seen how this national service money is used. It's anything but a waste; it's a pure investment in the United States of America.

The reason I've seen how City Year works is that one of my daughters, Rebecca, is part of it. She graduated from Stanford in 1993 and is in her second year in the Boston program. The first year, she was a team member. Now she's a leader of a team.

Her team is as diverse as our nation has always been — Brooks Emanuel from Atlanta and Jenny Evert from Minnesota and José Cerneno from Dorchester out of Puerto Rico and Robert Hannaford from North Quincy and Sherwin McCollon from Lynn and Darrell Greene from Mattapan and Natalie Pierre of Trinidad and now Dorchester and Yessenia Alvarado from Chelsea via El Salvador and Len Swartz from Hull.

You'll find them most days at a school in Chelsea, one of those struggling communities that ring Boston. The school, housed in the tired Chelsea High School, is called Early Childhood Program, which runs from prekindergarten through the second grade. If you sit for just a few hours and observe the City Year team members working with these 3- to 8-year-old black and Latino and Vietnamese and Cambodian kids, you will learn many things, not least of which is how much these volunteers are needed.

I sincerely hope the House speaker will visit them.

The Washington Post

TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1995

C

M

E. J. Dionne Jr.

Back to Citizenship

House Speaker Newt Gingrich performed a huge service for President Clinton last week. No, this isn't about that book deal. It's about Gingrich's attack on Clinton's national service program. By forcing the president to defend national service, Gingrich has given him a chance to shift the political debate from a moldy contest over "more" or "less" government to one about prior questions: What should government do in the first place, and what obligations do democratic citizens have toward each other?

The service program is certainly worth defending in its own right, and the best arguments for it have been made over the years by conservatives. It's true, as conservatives have said, that bureaucratic charity is not the preferred solution to social problems. Far better to have citizens engaged in helping each other, person-to-person, and to do so through local, voluntarily established institutions.

One of the most useful pieces of work done by conservative intellectuals over the last two decades was a 1977 essay, "To Empower People," by sociologist Peter Berger and the Rev. Richard John Neuhaus. They argued that if government relentlessly took over all charitable functions, it would endanger soci-

ety's "mediating structures"—the institutions created by families, communities and churches—that nurture individual virtue and "mediate" between government and the individual. Government, they argued, should make strengthening these institutions a central goal.

That, roughly, is what the service program does. The volunteers for AmeriCorps, as the main service agency is called, do not work for a federal bureaucracy. They work for already established local institutions that are trying to solve problems: preventing crime, teaching literacy, immunizing kids against disease, helping the homebound elderly, curbing teen pregnancy. The main function of the program's Washington arm, the Corporation for National and Community Service, is to monitor the programs—not for their adherence to bureaucratic rules but simply to make sure they're doing broadly what they claim to be doing.

Why spend any federal money on this sort of thing? Because the voluntary sector needs strengthening, and because federal money spent supplementing voluntary activities has a big payoff. A lot of volunteer organizations are having trouble finding people. Many parents—both parents—necessarily spend so much time working and then raising

their kids that they don't have a lot of time left over. Eli Segal, who heads the service program, sees it as "an effective way of filling in the holes" in the voluntary sector and a recognition of "the chords that bind us together as a people."

This last point is why the broader argument raised by the service program is so important. The idea of democratic citizenship inherent in the program is the one idea capable of answering the problems of two other ideas that are gaining currency in American politics: radical individualism and extreme multiculturalism.

Both ideas start at reasonable places. Almost all of us are individualists in that we value autonomy and freedom. But radical individualism suggests that we are completely free agents, thus denying the reality that our freedom depends on preserving a community that is civil, just, tolerant and nurturing of the other values on which freedom depends. Apart from such a community, freedom withers.

Multiculturalists started out with the fair argument that too little attention was paid to the contributions, ideas and interests of groups other than affluent white males—women, African Americans, Hispanic, working class people

and others. But pushed to the extreme, multiculturalists argued that the only forms of solidarity that counted were those within these particular groups.

Those who value the idea of democratic citizenship argue, against the radical individualists, that preserving freedom is a cooperative enterprise that carries burdens of responsibility. We can't just walk away from social problems. Against extreme multiculturalism, advocates of democratic citizenship argue that our sense of solidarity needs to transcend all our particularisms. Whites need to vindicate the rights of blacks, blacks the rights of whites, men those of women and women those of men.

The Clinton administration has been obsessed with its failure to "communicate" its achievements to the American people. This is the wrong obsession. It implies that the American people are too dumb or too bamboozled by Republican propaganda to "understand" all that the president has been doing.

What the administration should worry about instead is that it is losing the political argument. Americans have surveyed what they see as a series of messes—crime, family breakup, stagnating living standards for many in the middle—and a majority has decided (tentatively) that the best way to deal

with all of them may be for government to do little more than throw the book at criminals. This is not the product of selfishness but a retreat from government that is seen as ineffective, intrusive in the wrong places and insufficiently concerned with nurturing civic responsibility.

There is a corresponding retreat into enclaves. Suburbanites, to pick one example, are tempted to give up on the inner cities, figuring they have enough problems of their own. Think of it as the suburban (or male or white) answer to multiculturalism.

Clinton and the Democrats won't win the argument unless they reverse these trends. One worthy way of doing so is to preach the rewards—and the obligations—of democratic citizenship. A government based on this idea does not pretend to have all the answers. Still less does it claim the right to replace the civic institutions of a free people with its own. But neither is it an indifferent government, because it recognizes that government either strengthens or saps the ability of citizens to live together, solve problems and accept their moral obligations to each other. In this telling, government is not some alien structure out there. It is the realm of us all.

FLORIDA TIMES-UNION

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NATIONAL SERVICE

Americorps designed to complement armed forces

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As an active supporter of the Americorps national service program and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I strongly disagree with the Times-Union's recent editorial charging that Americorps damages military recruiting.

The armed forces offer far greater benefits than national service. Military salaries are much higher than the minimum wage allowance of Americorps members.

As was noted in the editorial, "college tuition of \$20,000 to \$30,000 can be earned for an Army hitch." Americorps' maximum education award for a year of service is \$4,725.

In fact, the Americorps award was set significantly lower than GI bill awards in recognition of the greater sacrifice made by those who serve in our armed forces. Moreover, under the national service law, veterans are encouraged to join Americorps and earn its benefits without diminishing those earned while in the military.

More than 2 million recruits currently serve in our armed forces. Americorps fields 20,000 members.



The program was designed so as not to impair military recruiting and to reflect the diversity of citizens seeking to serve our nation.

Americorps meets its much smaller need by drawing from a larger recruiting universe, including people of all ages, people with disabilities and many others who do not meet the requirements for military service.

Each year, Army recruiters turn

away more than 100,000 people who want to serve but fail the physical examination. For many of them, Americorps offers an opportunity to get things done for their country.

Americorps' commitment to work in partnership with our armed services has resulted in major programs that it operates with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and organizations such as the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans.

Americorps is designed to complement, not detract from, the great work of the armed forces. Protecting freedom at home and abroad, our men and women in uniform give all that a nation can ask of its citizens.

Inspired by that greater sacrifice, Americorps members work with communities to solve basic problems, get results and reap the opportunities of our free society.

DAVID C. JONES
Arlington, Va.

Bowling for Virtue

Kill the welfare state, but save national service

BY JOE KLEIN

WEEKS LATER, LIBERALS REMAIN MYSTIFIED BY NEWT Gingrich's inaugural speech to the House of Representatives. Why all the compassionate talk about the poor? (No Democrat could get away with that.) Has Gingrich changed his stripes? Has he moved to the center? Become a statesman? In a word: no. He's been talking this way for years, outraged by the violence, anarchy and despair in the slums—which he believes are largely caused by liberal programs. He wants to eliminate the "bureaucratic welfare state." He wants to replace it with... charity. He really means to do this. He proposes a "Wesleyan revival," in which virtuous Americans would feel morally reinvigorated, and give time and money to uplift the poor. "If every American spent three hours a month helping someone who needed it," he said last week, "a lot of these problems would disappear."

Gingrich, as always, offered a reading list: "The Tragedy of American Compassion," by Marvin Olasky, which chronicles an explosion of charitable giving in the late 19th century. He might easily have added Gertrude Himmelfarb's new book, "The De-Moralization of Society," which argues that Victorian attitudes toward charity—and poverty—were not only admirable but quite successful. Such views are easily mocked. Dickens trumps Himmelfarb. But one wonders what Dickens would have done with Joycelyn Elders, Donna Shalala and your local, insensate welfare office. Poverty seems more desperate, intractable and amoral now than it did a hundred years ago—when, as Himmelfarb shows, rates of pauperism, crime and illegitimacy were in steady, long-term decline. The old ways—a society-wide insistence on moral behavior and exemplary acts—may be the best way to lift the poor. But there is a problem: the Victorian charitable explosion occurred at a moment when living standards were soaring and when there were far fewer distractions. We don't seem to have the time, or the inclination, for altruism anymore.

Indeed, we seem to be moving in the opposite direction: the number of volunteers for groups like the Boy Scouts and Red Cross has plummeted in the last 20 years. PTA participation is way down. The fraternal orders are waning. Even bowling leagues are in decline—people prefer to bowl alone—Harvard professor Robert Putnam writes in an elegant article for the *Journal of Democracy*. Putnam attributes these phenomena to several factors: less time (women go to work now), increased mobility (people are less likely to put down social roots) and of course—television. Gingrich disagrees. He believes the aggrandizement of the bureaucracy has made families and communities less relevant. "People don't go to PTA meetings," he says, "because they don't like professional bureaucrats telling them how useless they are. When you emasculate citizens, you can't expect them to be very enthusiastic about participating."

But even if you empower citizens—as Gingrich might say—Putnam's other factors won't go away. This isn't the 19th century. And where's Wesley? If the welfare state is to be scrapped and privatized, civil society will need steroids. Gingrich wants a tax credit for charitable contributions. Fair enough. But more will be needed. No doubt, state and local governments can "nonprofitize" many services—that is, pay private charities to do things formerly done by bureaucrats. There is no reason social workers need to be public employees. But perhaps the most creative—indeed, virtuous—role government can play would be to provide charitable institutions with a steady stream of young, altruistic, energetic, exemplary (and cheap) workers. In fact, a government program recently has begun to do just that, and with great promise: national service.

"Everyone talks about unfunded mandates—things Washington requires the states and cities to do," says Eli Siegal, the director of Americorps. "We're the exact opposite: a funded nonmandate." The states decide whether to participate, and which local programs to fund. There are now about 20,000 young people working (at minimum wage, while repaying \$4,725 in college loans per year of service) in 350 nonprofit programs nationally.

Last week, I called around to various private groups who've been using the volunteers, and their reports were uniformly enthusiastic. "They've come into the community and done far more than we asked or expected," says Dawn Taylor of the Storm-break Youth Shelter in State College, Pa. (which runs, among other things—Newt

should note—a group home for troubled teens). "Their job is to tutor the young people, but they're not content with that. They've helped with fund-raising telethons and lots of other programs," expanding the scope of charitable activities in the county. "They are so enthusiastic and energetic. And there are a lot more ways we'd like to use them, if we could." Unfortunately, she can't: Americorps volunteers can't supplant existing public employees, a regulation that Republicans should jettison if they

choose to continue this program. (There is no reason why national service shouldn't bite off great chunks of the civil service.)

But the Republicans may not continue it. "I am totally, unequivocally opposed to national service," Gingrich says. "It is coerced voluntarism... It's gimmickry." These are spurious, knee-jerk arguments. National service is induced—not coerced—voluntarism, just as his tax credit for charity would be. And, gimmickry? As if term limits and balanced-budget amendments weren't polyester legislative shortcuts. Programs that work are miracles, not gimmicks. There will be a fight over this. But expect the House Appropriations Committee to follow the speaker's lead and kill national service—which seems the political equivalent of drowning a puppy.



BELEAGUERED: No time for society?
RAY F. HILLSTROM JR.

Conservatives seem to want Victorian charity, but who has the time?

10TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

January 30, 1995, Monday, HOME FINAL EDITION

SECTION: VIEWPOINTS; Jesse James; Pg. 11A

LENGTH: 749 words

HEADLINE: Hey, Newt, quit picking on Americorps

BYLINE: Jesse James

BODY:

I will get things done for America to make our people safer, smarter and healthier. I will bring Americans together to strengthen our communities. Faced with apathy, I will take action.

Faced with conflict, I will seek common ground. Faced with adversity, I will persevere. I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond. I am an Americorps member. And I'm going to get things done."

Twenty-three thousand energetic, mostly young people have taken that oath and are in fact getting things done in hundreds of communities across the country including Dallas. They are the members of President Clinton's national service program, Americorps.

The Americorps participants work full- or part-time at community agencies for minimum wage. They can work up to two years in one of four areas: education, environmental protection, public safety, or health and human services. In return, they receive \$ 4,725 annually to help offset college or vocational training costs.

Mr. Clinton introduced one Americorps member during his State of the Union address last week. A high school dropout who had gotten married and had four children, Cindy Perry has since received her high school equivalency certificate and will use her Americorps money for college.

In mentioning Ms. Perry, the president was sending the strongest possible message that his national service program not only will change communities for the better, it also will improve the lives of those who are lending a hand.

Mr. Clinton is touting the year-old program because House Speaker Newt Gingrich and other budget-conscious Republicans have targeted it. Mr. Gingrich, in a recent interview with Newsweek, put the administration on notice: I am totally, unequivocally opposed to national service. It is coerced voluntarism. . . . It's gimmickry."

Nonsense. The members aren't coerced. Members come to the program primarily because they want to help their communities. If they didn't, they wouldn't work for minimum wage. And, excuse me, but \$ 4,725 didn't go too far toward getting a college degree the last time I checked.

Individuals voluntarily sign up for our armed forces and the Peace Corps because they want to serve. Our military personnel are paid for their

service, and rightly so. Peace Corps volunteers are paid a stipend as well. Americorps is no different. So what is the gimmick?

Still, Republicans like Sen. Charles Grassley of Iowa are critical of the program because, he says, it seeks to federally bureaucratize voluntarism, thereby standing the concept on its head." In truth, only 100 people work for the Corporation for National and Community Service, which administers the program.

Americorps is a model of decentralization. A third of the program's funding is doled out to several national nonprofit groups, while the remainder goes to state commissions. The states in turn award grants to local organizations, which recruit and hire the Americorps members. Locally, the Greater Dallas Community of Churches has hired 49 people to tutor, teach alternatives to violence, improve access to health care and reduce hunger.

The decentralized aspect of the program is what prompted 16 House Republicans to send a letter to their colleagues in 1993 asking them to support legislation establishing the program. The president's proposal is structured as a Republican would have structured it, and . . . it deserves broad Republican support," the letter said.

Mr. Grassley also claims the program is too expensive, arguing that the per-member cost is at least \$ 30,000. Yet the head of the Corporation for National and Community Service, Eli Segal, says the annual expense is actually less than \$ 20,000. That includes a \$ 7,200 living allowance, the \$ 4,725 scholarship and roughly \$ 7,000 in health care, child care and other administrative costs.

All told, Americorps is expected to cost \$ 1.5 billion during the next three years. Sure, that sounds high at first. But let's consider the benefits of the program like immunizing 104,000 Texas children, as 80 members did, or providing a second chance for kids who have been on drugs or dropped out of school. No other single program can buy as much for the money.

That is the kind of cost-benefit analysis Republicans ought to be doing. That is the kind of cost-benefit analysis that can get things done in this country.

Jesse James is an editorial writer and columnist for The Dallas Morning News.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE-MDC: January 31, 1995

MEDIA ADVISORY



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JANUARY 23, 1995

CONTACT: J. TOSCANO
202-606-5000 ext 277

AmeriCorps National Service

CORPORATION

FOR NATIONAL

★ SERVICE

CONGRESSIONAL PEACE CORPS ALUMNI & ELI SEGAL WELCOME AMERICORPS MEMBERS TO CAPITOL

Eli Segal, Assistant to the President and CEO of the Corporation for National Service (CNS), will be joined by a bipartisan group of U.S. Representatives who once served in the Peace Corps, to welcome four AmeriCorps Members and the Kansas City, MO Police Chief to the U.S. Capitol on the day of the President's State of the Union address. The five will be guests of the White House for the address.

"These members of Congress come from both sides of the aisles and all walks of life. What they share is a personal knowledge of how service builds character while it rebuilds communities," said Segal. "Likewise, these AmeriCorps Members come from all across our country. This 'domestic Peace Corps' has enabled them to give a hand to their communities, and get a hand paying for college. Taking responsibility and earning opportunity – that is what AmeriCorps is all about."

WHO: The Honorable Eli Segal, Assistant to the President and CNS CEO; Representatives Mike Ward (D-KY), Christopher Shays (R-CT), Tony P. Hall (D-OH), James T. Walsh (R-NY), and Sam Farr (D-CA).

They will be joined by Kansas City, MO Police Chief Steven C. Bishop; and AmeriCorps Members Laron Field from Kansas City, Missouri; Cindy Perry from Simpson County, Kentucky; Colin Yost, from Portland, Oregon, and Philip Wu, originally from Staten Island, New York, now living and working in Miami, Florida.

WHAT: News Conference

WHERE: House triangle, U.S. Capitol

WHEN: 2:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 24th, 1995

WHY: To introduce the AmeriCorps Members and Kansas City Police Chief who will be guests of the White House at the State of the Union address, and for Congressional Peace Corps alumni to comment on their support for AmeriCorps.

AmeriCorps is the new national service program created with bipartisan support in 1993. Through AmeriCorps, Americans of all ages and backgrounds engage in educational, environmental, public safety, and human service and earn awards of nearly \$5000 per year to help pay for college or job training. To date, nearly 200,000 people have expressed an interest in service.

AmeriCorps is not a mandate for states, communities, or individuals: it is a voluntary partnership with 50 states and 450 community organizations around the country, including the Red Cross, Children's Health Fund, the YMCA, and the New York Police Department. AmeriCorps Members work as partners with teachers, pastors, and police officers who are already improving our communities.

1100 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20525
Telephone 202-606-5000
Fax 202-606-4906

Getting Things Done.
AmeriCorps, National Service
Learn and Serve America
National Senior Service Corps

**Remarks of Eli J. Segal
"Strengthening the Partnership"
December 6, 1994**

Welcome everybody. A special welcome to the folks here with us for the first time, our State Commission chairs and the representatives of the new Governors.

I'd like to begin with a story . . .

A few weeks ago, I travelled to South Philadelphia to visit a tremendous YouthBuild program there. It's a real model for building up low-income housing in the streets, and building up lives in the community. On the walk over, an elderly man named [John] Ryan introduced himself as a ward committeeman who'd served in South Philly for thirty years. He knew my name, and he knew all about AmeriCorps. Because he had served in the Civilian Conservation Corps 60 years ago.

Mr. Ryan and I went to YouthBuild and met with four people in the program. I talked to the kids a little bit about their great work, which they seemed plenty eager to get back to. But then I introduced Mr. Ryan and when he started to talk about his experiences a half century earlier, the eyes of those AmeriCorps Members locked on to him, their bodes froze, and they connected like long-lost family. Together they talked about what service meant to them: contributing to their communities, taking responsibility for themselves, and doing their families proud. And When I casually asked Mr. Ryan whether he still had his CCC uniform, he paused, pulled out his wallet, and dug out his enrollment card from the Civilian Conservation Corps. The year was 1935.

I tell that story to help all of us see the forest through the trees: National service is special, and it unites people like nothing else. Service helps our communities become whole. And it helps each of us as individuals become whole as well.

But if Mr. Ryan speaks to our collective conscience, he also speaks for our collective doubt. This man brought memories from 1935 to forge a bond across four wars and eleven Presidents with people one-quarter his age. We have to ask ourselves: Will the young people serving today be able to stretch the ties that bind to the year 2055? And unlike the CCC that ended with World War II, will AmeriCorps grow as they do?

If our uncertainties are high, for me the hopes are higher still. We have a lot to be proud of in 1994. Not long ago, national service was just an inspiring promise of an obscure Governor from Arkansas. But with President Clinton's leadership, we have taken AmeriCorps from the poetry to the prose.

Today, there are 20,000 diverse AmeriCorps Members in the streets of America.

Today, there are 47 state commissions tapped into a powerful network of grass roots groups.

Today, 91 percent of the American people like the idea of AmeriCorps. More and more are seeing us succeed every day.

So we should be very proud. As I told the President a few days ago, we owe much of our success to the close partnership among the people in this room. But now is not the time to rest on our laurels. A successful start-up is a case study, not a success. The real test comes in roll out: to spread what works, correct what doesn't, and make AmeriCorps an integral part of American life.

The November elections only make this work more urgent. It's true that some in the new congressional majority just dismiss national service.

But there are many who strongly support AmeriCorps, and many more who like the idea, worry about the details and are waiting to see the results. And if we don't deliver--getting things done, building community, and encouraging responsibility, all in a cost-effective manner--if we don't do that, we can all go home. In fact, if we don't do that, we will all be sent home.

I used to ask people to imagine testifying before Senator Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas. Well, I won't ask you to imagine that any more. I'll ask you to prepare. She is a tough but fair Senator, yet a year ago, she said she feared AmeriCorps would become, quote, "*too costly and too bureaucratic.*" We have got to allay her fears--every single day.

It will be a challenge. But we should welcome the challenge as an incentive to excellence. After all, our theme today is partnership, not partisanship. The partnerships in this room today can yield partnerships in Congress for years to come.

But in the very next year, we'll face two fundamental challenges. Let me focus on those.

The first is raising quality. Throughout this process, we've consciously focused on making AmeriCorps better rather than making it bigger. That's a political imperative, because Congress won't stand for a weak program. But quality is also a **moral** imperative, because Americans

deserve better than make-work assignments, bored participants, and wasted dollars. Americans deserve a program working block-by-block, neighborhood-by-neighborhood, truly changing America.

Let me name three things we mean by quality.

First: Getting things done. AmeriCorps has to be about doing real work, meeting serious needs, and demonstrating clear results. We have to show that this thing works--with higher test scores, lower crime rates, more kids who are immunized, fewer houses that are unsafe.

You'll hear a lot about getting things done today and tomorrow. For now, it means results. And it means a recruitment and retention plan which emphasizes both diversity and careful matching of skills and experience. And it means a strong fundraising plan which emphasizes community buy-ins.

Second: Quality means a compelling Member experience. Customer satisfaction is the term they use in business, and businesses with unhappy customers close up shop. Every Member should be able to recommend AmeriCorps to a friend.

Third: Quality is cost-effectiveness. Once again, it would be politically disastrous and morally wrong for AmeriCorps to spend precious tax dollars on things that aren't part of our core mission. What we can't achieve with dollars, we'll have to get with desire, hard work, and creative management.

If raising quality is one part of our challenge this year, the other is building national identity. It doesn't do us any good if a program is known for its good work, but isn't known as an AmeriCorps program. There are AmeriCorps Members out there who don't even know they are AmeriCorps Members. I consider every one a horror story. And the press is still writing stories about our programs without mentioning our name. That will not do.

My friends, this is not about public relations. It's about survival, plain and simple. Because we will not survive if people do not know who we are. This will never be a national movement for service unless Americans see the national unity of our efforts. And this will never be a sustainable enterprise unless Washington sees it as a whole that's worth sustaining. As Bill Clinton likes to say, we will rise or fall together.

And that is why our partnership is so important. Here in Washington, our goal is to steer the Corporation between the Scylla and Charybdis of government agencies: we don't want to be an absent, invisible grantmaker completely cutoff from the communities in which we're investing on the one hand, but we refuse to become a hidebound

bureaucracy on the other hand. I can't claim we've found the right balance yet, because we haven't.

In fact, there's no shame in saying we're going through the normal stresses of every start-up. For every one of you who said we were too hands on around the launch, there is another who wanted even more guidance. MTV lost \$50 million in its first two years. 3-M's "post-it," the kind you find everywhere in your office--that "post-it" failed its first testmarket miserably. And colonel Sanders burned hundreds of drumsticks before he put together one solid recipe.

My friends, someday AmeriCorps can be the Kentucky Fried Chicken of government programs. Mistakes are a sign of our humanity, not our failure. The sign of our success will be finding those mistakes and fixing them quickly.

In AmeriCorps, the only unforgivable sin should be complacency. If one manager says, "*Everything's going great*" and the second says, "*here's two problems and here's how we want to fix them,*" I will go to the second every single time.

Let me talk a little bit about what we are doing on our end to practice what Peter Drucker calls the habit of continuous learning. We've taken your feedback very seriously, and we are making changes right now to meet your needs:

- o First, we've extended the deadline for quarterly reports to February first.
- o Second, we've delayed the application deadline for renewal programs to May 1st.
- o Third, we've eliminated the "*six week rule*" for recruitment and replacement.

- o And fourth, we are re-examining other program requirements that many of you find troubling. Right now we're looking at the "80/20" rule on direct service. And we'll put other issues on the table as you raise them.

We are able to make these changes because we've heard from you about what's working and what's not. But if you don't tell us, we can't help you. I know the paperwork can be a pain. Trust me: when I was in business, there was nothing I hated more than forms. But right now, when a Congressman asks us what we're doing in his district, we can't always answer. For us, it just means we look foolish, but for you, it means you don't get the credit you deserve.

Each of you has a role to play in raising the quality of our programs. For the state directors, you will have to keep doing the things you've always done--running AmeriCorps* VISTA, our largest AmeriCorps program, and running the National Senior Service Corps, the largest service program in America. But your real challenge now is to do more--to become true partners with your state commissions. You can act as an information clearinghouse, a source of technical assistance, and much more. And you, too, are key partners with us at headquarters in ensuring quality. That's why we are taking a careful look at how we allocate VISTA resources, introducing an element of competition that will help raise quality throughout the program.

Part of enhancing quality also means continuing to work closely with the State Commissions. I don't have the Platonic ideal for the good relationship between the State Commission and the state office. Again, that's the nature of start-ups. But uncertainty doesn't equate to paralysis.

There is no

problem in one state that some other state hasn't begun to address. Our role here is going to be helping you learn from each other. That's why we've compiled a list of 37 ways that states are already making this relationship work. You'll hear Shirley Sagawa talk more about it over Wednesday's lunch.

Now let me turn to our state commission chairs. You have three vital roles in this process. The first is making

sure your state commission keeps its eyes on the prize called quality. While the executive director gets the details right, you have to stay focused on the big picture. Second, you have the most visible spokesperson for AmeriCorps in your state. You can communicate a stirring vision to the public. And third, you are a terrific resource for your commission. The skills and relationships you bring from the rest of your life can be put to work for the rest of your commission.

Finally, let me say a word to our State Commission Executive Directors. You and your staffs are our primary assurance of program quality. Monitoring. Offering training and TA. Setting up continuous evaluation mechanisms. You are the linchpin.

There you have it. Our partnership of state directors, executive directors and commission chairs. For it to succeed, it will need to be an ongoing conversation, not an occasional meeting. Here in Washington, we have some terrific people ready to work with you. Our program staff is committed to helpful site visits and appropriate technical assistance. Our training and TA unit is ready to supplement your work with specialized help. And our External Affairs staff can work with you so that the Congress, the public, and the press delight in your success.

In short, we--the 200 of us here today and our staffs in Washington and all over America--are the delivery system of national service. We don't see AmeriCorps members perform every day. We don't see Mr Ryan, or

the eyes of the young people touched by him. We have the less visible, more pedestrian responsibilities.

But we have elected to be here today because we all know Mr. Ryans. And regardless of our backgrounds--regardless of our experience, our political party or our approach to service--we are here because we believe that our people engaged with a responsive government can make a difference in an age of skepticism.

As we perform our tasks, all of us should carry inside us the warmth of those five young men and women with Mr. Ryan: not just because of what they felt, but also because of the work they did. I didn't mention it before, but those five AmeriCorps Members are building a house where five families will have apartments and which will

change dozens of lives for years to come. Their work will be an enduring monument to our own--and to hope.

There is a national service program [City Year] whose motto is something like, "*Never judge another until you have walked a mile in her moccasins.*" I know that you may not wear moccasins, but all of us in Washington are trying very hard to remember what it's like to be in your shoes. I hope you will think about what it's like to be in ours. If we will keep each other's needs in mind, then the only limits to our future will be our demands from ourselves.

Thank you.

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January

Divider Title: _____

January 30, 1995

To: USDA/AmeriCorps Project Managers and Facilitators
From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service
Subject: Student Loan Forbearance During AmeriCorps Service

As a result of your first quarter reports, it has come to my attention that some of our AmeriCorps Members are having difficulty obtaining forbearance for their student loans from educational institutions, even though their legal right to such forbearance is clearly specified in the National and Community Service Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-82).

This is a critical issue, because many of our Members can only financially afford to participate in AmeriCorps if they do not have to pay back their loans during their term of AmeriCorps service.

Attached is a letter from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) that Members can send to their educational institutions regarding this matter. Please make it available to all our AmeriCorps Members.

If you or your Members have any further questions, please call CNCS at (202) 606-500, ext. 347. If your problem is still not resolved, please call me directly at (202) 720-6350.



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

January 30, 1995

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January 27, 1995

To: Lloyd, Paula, Dee
From: Joel *JB*
Subject: **Remaining First Quarter AmeriCorps Reports**

Thank you for providing me with almost all of the first quarter reports. I have begun reviewing them, and most are excellent. The high quality of most of your projects is impressive, and I will once again pass that along to Chief Johnson and Under Secretary Lyons.

However, the I am still missing the following site reports:

Boston
District of Columbia
Beltsville, MD
Chicago
Maine
West Virginia
South carolina
Arkansas
Illinois RP

In addition, in the following states, the number of members, the hours of service, the hours of training, and the objectives need to be divided between the Rural Development Team and the Environmental Team in those states:

Kansas
Minnesota
South dakota

In addition, I need more specific information about the accomplishments of each specific Kansas site; the quarterly report contains virtually no specific accounting of accomplishments and how the objectives were met. In addition, the service and training percentages for Atlanta need to be converted into the actual number of hours.

The Department's entire, edited, combined, report is due to the Corporation for National and Community Service on February 1, so I would appreciate your remaining reports by close of business Monday.

I know NRCS field offices use different computer systems, but I would appreciate it if you could submit all future quarterly reports electronically, on disk. We would prefer Word Perfect, but we can convert files from any word processing software. Thank you again for your help.

Issues:

Flood states not doing flood work

Mississippi - - Area not want dry fire hydrant
New Albany and Tupelo members (1 each) not even near cluster

Announce California before approval -- announce Indian before approval

Joel
your copy
S

January 27, 1995

To: LLOYD, Paula
From: Joel Berg JB
Subject: Resolving Personnel Conflicts in Minnesota

Unfortunately, the personnel conflict in Minnesota has only escalated since our previous discussions. The facilitator has raised the possibility that she will file a grievance.

In an effort to stop this fighting between two USDA agencies from different mission areas, I have sent the following letter. I have made it clear that it was wrong to exclude NRCS staff from a meeting, but I have made it equally clear that it is wrong for one employee to wage what appears to be a continued personal campaign against the CFSA employee. Hopefully, this memorandum will put the matter to rest so all our projects in Minnesota can move forward.



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

January 27, 1995

To: Michael Price, NRCS Minnesota AmeriCorps State Coordinator
From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service USDA JB
Subject: Your Interactions With the Minnesota State AmeriCorps Facilitator

I am very concerned that, although you have performed excellent work in planning and implementing highly innovative AmeriCorps projects throughout Minnesota, your apparent efforts to personally disparage your colleague serving as State AmeriCorps Facilitator are negatively affecting your projects.

The Regional and State AmeriCorps Facilitator positions throughout the nation, filled by USDA employees on details from various agencies, have greatly improved the quality of our USDA AmeriCorps projects by helping build "AmeriCorps identity," providing logistical support, and coordinating information between Washington and the field. In almost all cases, facilitators and agency project managers have worked extremely well together, and project managers have, in fact, praised those facilitators. Moreover, the facilitator role has been heavily praised by the Corporation for National and Community Service, multiple USDA agencies, at least one NRCS state conservationist, and myself. The Corporation for National and Community Service has recently requested that we increase the role for facilitators in coordinating our projects.

It also concerns me that your repeated personal criticisms of the Minnesota State Facilitator have harmed inter-agency cooperation. The energy being focused on personal attacks against the facilitator is taking energy away from addressing structural challenges in some of your state's projects.

It is imperative that all agencies involved with AmeriCorps accept that we are all part of "Team USDA" and, as such, have critical roles to play in ensuring that USDA runs the highest quality AmeriCorps program in the nation.

As I have expressed to you before, I am troubled that you seem to continue "blaming the messenger" instead of dealing with the "message" that your projects --- like all USDA AmeriCorps projects --- need to engage in a constant process of continuous improvement made possible by a free and open exchange of ideas.

Perhaps most troubling is that, immediately following our phone conversation in late December in which I thought you had assured me that you would cease your personal attacks against the Facilitator, Ms. Janice Syverson, you sent yet another lengthy letter that dealt largely with her alleged personal failings. While you may have written this letter in order to bolster your claim that she was to blame for all problems related to our Minnesota projects, your action only served to bolster the impression that your motivation was personal in nature.

As early as August of 1994 -- when the USDA AmeriCorps staff training was held and when the draft operations manual was distributed --- all USDA agencies involved in running AmeriCorps --- including NRCS --- agreed to the specific roles, duties, and job description of the facilitator. The operations manual, which was drafted and printed by NRCS' National Staff, included the following agreed upon duties:

- * "Planning and managing regional training and orientation programs"
- * "Helping ensure USDA/AmeriCorps members establish a national identity"
- * "Participating in identifying and recommending methods and criteria to improve USDA/AmeriCorps procedures"
- * "Participating in planning for future USDA/AmeriCorps activities and projects."

In meetings throughout the training session in which all USDA agencies involved were represented, I made it clear that one of the duties of the facilitator would be to provide me with regular written reports.

Additionally, the lengthy job description for the facilitator --- also distributed at the training session and also approved by all the agencies involved --- specified that facilitators would be providing information on project activities to me. Thus, your continuing claim that both the general facilitator duties and weekly report preparation were somehow secrets is unfounded.

The conflicts involving your projects arose because both the Corporation for National and Community Service and myself -- not Ms. Syverson -- first raised questions about the type of service performed in Minnesota. In a late November of 1994 report, Ms. Syverson ---- in plain, non-judgmental, language --- described some of the activities being performed by AmeriCorps Members in Minnesota.

It was the Corporation for National and Community Service and myself --- not Ms. Syverson --- who came to the conclusion that some of the projects might not be specifically meeting the objectives of your original application and also might not be fully meeting the program design of AmeriCorps.

My concern --- as well as the concern of the Corporation for National Service - -- was so great over these issues that I suggested in a November 29, 1994 memorandum to the NRCS national office that I convene a conference call with all the parties involved in the Minnesota projects. However, at the request of that office, I postponed the conference call based on the understanding that the NRCS national office would act to redress the concerns about the projects.

I was thus very surprised to receive a copy of your December 1, 1994 memorandum (copy attached) to Paula Jones that did not answer the substantive issues I raised, but instead spent five pages basically questioning the competence of Ms. Syverson. Furthermore, the letter was widely distributed, giving the impression that you were seeking to embarrass Ms. Syverson. Additionally, at around the same time, I asked NRCS a series of substantive questions related to serious concerns about Minnesota's community service initiatives and one of the responses I received included the comment that my question "did not deserve an answer."

Although I was troubled by this seemingly hostile attitude towards your colleagues both in Minnesota and Washington, I decided not to take the traditional route of contacting your supervisors. Instead, treating you with the respect I accord to all fellow professionals in USDA, and expect to be treated with myself, I took time out of my schedule on a trip to Oregon so that I could speak with you at length by telephone on or about December 16, 1994.

As you may recall, most of the conversation centered around you relating "your side of the story." My response was that some of the issues that had caused friction -- meetings at which one agency excluded another, the confusion about the preparation of weekly reports, the lack of clarity to lines of authority -- had all been resolved by my November 29, 1994 memorandum, which was approved by all USDA agencies, and sent to facilitators and project managers.

I also made the following points in response to your December 1, 1994 memorandum:

1) The Department expects our requests for specific programmatic information to be met with such information --- not with unrelated commentary about another employee. I expressed great concern that instead of providing answers to my questions, you wrote a lengthy personal attack on the facilitator.

2) Your memorandum implied that the facilitator should have no real role in arranging cluster meetings, however, the operations manual details a very specific role for facilitators in arranging such meetings.

3) Your memorandum states, "We know we can tell our NRCS AmeriCorps project Directors and AmeriCorps members to totally ignore any and all of Ms. Syverson's requests." As I told you, this is certainly not an acceptable option.

4) In the memorandum you claimed the term "facilitator" is new, but as I pointed out, the term is used repeatedly in the operations manual that you received in August. You agreed with me on that point.

5) I mentioned that I had not seen press releases from your state prior to their distribution to the media and, that I was highly concerned that some that I had seen subsequently, contained inaccurate information and/or had generally not met the Department's professional standards. I also reminded you of the policy, explained repeatedly at the August training session, that since AmeriCorps is a Departmental initiative, it is the Department's policy that all press releases be approved, before release in the field, by the USDA Office of Communications, in this case through either myself or Ms. Katherine Gibney. In response, you requested that I reiterate this policy to state and national NRCS offices. I agreed to do so and also reminded you that, in my authority as an officer of the USDA Office of Communications, as the legally constituted AmeriCorps liaison for the Department under the authority of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, and as the designee of both the President of the United States and the Secretary of Agriculture to run the program at USDA, you are obligated to abide by my instructions on AmeriCorps media policy whether or not you received those identical directions from your agency.

6) I stated that it was absolutely inexcusable that someone in NRCS had issued an e-mail message giving the false impression that Ms. Syverson had been fired. I reminded you that, since Ms. Syverson had been, in effect, detailed to my office by CFSA, only her agency or myself had the authority to relieve her of her duties. Furthermore, even if she was relieved of her duties, it would be highly unprofessional to broadcast such an event on e-mail.

7) I then requested that if you had a problem with our national policies, you should take it up with NRCS, or with me directly, and not "blame the messenger" --- in this case, the facilitator.

Despite these frank topics of our discussion, I believed that the conversation was constructive and ended on a mutually agreeable note. I am comfortable that I went out of my way to be polite and collegial in our discussion, and that I listened carefully to your concerns.

As I stressed in our conversation, I was not then, nor am I now interested in assigning past blame. My interest lies in building a better program and, since the past confusion has been dispelled, I hope we all can agree to simply move forward. Our conversation ended with my praise of your work in Minnesota, and thinking that we had reached an understanding that made discussing the matter with your supervisors unnecessary.

I was extremely surprised to receive a copy of your December 20, 1994 letter to Ms. Syverson, (copy attached). Again, the letter was a lengthy discussion of Ms. Syverson's supposed negative previous actions. Again, the letter avoided discussion of substantive issues related to the AmeriCorps project work. Again, the letter was widely distributed --- giving an ever-increasing impression that you were attempting to aggravate Ms. Syverson.

This December 20, 1994 letter, contained many troubling statements:

1) You wrote that "All of a sudden, with absolutely no written or verbal communication at all," she shared the weekly reports with you. Yet both Lloyd Wright and myself had just sent memorandums to the field clarifying that all AmeriCorps memorandums should be shared among all the agencies. Your letter also demanded an explanation from her as to why she changed her procedure even though you should have known that the national policy had changed. In effect, you blamed her for following the new national policy.

2) In criticizing her new request for you to directly provide information for the weekly report, your letter seems to again berate her for simply following the new national policy.

3) Your continued insistence that Ms. Syverson does not understand the structure of NRCS is, in my view, patronizing in tone. Your implication that she does not have a right to communicate directly with our local project managers or our AmeriCorps Members is totally incorrect. As graphically demonstrated by the chart on page 32 of the operations manual, the facilitators have a duty to communicate directly with the state project directors, local project managers, and the AmeriCorps Members themselves. It is impossible for any one individual to single-handedly monitor all details of projects throughout a state as large as Minnesota. Open lines of communication and cooperation are critical among all levels of the projects.

4) You write that the authority to review press releases rests only with "NRCS personnel who manage and supervise AmeriCorps Members." Thus, despite our previous conversation, your letter again incorrectly disputes the authority of the Department to require prior approval of any AmeriCorps press release.

Your letter also criticizes Ms. Syverson for relating Departmental policy, although it is clearly the facilitators' duty to help ensure that all our projects comply with policies, regulations, and laws governing both USDA and AmeriCorps.

5) Your letter again refers to the unfortunate, yet isolated, incident in which Ms. Syverson asked NRCS personnel to leave a room during a meeting with AmeriCorps Members. She previously acknowledged her error in this one incident, as have CFSA and myself. We have clarified that no agency --- including either CFSA or NRCS --- are to take such actions in the future. There is no possible benefit for continued reference to this past incident.

6) You reiterate that Ms. Syverson "is not in a position to tell any of our NRCS employees what to do." While it is true that facilitators have no line authority over NRCS, they do have an important collaborative role to play in each and every aspect of AmeriCorps. Just as important as the fact that you do not work for Ms. Syverson, is the fact that she does not work for you. Under our new method of reinventing government, teams of employees from differing agencies are working together collaboratively on an equal basis to achieve a common goal.

7) You also wrote, "As I have told Joel Berg and NRCS people in our agency at the state and national levels, you've been told one thing; we may not have been told about it at all." This is incorrect. As I have personally told you, all written and verbal instructions are now shared fully by all agencies.

8) Your letter gives Ms. Syverson a series of instructions as if you are giving her orders, yet you have no authority to give her orders.

9) You wrote that her reports should "not include any review of NRCS administrative concerns or personal critiques." This is also incorrect. It is critical that we are made aware of both successes and problems in the field.

The fact that you do not seem to want program managers or policy makers in Washington to learn of any problems is disturbing and counters the spirit of AmeriCorps. This type thinking hinders the utilization of continuous and healthy self-assessments in order to ensure Total Quality Management, a top goal of your agency. Dealing with problems openly is always preferable to censoring them.

10) You tell Ms. Syverson not to "make these (clustering) arrangements or comment on your concerns regarding this issue." Not only are you asking her not to fulfill one of her main duties as outlined in the operations manual, but you are once again telling her she has no right to professionally express her views if they happen to differ from yours.

11) You write that Ms. Syverson has no real role in helping plan future service projects, although this is another key facilitator duty outlined in the manual. Once again, you tell her that your decisions are "not to be criticized."

12) You write "If we don't ask for your assistance, be assured everything is fine." This comment seems to express contempt for the facilitator role and gives the impression that you believe you could not benefit from any outside advice or assistance.

13) Although you heavily criticize Ms. Syverson for -- in your view --- going around proper NRCS channels, you freely described your second-hand understanding of the views of the Minnesota CFSA State Executive Director. This action seems inconsistent.

14) Your letter then assures her that you "do not plan to discuss anything in this letter with NRCS in NHQ." This sentence is also surprising, given that you have continuously claimed that most of the problems in Minnesota were caused by poor communication between Washington and the field; if that was indeed the case, wouldn't you want both your NHQ and myself to see the letter?

Following your letter of December 20, 1994, I understand that you asked Ms. Syverson to include in the January 19, 1995 weekly report three paragraphs that you wrote.

Your words in these three paragraphs again reiterated the incorrect claim that NRCS did not originally know the weekly reports were being created. You asked her to include the following line as if she had written it: "It is not my role to manage AmeriCorps projects in Minnesota," which again demonstrates a misunderstanding about the facilitator role. Moreover, I do not understand why such paragraphs were needed in a weekly report.

Taken together, the tone, substance, language, and length of your communications all give the impression that you are focused on personally disparaging Ms. Syverson. I hope that is not the case, and that positive change will be forthcoming.

AmeriCorps is a new program, and the Office of the Secretary, the agency national offices, the agency state and area offices, and the agency county offices each have critical roles to play in working closely together as respectful colleagues in order to build the best program possible. This structure is not haphazard -- it is spelled out concretely in our operations manual.

Once we move away from discussing personalities, and the needless "in-fighting" ceases, we can meet remaining goals for the Minnesota projects:

- 1) Ensuring that the members are performing concrete, measurable service that will directly benefit Minnesota in the first year of the program's operations. While I still have strong concerns that our Members may be spending a lot of time planning, surveying, sending out letters, holding public meetings, and engaging in public affairs activities, we need to assure that, at the end of your first year, we will be able to point to concrete changes in conservation practices that actually took place on the land as a result of AmeriCorps activities.
- 2) Ensuring that all AmeriCorps Members in Minnesota meet the requirement of regular meetings with at least four other Members.
- 3) Ensuring that we allow none of the Members to come even close to violating the provisions of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 that prohibits Members from duplicating work already performed by the Federal government. It is critical that we guarantee that no Member is performing work normally performed by NRCS.
- 4) Ensuring that all the members who, according to your original application, are supposed to be performing flood recovery work, are working specifically with landowners who were victims of the 1993 floods and/or are working specifically to take concrete actions that will help prevent future flooding. The Department and the Corporation for National and Community Service agreed to allow so many AmeriCorps Members in Minnesota for the express reason that many of them were supposed to be engaged in flood recovery work.

Based on your original application, we described some of the work in Minnesota as flood relief work in public materials released to Congress and the media. In a recent book about AmeriCorps, a *Newsweek* reporter described the USDA flood recovery work as some of the single most important work to be carried out by AmeriCorps. Yet none of Minnesota's first quarter reports describe any flood recovery work at all.

- 5) Ensuring that all media releases meet professional standards and are approved by my office before their issuance.

6) Ensuring that all sites have concrete, measurable community service objectives approved by NRCS, myself, and the Corporation for National and Community Service and that those objectives match the service actually being performed by our AmeriCorps Members. The service outlined in your first quarter reports does not match up in all cases with the latest objectives provided to me by the NRCS national office.

7) Ensuring that the following specific concerns, raised by your first quarter report, are addressed:

Twin Valley - Members seem to have spent most of their first quarter planning, training, and holding meetings, but have not yet actually started planting the living snowfence -- which was the focus of the original objectives. Recognizing the weather's impact, I still question how quickly this project will move from planning to implementation?

Cloquet - Members seem to have conducted inventories, prepared documents, produced maps, and attended meetings, but how will this directly impact upon actual conservation practices on the land? How is this different from regular NRCS work performed by Federal employees?

Rochester - The quarterly report does not indicate precisely how the pasture/grassland management plans to be produced by the Members will result in fulfilling objective #1 by improving conditions on 5,000 acres of land.

Lewiston - One of the newsclips attached to the quarterly report has the headline "AmeriCorps to clear brush, watch video." This gives the false --- and potentially damaging --- impression that AmeriCorps Members spend their time watching TV. Was this story based on a NRCS press release?

It is obvious that there are still critical issues regarding the Minnesota projects that need to be resolved. I must stress that these issues should not be taken lightly. Because of issues like these in many states, the Corporation for National Service almost did not approve our Rural Development Team in the first place. If these issues are not addressed successfully, our projects will not be re-funded.

I fully understand the great pressure that project managers like yourself have endured. You have spent almost a year now planning and implementing excellent AmeriCorps projects, meeting incredibly tight deadlines with often very little logistical support.

I further understand that you and your colleagues have accomplished these tasks even while carrying out all your other important, non-AmeriCorps, duties. I understand the great confusion and mistrust created on all sides originally by the creation of the AmeriCorps facilitator position. It is not surprising that all these pressures put together --- along with the general strain of USDA reorganization --- can lead to friction in the field. However, I am fully convinced, that, working together cooperatively on an inter-agency basis, we will accomplish all of our goals.

Now that we have all clarified our structures and processes, I am confident that we can move together productively to continue building the best AmeriCorps projects that exist. If you have any additional questions, concerns, or comments, please feel free to call me at work at (202) 720-6350 or at home at (202) 387-8221.

Attachments (2)

cc: Janice Syverson, Minnesota State AmeriCorps Facilitator, CFSA, Ada, MN
Steve Chick, Acting State Conservationist, NRCS, St. Paul, MN
Wally Sparby, State Executive Director, CFSA, St. Paul, MN
David Benner, Deputy State Conservationist, NRCS, St. Paul, MN
Glen Kajewski, Area Conservationist, NRCS, Thief River Falls, MN
John Nicholson, Area Conservationist, NRCS, Rochester, MN
Kevin Daw, Area Conservationist, NRCS, Duluth, MN
LLoyd Wright and Paula Jones, NRCS, Washington, DC
Beverly Pritts, AmeriCorps Facilitator Coordinator, CFSA, Washington, DC

January 20, 1995

To: Susan Stroud, Gene Sofer, Robert Gordon
From: Joel Berg
Subject: **Stressing G.O.P. Support of Federal Programs**

In addition to the points in support of federal programs I suggested last night, you might want to highlight Federal programs already praised by Republican Senators.

On October 17, 1994 Republican Jim Jeffords, as well as Democrat Patrick Leahy of Vermont, joined with Eli to visit the USDA Soil Conservation Service Rural Development Team project in Vermont. On Burlington Channel 22 (I have the video) Jeffords said the following about this project: "Its gonna be a wonderful boon to us in the area of the environment, especially keeping Lake Champlain the gem that it is." In the subsequent town meeting with Vermont AmeriCorps Members, Jeffords also praised the USDA Anti-Hunger project and the USDA Forest Service project in Vermont.

Republican Senator Mark Hatfield has written to CNCS praising the Northwest Service Academy in Oregon and Washington. While the Northwest Service Academy is not, this year, specifically part of USDA's own grant, the program is run by a full-time USDA employee, receives significant continuing technical support from many USDA employees, and conducts much of its work on USDA Forest Service land.

According to the October 21, 1994 *Lincoln Star*, Republican Congressman Doug Bereuter visited a USDA flood relief project in Nebraska and told the Members: "I hope you feel good about being pioneers --- you should."

Let me know if you need more documentation or more specific information about our Vermont or Nebraska projects.



January 19, 1995

To: Karl Stauber, Deputy Under Secretary, Science and Education

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service *JB*

Subject: How Your Mission Area Can Further Aid AmeriCorps

As you know, the AmeriCorps national service program is one of the Administration's top priorities. Now in its fourth month of operation, the USDA AmeriCorps program has already demonstrated remarkable success in fighting hunger, protecting the environment, and boosting rural development.

To date, the Agricultural Research Service has provided \$100,000 in FY94 funding to support five AmeriCorps Members serving at the National Arboretum. The Extension Service has provided some technical assistance. However, as AmeriCorps continues to expand and become institutionalized at USDA, it would be extremely helpful if both agencies could increase their support.

Some possible ways in which they could help:

1) CSREES could provide one full-time computer expert on a three-month detail to help ensure that all USDA AmeriCorps Members are on Internet and are trained to help rural communities utilize the Information Superhighway.

In the last few years, the Extension Service clearly demonstrated its leadership role in electronic communications, largely because of the work of a small group of highly skilled employees on the CIT staff such as Tom Tate. It would provide a huge boost to the USDA programs --- filling the single greatest current need of the program --- if Tom or another member of the CIT staff could be temporarily detailed to the AmeriCorps program to aid in implementing our electronic communications network. The Rural Electric Administration and other agencies have already donated computer hardware to this effort; technical assistance from CSREES would help us ensure that the hardware is used effectively. Both the White House and the Corporation for National and Community Service have a great interest in our efforts to connect all our AmeriCorps Members electronically.

2) Both ARS and CSREES could provide increased funding to the program.

In FY '94, the Forest Service and the Soil Conservation Service each spent about \$10 million, the Food and Nutrition Service spent \$350,000, and the Farmers Home Administration and the Rural Development Administration each spent about \$1.2 million on AmeriCorps. ARS, facing great funding cutbacks, was only able to spend \$100,000 and the Extension Service provided only \$5,000.

With increased funding, ARS could expand its program at the Arboretum, as well as support AmeriCorps projects in other parts of the country. Some ARS employees have previously prepared internal recommendations on how such projects might operate.

I am especially hopeful that the CSREES, which already runs the largest volunteer program in the world and already has its own programs focused on precisely the same issues areas as the USDA AmeriCorps projects, could play a more direct role in funding and managing AmeriCorps programs. Many state extension service employees have expressed disappointment to me that the USDA has not utilized the 4-H system more fully in building AmeriCorps.

I am confident that talented staff such as Alma Hobbs and Steve Mullen could design and manage highly successful AmeriCorps programs in partnership with 4-H, but they would need significant budgets and resources support from CSREES. Given that the USDA AmeriCorps nutrition education, environmental protection, Information Superhighway, and rural development projects are highly similar to CSREES programs explicitly authorized and funded by Congress, it is likely that various CSREES budget lines could be partially utilized to fund an expansion of AmeriCorps.

3) CSREES could provide technical support related to nutrition education, rural development, and environmental work.

CSREES could assign staff in each of the above-listed areas to have collateral duties related to providing technical support for AmeriCorps.

4) Name a full-time, permanent liaison between CSREES and AmeriCorps.

USDA's 1,200 Members in 38 states are only a small portion of the overall 20,000 AmeriCorps Members working in all fifty states. While there is a great similarity between most AmeriCorps programs and the work of the extension system, most state extension services have not been as fully integrated into AmeriCorps as they would like.

One full-time coordinator acting as a liaison between all AmeriCorps projects -- and especially USDA AmeriCorps projects --- would mutually benefit both AmeriCorps and the state extension services.

I look forward to following-up on any or all of these matters with you, with the ARS and CSREES Administrators, or with any other staff you deem appropriate.



January 17, 1995

To: AmeriCorps Project Managers and Facilitators

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service *JB*

Subject: **Remaining Quarterly Reports And Other Reports**

As you know, the AmeriCorps/USDA first quarter reporting period closed November 31, 1994, and site reports were due from project managers to the various USDA national offices by December 15, 1994. The consolidated Departmental report must be submitted to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) by February 1, 1995. Please make it a top priority to immediately submit any outstanding first quarter reports.

Attached is the new quarterly reporting form required by CNCS. As you will read, it is almost identical to the format we required in the first quarter.

Please note that while the first quarter reporting period was extended by CNCS to December 31 in order to match with normal Federal quarters, the USDA first quarter cut-off for this year will remain November 30, 1994 so that you will NOT have to re-do your first quarter reports.

Thus, the second quarter report will include not only January, February, and March of 1995, but also December of 1994. From the next cycle on, we will track exactly to the normal Federal quarters.

The schedule for the remainder of the year is as follows:

<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Dates of Reporting Period</u>	<u>Date Reports Are Due to USDA</u>
2nd	12/1/94 - 3/31/95	4/10/95
3rd	4/1/95 - 6/30/95	7/15/95
4th	7/1/95 - 9/30/95	10/15/95

(File)
memos to meg

January 8, 1995

To: Meg

From: Joel

2 pages, including this cover

Please read the attached comments from our Regional Facilitator in the Four-Corners.

It seems that some of forms may be have been lost in the mail or somewhere. Let's discuss how we can address this problem.

January 23 the Holbrook Arizona cluster held their meeting with all members in attendance. These members have done a tremendous job in refurbishing a old forest service building into a workable office complex, that allows all members to interact and provide support to one another through the work week. The building had been vacant for many years with no upkeep. The members secured the use of the building in return for a lot of paint, repairs, and elbow grease.

Joel the members have a small agri-base demonstration farm being organized in the local community with a tremendous partnership being built. A local farmer is donating the land, and part of the equipment. The local RC&D district is helping with seed, the members are doing all the work. The project will demonstrate sustainable small scale agriculture practices to the community. If scheduled correctly this would be a good project for Joel to tour, and participate in for a day. Enclosed a copy of the project plan.

January 25 we held the cluster meeting for the Albuquerque area with all members in attendance. The members interacted by sharing information and projects, with myself sharing national information with the members. Through the efforts of Americorps member Jason DeHerrera the local RECD office has reduced the processing time of SSI loan applications from 9 months to 2 months. Also through the efforts of member Shantel Farnsworth, a lady suffering from MS has been processed for a loan to remodel her house to make life easier with her disability. Shantel also went out of her way to locate a room and services for her while her house is being remodeled. The Aztec, NM group have partnered up with a local veteran group to refurbish a theater for the community to use for social events. These members are seeking funding for the project and will also be involved with the actual work taking place. The veterans have actually contributed 3500 volunteer hours towards the project.

JOEL HELP HELP HELP HELP!!!!!!!!!!!!

I talked with Bev last week and told her of the problem we have of insuring the members are enrolled in the national service corporation and trust. We have members who had their papers sent in as long ago as November who are not enrolled. When the facilitators were in Washington in January Meg stated that none of the enrollment forms had been received from the Rural Development team. In checking with my coordinators all but 1 site had sent all their forms in. The other one has ~~send~~ sent their forms directly to the Corporation. If this situation continues I am afraid we will have members not receiving the benefits promised them for their service.

I feel we need to establish a network in which we have some type of print-out or verification of which members have been enrolled so we can successfully track down those members forms who have been sent but not received.

We have a member who's enrollment form was sent directly to the corporation who is having difficulty having their student loan forbearance form processed. The trust states he is not enrolled and will not process his paperwork. At the same time the Loan institution is stating that his loan is overdue and is threatening him with lifetime credit problems. If there is any way that I can help to alleviate this and future problems please contact me and let me know.

Training

February 1, 1995

To: USDA AmeriCorps Working Group
From: Joel Berg JB
Subject: Forms Outstanding to the Corporation

Attached is the Corporation's print-out --- as confusing as it is --- listing the Participant Enrollment Forms (PEF) and the National Service Trust Enrollment Forms (NSTEF) still missing by state. As you know, these forms were due to the Corporation immediately following the launch.

Additionally, to date, none of our sites have submitted the new Operating Site Form, which was due to the Corporation January 20. Please have your field staff send this form directly to the Corporation, but also send you a copy. I would appreciate receiving a complete set of this form (one for each site) as soon as you have them.

The Corporation is frantic about their need for these forms. (Unfortunately, they can not tell us which USDA agency's forms are missing in each state.)

I appreciate any help you can give. Thanks.

Number of Participants by Program Site

ST CODE	NAME	Exp	Act	PEF	NSTEF
AR 94ADFDC0100001	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	1	1	1
AR 94ADFDC0100002	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
AZ 94ADFDC0100003	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	2	2	0
CA 94ADFDC0100004	USDA - Rural Development Team	6	0	0	0
CA 94ADFDC0100005	USDA - Rural Development Team	6	0	0	0
CA 94ADFDC0100006	USDA - Rural Development Team	0	0	0	0
CA 94ADFDC0100007	USDA - Rural Development Team	6	0	0	0
CA 94ADFDC0100008	USDA - Rural Development Team	7	0	0	0
CO 94ADFDC0100009	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	6	6	6
IA 94ADFDC0100010	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
IA 94ADFDC0100011	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
IA 94ADFDC0100012	USDA - Rural Development Team	6	0	0	0
IA 94ADFDC0100013	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
IA 94ADFDC0100014	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
MN 94ADFDC0100015	USDA - Rural Development Team	3	0	0	0
MN 94ADFDC0100016	USDA - Rural Development Team	6	0	0	0
MN 94ADFDC0100017	USDA - Rural Development Team	6	0	0	0
MO 94ADFDC0100018	USDA - Rural Development Team	15	0	0	0
MS 94ADFDC0100019	USDA - Rural Development Team	10	19	18	18
MS 94ADFDC0100020	USDA - Rural Development Team	7	0	0	0
ND 94ADFDC0100021	USDA - Rural Development Team	0	2	2	2
NE 94ADFDC0100022	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	7	7	7
NE 94ADFDC0100023	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
NE 94ADFDC0100024	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
NE 94ADFDC0100025	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	1	1	1
NM 94ADFDC0100026	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	2	2	0
NY 94ADFDC0100027	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	1	1	1
OH 94ADFDC0100028	USDA - Rural Development Team	6	0	0	0
OR 94ADFDC0100029	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
SC 94ADFDC0100030	USDA - Rural Development Team	8	23	23	22
SD 94ADFDC0100031	USDA - Rural Development Team	20	0	0	0
TN 94ADFDC0100032	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
TN 94ADFDC0100033	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	25	25	25
TN 94ADFDC0100034	USDA - Rural Development Team	9	0	0	0
UT 94ADFDC0100035	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
VA 94ADFDC0100036	USDA - Rural Development Team	3	1	1	1
VA 94ADFDC0100037	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	0	0	0
VT 94ADFDC0100038	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	5	5	5
WI 94ADFDC0100039	USDA - Rural Development Team	8	26	25	26
WV 94ADFDC0100040	USDA - Rural Development Team	5	1	1	1
CA 94ADFDC0100042	San Bernadino NATional Forest	77	81	79	76
		314	203	199	192

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Number of Participants by Program Site

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ST CODE	NAME	Exp	Act	PEF	NSTEF
CA 94ADFDC0460001	Southern California InterFaith Hunger Co	40	0	0	0
DC 94ADFDC0460002	DC Service Corps	15	47	46	44
MS 94ADFDC0460003	Greater Jackson Youth Service Corps	15	0	0	0
VT 94ADFDC0460004	Office of Economic Opportunity	40	11	0	11
WI 94ADFDC0460005	Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee	40	0	0	0
WI 94ADFDC0460006	Milwaukee Community Service Corps	↓	0	0	0
		150	58	46	55

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Number of Participants by Program Site

ST CODE	NAME	Exp	Act	PEF	NSTEF
AR 94ADFDC0470001	Public Lands and Environmental Team	22	7	7	0
AZ 94ADFDC0470002	Public Lands and Environmental Team	12	46	45	42
AZ 94ADFDC0470003	Public Lands and Environmental Team	45	0	0	0
CA 94ADFDC0470004	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	0	0	0
CA 94ADFDC0470005	Public Lands and Environmental Team	77	0	0	0
CA 94ADFDC0470006	Public Lands and Environmental Team	30	0	0	0
CO 94ADFDC0470007	Public Lands and Environmental Team	13	0	0	0
DC 94ADFDC0470008	Public Lands and Environmental Team	30	23	11	21
GA 94ADFDC0470009	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	0	0	0
IA 94ADFDC0470010	Public Lands and Environmental Team	9	0	0	0
IL 94ADFDC0470011	Public Lands and Environmental Team	9	10	10	6
IL 94ADFDC0470012	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	0	0	0
KS 94ADFDC0470013	Public Lands and Environmental Team	29	24	23	24
LA 94ADFDC0470014	Public Lands and Environmental Team	23	10	10	0
MA 94ADFDC0470015	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	0	0	0
MA 94ADFDC0470016	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	0	0	0
ME 94ADFDC0470017	Public Lands and Environmental Team	30	0	0	0
MI 94ADFDC0470018	Public Lands and Environmental Team	10	0	0	0
MN 94ADFDC0470019	Public Lands and Environmental Team	30	0	0	0
MO 94ADFDC0470020	Public Lands and Environmental Team	9	0	0	0
MS 94ADFDC0470021	Public Lands and Environmental Team	22	0	0	0
MS 94ADFDC0470022	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	0	0	0
MS 94ADFDC0470023	Public Lands and Environmental Team	15	2	2	2
ND 94ADFDC0470024	Public Lands and Environmental Team	9	0	0	0
NE 94ADFDC0470025	Public Lands and Environmental Team	9	5	5	4
NH 94ADFDC0470026	Public Lands and Environmental Team	32	0	0	0
NJ 94ADFDC0470027	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	6	6	4
NM 94ADFDC0470028	Public Lands and Environmental Team	12	0	0	0
NY 94ADFDC0470029	Public Lands and Environmental Team	70	0	0	0
OH 94ADFDC0470030	Public Lands and Environmental Team	10	6	6	0
OK 94ADFDC0470031	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	1	1	0
OR 94ADFDC0470032	Public Lands and Environmental Team	35	0	0	0
OR 94ADFDC0470033	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	0	0	0
OR 94ADFDC0470034	Public Lands and Environmental Team	21	0	0	0
SC 94ADFDC0470035	Public Lands and Environmental Team	37	16	15	15
SD 94ADFDC0470036	Public Lands and Environmental Team	9	0	0	0
TN 94ADFDC0470037	USDA Public Lands and Environmental Team	26	0	0	0
TX 94ADFDC0470038	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	0	0	0
TX 94ADFDC0470039	Public Lands and Environmental Team	30	0	0	0
UT 94ADFDC0470040	Public Lands and Environmental Team	13	0	0	0
VA 94ADFDC0470041	Public Lands and Environmental Team	27	0	0	0
VT 94ADFDC0470042	Public Lands and Environmental Team	40	0	0	0
VT 94ADFDC0470043	Public Lands and Environmental Team	20	0	0	0
WA 94ADFDC0470044	Public Lands and Environmental Team	22	37	37	36
WA 94ADFDC0470045	Public Lands and Environmental Team	32	13	13	12
WI 94ADFDC0470046	Public Lands and Environmental Team	9	0	0	0
WV 94ADFDC0470047	Public Lands and Environmental Team	27	0	0	0
		1105	206	191	166