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UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

To: Jim Stein, Office of Congressman Schiff

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

8 pages, including this cover

As you may know, USDA has sponsored an extremely successful AmeriCorps rural development projects throughout New Mexico, including Congressman Schiff's District. (See attached data sheets). USDA also sponsored a highly successful summer AmeriCorps project focused on recovering excess food.

Ironally, even as Congres has reached bi-partisan agreement to continue the overall AmeriCorps program, all USDA AmeriCorps projects are in immediate jeopardy unless we can reach a compromise with Senators Grassley and Bond and Congressman Jerry Lewis to allow USDA to continue to provide assistance to local AmeriCorps projects. (See attached fact sheet.) Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

To: Aura Kenny, Office of Congressman Quinn

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

11 pages, including this cover

Per our discussion:

- 1) Fact sheet on status of the program
- 2) Description of this year's accomplishments in New York
- 3) News clips from your district

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

**To: Tom Geier, Office of Senator Snowe
Kate Lambrew, Office of Senator Cohen**

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

23 pages, including this cover

For your information, attached are:

- 1) Updated fact sheet on status of USDA AmeriCorps program**
- 2) Data sheets listing USDA AmeriCorps sites in Maine and their accomplishments this year**
- 3) News clips about projects in Maine**
- 4) Press release about the effectiveness of USDA AmeriCorps rural fire protection efforts nationally**

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

To: Brooke Robert, Office of Senator Craig

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

5 pages, including this cover

As you may know, USDA is currently sponsoring a highly successful AmeriCorps project throughout Idaho that is helping farm families voluntarily improve their drinking water. A number of months ago, at a town meeting in Idaho, Senator Craig met one of the Members of this project and indicated that he fully supported it.

However, as explained in the attached fact sheet, all USDA AmeriCorps projects -- including the one in Idaho --- are in jeopardy unless action on this matter is taken immediately.

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.

1/20
Re - send
10/19



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

To: Mark Aldridge, Office of Senator Smith

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

70 pages, including this cover

This year, USDA AmeriCorps Members based in Laconia provided technical assistance to 23 rural fire departments in New Hampshire. USDA AmeriCorps Members based in Meredith provided voluntary assistance to landowners to protect water quality. Last year --- and hopefully next year --- we also had a successful AmeriCorps project on the White Mountain National Forest.

However, as explained in the attached fact sheet, all USDA AmeriCorps projects --- including those in New Hampshire --- may be canceled immediately unless we can reach a compromise with Senators Grassley and Bond to allow USDA to continue to provide assistance to local AmeriCorps projects.

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

To: Rick Murphy, Office of Senator Gregg

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

5 pages, including this cover

This year, USDA AmeriCorps Members based in Laconia provided technical assistance to 23 rural fire departments in New Hampshire. USDA AmeriCorps Members based in Meredith provided voluntary assistance to landowners to protect water quality. Last year --- and hopefully next year --- we also had a successful AmeriCorps project on the White Mountain National Forest.

However, as explained in the attached fact sheet, all USDA AmeriCorps projects --- including those in New Hampshire --- may be canceled immediately unless we can reach a compromise with Senators Grassley and Bond to allow USDA to continue to provide assistance to local AmeriCorps projects.

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

To: Debbie Marshall, Office of Congressman Ehlers

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

5 pages, including this cover

As you may know, USDA has sponsored an extremely successful AmeriCorps project in Congressman Ehlers district that has helped farms to voluntarily improve their drinking water.

Ironally, even as Congres has reached bi-partisan agreement to continue the overall AmeriCorps program, all USDA AmeriCorps projects are in immediate jeopardy unless we can reach a compromise with Senators Grassley and Bond and Congressman Jerry Lewis to allow USDA to continue to provide assistance to local AmeriCorps projects. (See attached fact sheet.)

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



**To: Scott Malvaney
Office of Congressman Parker**

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

5 pages, including this cover

As you may know, USDA sponsored a highly successful AmeriCorps project this summer in your district focused on recovering excess food that normally would be discarded and distributing that food to citizens in need. We hope to be able to continue to support such projects in the future.

Ironically, even as Congress has reached bi-partisan agreement on continuing to fund the overall AmeriCorps program, our highly successful program faces elimination. As explained in the attached fact sheet, all USDA AmeriCorps projects may be eliminated immediately unless we can reach a compromise with Senators Grassley and Bond to allow USDA to continue to provide assistance to local AmeriCorps projects.

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



To: Marsha Meeks Kelly

From: Joel Berg

9 pages, including this cover

FYI, attached is a fax I just sent to Senator Cochran's office about the future of our program. Cochran is critical on this issue because he is chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture.

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

To: Gregory McGinty, Office of Senator Cochran

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

8 pages, including this cover

For your information, attached are three sheets of data outlining some of the impressive accomplishments of USDA AmeriCorps projects in Mississippi.

However, as explained in the attached fact sheet, all USDA AmeriCorps projects --- including those in Mississippi --- are in immediate jeopardy unless we can reach a compromise with Senators Grassley and Bond to allow USDA to continue to provide assistance to local AmeriCorps projects.

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

**To: Jenny Balinsky
Office of Congressman Torkildsen**

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

5 pages, including this cover

Per our discussion.

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.

10/19



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

P Ro - keep feedback

To: Dean Kueter, Office of Congressman Blute

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

5 pages, including this cover

As you may know, USDA has sponsored an extremely successful AmeriCorps project in Congressman Blute's district in partnership with the Suasco Watershed Association.

ironically, even as Congress has reached bi-partisan agreement to continue the overall AmeriCorps program, all USDA AmeriCorps projects are in immediate jeopardy unless we can reach a compromise with Senators Grassley and Bond and Congressman Jerry Lewis to allow USDA to continue to provide assistance to local AmeriCorps projects. (See attached fact sheet.)

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

**To: Gordon Taylor
Office of Congressman Hayes**

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

5 pages, including this cover

As you may know, USDA has sponsored a successful AmeriCorps program in your district.

Ironically, even as Congress has reached bipartisan agreement to continue the overall AmeriCorps program, all USDA AmeriCorps projects are in immediate jeopardy unless we can reach a compromise with Senators Grassley and Bond to allow USDA to continue to provide assistance to local AmeriCorps projects. (See attached fact sheet.)

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.

To: Shawn Gilleylen, Office of Senator Bond

From: Joel Berg, USDA

It was good to actually meet you face-to-face in the meeting on Friday. Now that your conference committee has successfully completed its national service work, we are hopeful we can come to a mutually agreeable resolution about our AmeriCorps program.

We appreciated the Senator's praise in the meeting for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (the former Soil Conservation Service) and his desire to try to find some mechanism through which it could continue to provide assistance to AmeriCorps projects. It was my understanding of the Senator's position that, while he would like high quality USDA projects in partnership with local entities to continue, he does not believe the Federal government should "run" such projects.

In keeping with Senator Bond's direction, attached is draft language explaining how locally-based individual projects could continue to receive technical and other assistance from USDA .

While we don't need any additional funds --- nor do we formally need any additional authorization or appropriations language --- we do seek to reach agreement with your office that USDA --- and USDA alone --- can go forward under the attached proposal. I believe that Rep. Jerry Lewis, Senator Bond's counterpart in the House, would probably support such a compromise. Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.

DRAFT PROPOSAL TO ALLOW USDA TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO AMERICORPS PROJECTS

The Corporation for National and Community Service would have the authority to enter into a *non-monetary* cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture to allow the Department to provide technical assistance, funding, administrative support services, and other assistance to national service programs sponsored by non-profit organizations, state, local, and tribal governments, and the local managers of public lands, and to allow participants in those programs to receive National Service benefits, including National Service educational awards from the National Service Trust.

It is understood that the Corporation for National Service would *not* seek to enter into such an agreement with any other Federal agency other than the Department of Agriculture.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

**To: Melvin Thompson,
Office of Congressman Gilchrest**

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

9 pages, including this cover

As you may know, USDA has sponsored an extremely successful AmeriCorps project in your district.

Ironically, even as Congress has reached bi-partisan agreement to continue the overall AmeriCorps program, all USDA AmeriCorps projects are in immediate jeopardy unless we can reach a compromise with Senators Grassley and Bond to allow USDA to continue to provide assistance to local AmeriCorps projects. (See attached fact sheet.)

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

**To: Jamie Castillo, Office of
Congressman Skeen**

**Jim Jepson, Office of
Congressman Durbin**

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

4 pages, including this cover

We are still trying to reach a compromise with the Senate that would allow USDA to continue to support highly successful AmeriCorps projects, including those in New Mexico and Illinois. .

As you can see from the attached letter from Senator Grassley to Harris Wofford, Grassley is basing much of his opposition to USDA involvement in AmeriCorps on his belief that the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees *oppose* USDA spending funds on AmeriCorps. If Mr. Skeen and Mr. Durbin were to co-sign a letter together expressing support for USDA spending on AmeriCorps, such a letter could play a critical role in helping us. Such a letter might be even stronger if Senator Cochran and Senator Bumpers also signed it.

Two other points about the Grassley letter:

1) We have never sought to have AmeriCorps Members work “at USDA” --- our AmeriCorps Members work directly in each community or directly on public lands.

2) USDA AmeriCorps members have never cost \$30,000 each. In our first year of operation, the total Federal spending on the USDA AmeriCorps program --- including tools, equipment, supplies, and staff support needed for projects --- was \$29.311 million, equaling \$24,426 per AmeriCorps Member. Given that the service provided by the program helped 828,000 people and aided 234,000 acres of land, the Federal government spent only \$17 per person aided and only \$62 per acre helped. In addition, the Forest Service calculated that, for each Federal dollar spent on Forest Service AmeriCorps projects, between 1.51 to \$2.30 worth of work was performed.

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

To: Michael Gerson, Office of Senator Coats

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

4 pages, including this cover

As you may recall, we met very briefly at the PPI/Hudson Institute forum on AmeriCorps. As I mentioned, USDA helped sponsor a very successful AmeriCorps food recovery project in Indiana this Summer. Information about the project is attached.

You were eloquent in explaining Senator Coats' belief that, as government reduces welfare payments to the poor, it is critical to develop innovative and cost-effective ways to energize citizen and non-profit anti-poverty initiatives. I hope you will agree that our "Summer of Gleaning" initiative is one such approach.

I would very much like to meet with you at your convenience to discuss how the "Summer of Gleaning" program succeeded nationally. Please call me at 720-5746 if you have any time available.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

**To: Jay Parkinson
Office of Senator Kempthorne**

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

5 pages, including this cover

As we discussed, USDA has sponsored extremely successful AmeriCorps projects in Idaho that have helped farmers improve their water quality.

Also as we dsicsussed, ironically, even as Congress has reached bipartisan agreement to continue the overall AmeriCorps program, all USDA AmeriCorps projects are in immediate jeopardy unless we can reach a compromise with Senators Grassley and Bond to allow USDA to continue to provide assistance to local AmeriCorps projects. (See attached fact sheet.)

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



**To: Mary Elizabeth Larson
Labor and Human Resources Committee**

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

20 pages, including this cover

As you may know, USDA is currently sponsoring highly successful AmeriCorps project throughout the nation, including Kansas. Our Kansas projects have performed critical environmental and rural development services, and have been strongly support by the State Secretary of Wildlife and Parks, who is appointed by Governor Graves. (See attached letter, news clips, and list of site accomplishments.)

As explained in the attached fact sheet, we are seeking a compromise with Senators Grassley and Bond to find some way that would allow USDA to continue to provide assistance to local AmeriCorps projects. Any help that Senator Kassebaum could provide in this regard would be greatly appreciated. Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

**To: Jeff Shockey,
Office of Congressman Lewis**

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

5 pages, including this cover

Per our discussion, attached is updated information about the status of our overall program.

Also attached is a June 7 letter from Harris Wofford to Congressman Lewis, as well as a September 25 recent letter from Senator Grassley to Wofford. Two points about the Grassley letter:

- 1) We have never sought to have AmeriCorps Members work "at USDA" --- our AmeriCorps Members work directly in each community or directly on public lands.**

- 2) In our first year of operation, the total Federal spending on the USDA AmeriCorps program --- including tools, equipment, supplies, and staff support needed for projects --- was \$29.311 million, equaling \$24,426 per AmeriCorps Member. Given that the service provided by the program helped 828,000 people and aided 234,000 acres of land, the Federal government spent only \$17 per person aided and only \$62 per acre helped. In addition, the Forest Service calculated that, for each Federal dollar spent on Forest Service AmeriCorps projects, between 1.51 to \$2.30 worth of work was performed.**

I look forward to meeting with you next week. Please call me at 720-5746.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

**To: Jeff Shockey,
Office of Congressman Lewis**

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

12 pages, including this cover

To provide you with more background on the USDA AmeriCorps program in Mr. Lewis' district, attached is a letter of appreciation from the City of Victorville to our AmeriCorps Members, preliminary plans for next year's Natural Resources Conservation Service AmeriCorps project to be based in Apple Valley, and preliminary plans for next year's Forest Service AmeriCorps project on the San Bernardino National Forest.

I look forward to meeting with you. Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.

USDA AMERICORPS
UPDATE -- UPDATE --- UPDATE --- UPDATE --- UPDATE

To: Jeff Shockley, Office of Congressman Lewis

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

2 PAGES, INCLUDING THIS COVER

I understand that neither the VA, HUD appropriations bill nor its appropriations language will have language clarifying the status of the USDA AmeriCorps program. We would now propose “Plan B” in which ask Senator Bond and Congressman Lewis to give their at least their tacit approval to allow USDA to continue to support AmeriCorps projects.

It was my understanding of Senator Bond’s position that, while he might like high quality USDA projects in partnership with local entities to continue, he does not believe the Federal government should “run” such projects. In keeping with Senator Bond’s desire in this regard, we have proposed draft language explaining how locally-based individual projects could continue to receive technical and other assistance from USDA .

While we don’t need any additional funds --- nor do we formally need any additional authorization or appropriations language --- we do seek to reach agreement with Congressman Lewis and Senator Bond that USDA can go forward under the attached proposal.

If we can not reach such an agreement rapidly, all our AmeriCorps projects planned for this year would be canceled.

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.

DRAFT PROPOSAL TO ALLOW USDA TO CONTINUE TO
PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO AMERICORPS PROJECTS

The Corporation for National and Community Service would have the authority to enter into a *non-monetary* cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture to allow the Department to provide technical assistance, funding, administrative support services, and other assistance to national service programs sponsored by non-profit organizations, state, local, and tribal governments, and the local managers of public lands, and to allow participants in those programs to receive National Service benefits, including National Service educational awards from the National Service Trust.

It is understood that the Corporation for National Service would *not* seek to enter into such an agreement with any other Federal agency other than the Department of Agriculture.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

**To: George Lowe
Office of Senator Stevens**

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

5 pages, including this cover

I am sending you information at the suggestion of Liz Connell. USDA has sponsored an extremely effective AmeriCorps program in native villages of the Lower Kuskowim region of Alaska. The AmeriCorps Members recruited non-compensated community volunteers to complete critical projects and worked on developing self-help housing, training local residents in entrepreneurial management, developing a fish smoking and processing cooperative, and removing junk vehicles from the villages.

Ironically, even as Congress has reached bipartisan agreement to continue the overall AmeriCorps program, all USDA AmeriCorps projects are in immediate jeopardy unless we can reach a compromise with Senators Grassley and Bond to allow USDA to continue to provide assistance to local AmeriCorps projects. (See attached fact sheet.) Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

To: Liz Connell, Office of Senator Stevens

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

5 pages, including this cover

As you may know, USDA is currently sponsoring a highly successful AmeriCorps rural development project in native villages in the Lower Kuskokwim region of Alaska.

However, as explained in the attached fact sheet, all USDA AmeriCorps projects -- including the one in Aalska --- are in jeopardy unless action on this matter is taken immediately.

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.

USDA AMERICORPS

UPDATE -- UPDATE --- UPDATE --- UPDATE --- UPDATE

To: Aura Kenny, Office of Congressman Quinn
 Mary Cline, Scott Rylco, Office of Congressman Chrysler
 Jodi Smith, Office of Congressman Bereuter
 Jamie Castillo, Office of Congressman Skeen
 Katherine Armstrong, Office of Congressman Torkildsen
 Linda Theil, Office of Congresswoman Woolsey
 Russ McGuirk, Office of Congressman Pallone
 Jim Jepsen, Office of Congressman Durbin
 Tiffany Clements, Office of Congressman Fields
 Ashley Abbott, Office of Congressman Baldacci
 David Lipsett, Office of Congressman Dingell
 Danny Cromer, Office of Congressman Clyburn
 Mike Bagley, Office of Congressman Dicks

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

2 PAGES, INCLUDING THIS COVER

I understand that neither the VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Bill nor its committee report will have language clarifying the status of the USDA AmeriCorps program. We are now attempting "Plan B," in which we ask Senator Bond and Congressman Jerry Lewis --- the chairs of the relevant appropriations subcommittees --- to give their at least their tacit approval to allow USDA to continue to support AmeriCorps projects.

It was my understanding of Senator Bond's position that, while he might like high quality USDA projects in partnership with local entities to continue, he does not believe the Federal government should "run" such projects. In keeping with Senator Bond's desire in this regard, we have proposed draft language (attached) to his office and that of Congressman Lewis; the language explains how locally-based individual AmeriCorps projects could continue to receive technical and other assistance from USDA .

While we don't need any additional funds --- nor do we need any additional authorization or appropriations language --- we do seek to reach agreement with Congressman Lewis and Senator Bond that USDA can go forward under the attached proposal. If we can not reach such an agreement rapidly, all our AmeriCorps projects planned for this year would be canceled. Given the current sensitivity of this matter, I think member to member discussions and/or staff-to-staff discussions might be more useful at this point than a formal letter. Please call me at 720-5746.

DRAFT PROPOSAL TO ALLOW USDA TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO AMERICORPS PROJECTS

The Corporation for National and Community Service would have the authority to enter into a *non-monetary* cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture to allow the Department to provide technical assistance, funding, administrative support services, and other assistance to national service programs sponsored by non-profit organizations, state, local, and tribal governments, and the local managers of public lands, and to allow participants in those programs to receive National Service benefits, including National Service educational awards from the National Service Trust.

It is understood that the Corporation for National Service would *not* seek to enter into such an agreement with any other Federal agency other than the Department of Agriculture.

USDA AMERICORPS

UPDATE -- UPDATE --- UPDATE --- UPDATE --- UPDATE

To: Raissa Quintal, Mike Russell, Office of the Senator Campbell *message 10/10*
Tom Geier, Cynthia Dailard, Office of Senator Snowe
Kate Lambrew, Office of Senator Cohen
Kevin Mathis, Office of Senator Specter
Sue Hildick, Patrick Atagi, Office of Senator Hatfield
Robin Bowen, Office of Senator McConnell
Brian Jones, Joe Trujillo, Office of Senator Domenici
Sherry Kaiman, Senate Education Subcommittee
Gene Sofer, Corporation for National Service

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

3 PAGES, INCLUDING THIS COVER

It now looks unlikely that either the VA, HUD appropriations bill or its committee report will have language clarifying the status of the USDA AmeriCorps program. We will now try "plan B" in which we determine whether Senator Bond will give at least tacit approval to allow USDA to continue to support AmeriCorps projects. (See attached documents I sent to Shawn Gilleylen of Bond's office).

Given the current sensitivity of this matter, I think member to member discussions and/or staff-to-staff discussions might be more useful at this point than a formal letter. Please call me at 720-5746.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

To: Shawn Gilleylen , Office of Senator Bond

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

We continue to search for a compromise that would meet Senator Bond's goal of ending direct Federal agency management of AmeriCorps projects, but would allow USDA to continue to provide technical assistance and funding to locally-based organizations that sponsor AmeriCorps projects.

As part of this continuing discussion, we hope you will consider the findings of the enclosed report on the "Summer of Gleaning." **This program worked in partnership with hundreds of locally based anti-hunger groups, youth service corps, farm organizations, food banks, churches, and food recovery organizations --- including such groups in Missouri.**

The AmeriCorps members in this summer program helped recover over 1,005 tons of food, which provided an estimated 1.34 million meals. **Given that the total Federal dollars spent on this summer program -- including collection, transportation, and storage of food, and stipends and educational awards for the AmeriCorps members --- was \$430,000, the total Federal cost per meal provided was approximately 43 cents each.**

Furthermore, the program was based on the "volunteer generator model" of community service in which a handful of compensated AmeriCorps members recruit numerous non-compensated volunteers to help implement large-scale tasks. **The 88 AmeriCorps members in the summer program recruited over 500 non-compensated community volunteers who helped pick, sort, deliver, and prepare the recovered foods.**

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

To: Monica Azare, Office of Congressman Tauzin

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

7 pages, including this cover

For your information, attached is information about the impressive achievements of the USDA AmeriCorps fire protection project in Congressman Tauzin's district that has both protected property and saved homeowners money.

Also attached is a fact sheet about the current status of the USDA AmeriCorps program. If action on this matter is not taken immediately, all USDA AmeriCorps projects may be canceled.

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

To: Sherry Kaiman, Education Subcommittee

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

As you may be aware, in addition to year-long AmeriCorps rural development projects, USDA sponsored a highly successful summer AmeriCorps program this year focused on recovering excess food that normally would be discarded and distributing that food to citizens in need. **The Vermont anti-hunger project played a significant role in this effort.** Enclosed is a report detailing the achievements of this program. This “Summer of Gleaning” program worked in partnership with hundreds of locally based anti-hunger groups, youth service corps, farm organizations, food banks, churches, and food recovery organizations.

The AmeriCorps members in this summer program helped recover over 1,005 tons of food, which provided an estimated 1.34 million meals. **Given that the total Federal dollars spent on this summer program -- including collection, transportation, and storage of food, and stipends and educational awards for the AmeriCorps members --- was \$430,000, the total Federal cost per meal provided was approximately 43 cents each.**

Furthermore, the program was based on the “volunteer generator model” of community service in which a handful of compensated AmeriCorps members recruit numerous non-compensated volunteers to help implement large-scale tasks. **The 88 AmeriCorps members in the summer program recruited over 500 non-compensated community volunteers who helped pick, sort, deliver, and prepare the recovered foods.**

UNFORTUNATELY, OUR ABILITY TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT SUCH PROJECTS IS STILL IN JEOPARDY, PENDING NEGOTIATIONS WITH SENATOR BOND AND SENATOR GRASSLEY. PLEASE CALL ME AT 720-5746 WITH ANY QUESTIONS.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

To: Mike Mills, Office of Senators Ashcroft and Bond

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

Handwritten initials, possibly 'JB', in black ink.

We continue to search for a compromise that would meet Senator Bond's goal of ending direct Federal agency management of AmeriCorps projects, but would allow USDA to continue to provide technical assistance and funding to locally-based organizations that sponsor AmeriCorps projects.

As part of this continuing discussion, we hope you will consider the findings of the enclosed report on the "Summer of Gleaning." **This program worked in partnership with hundreds of locally based anti-hunger groups, youth service corps, farm organizations, food banks, churches, and food recovery organizations --- including such groups in Missouri.**

The AmeriCorps members in this summer program helped recover over 1,005 tons of food, which provided an estimated 1.34 million meals. **Given that the total Federal dollars spent on this summer program -- including collection, transportation, and storage of food, and stipends and educational awards for the AmeriCorps members --- was \$430,000, the total Federal cost per meal provided was approximately 43 cents each.**

Furthermore, the program was based on the "volunteer generator model" of community service in which a handful of compensated AmeriCorps members recruit numerous non-compensated volunteers to help implement large-scale tasks. **The 88 AmeriCorps members in the summer program recruited over 500 non-compensated community volunteers who helped pick, sort, deliver, and prepare the recovered foods.**

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

**To: Jamie Castillo, Office of
Congressman Skeen**

**Jim Jepson, Office of
Congressman Durbin**

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

4 pages, including this cover

We are still trying to reach a compromise with the Senate that would allow USDA to continue to support highly successful AmeriCorps projects, including those in New Mexico and Illinois. .

As you can see from the attached letter from Senator Grassley to Harris Wofford, Grassley is basing much of his opposition to USDA involvement in AmeriCorps on his belief that the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees *oppose* USDA spending funds on AmeriCorps. If Mr. Skeen and Mr. Durbin were to co-sign a letter together expressing support for USDA spending on AmeriCorps, such a letter could play a critical role in helping us. Such a letter might be even stronger if Senator Cochran and Senator Bumpers also signed it.

Two other points about the Grassley letter:

1) We have never sought to have AmeriCorps Members work “at USDA” --- our AmeriCorps Members work directly in each community or directly on public lands.

2) USDA AmeriCorps members have never cost \$30,000 each. In our first year of operation, the total Federal spending on the USDA AmeriCorps program --- including tools, equipment, supplies, and staff support needed for projects --- was \$29.311 million, equaling \$24,426 per AmeriCorps Member. Given that the service provided by the program helped 828,000 people and aided 234,000 acres of land, the Federal government spent only \$17 per person aided and only \$62 per acre helped. In addition, the Forest Service calculated that, for each Federal dollar spent on Forest Service AmeriCorps projects, between 1.51 to \$2.30 worth of work was performed.

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

To: Sherry Kaiman

From: Joel Berg

3 pages, including this cover

FYI, attached is information about the impressive results of USDA AmeriCorps fire protection projects, including those in Vermont.

Please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.

SAM NUNN, GEORGIA
 MAX BAUCUS, MONTANA
 CARL LEVIN, MICHIGAN
 ALAN J. DIXON, ILLINOIS
 TOM HARKIN, IOWA
 JOHN F. KERRY, MASSACHUSETTS
 BARBARA A. MIKULSKI, MARYLAND
 JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN, CONNECTICUT
 PAUL DAVID WELLSTONE, MINNESOTA
 HARRIS WOFFORD, PENNSYLVANIA

ROBERT W. KASTEN, JR., WISCONSIN
 LARRY PRESSLER, SOUTH DAKOTA
 MALCOLM WALLOF, WYOMING
 CHRISTOPHER S. BOND, MISSOURI
 CONRAD BURNS, MONTANA
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 CESAR V. CONDA, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6350

November 17, 1992

M E M O R A N D U M

FOR: 

FROM: CHUCK LUDLAM, OFFICE OF SENATOR BUMPERS

RE: COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

This memo explains the opportunities for the Clinton/Gore Administration with the new Bumpers-sponsored community service loan cancellation program authorized in the 1992 Higher Education Act amendments. I am sending it to you so you can give it to the transition teams for the Clinton/Gore Administration with responsibility for its proposal for loan cancellation as a method for repayment of student loans and anyone else who will be working on implementation of the Clinton/Gore national service proposals.

Enclosed is the statutory language for the new Stafford loan cancellation program and for the amendments to the existing Perkins loan cancellation program.¹ I worked for nearly six years to secure their enactment and know as much as anyone about what they mean and how they can be implemented by the new Administration.

The most exciting opportunity for President-elect Clinton is the new generic program for cancellation of Stafford (guaranteed)

¹ You can only understand the 1992 changes to the Perkins loan cancellation program by referring to the 1986 law that set up this program, so I've enclosed the 1986 language.

loans. The 1992 Higher Education Act amendments provide for cancellation of Stafford loans for student borrowers who serve as full-time, low-paid employees of a tax-exempt organization -- see section 428J(b)(1)(B). This applies to every type of service as long as it meets these generic requirements.

The generic requirements are simple: the service must be "full-time," it must be "comparable" to Peace Corps or VISTA service, it must be with a non-profit organization and it must be low-paid (minimum wage or poverty line for a family of two).

This is not Yuppie service; it's a demanding program. This is good policy and it keeps the cost of the cancellation under control. More on this below.

This Stafford loan cancellation program is brand new. We've never had any cancellation of Stafford loans before this. But, we have had a program for partial cancellation of Perkins loans since 1986. Unfortunately, I did not succeed in amending the existing Perkins loan cancellation program to permit cancellation under these generic terms. You can see who qualifies for cancellation under the Perkins program in the attached materials. It's a mish-mash of targeted groups.

It is important to note that I was successful in saving the deferment on repayment of loans for the students who would qualify for the Stafford and Perkins loan cancellation programs. It would be a mess if they could qualify for loan cancellation but not get a deferment while they serve. It was an incredible fight to preserve the deferment; it was harder to save the

deferment than to get the new loan cancellation program!

There are a variety of opportunities here for President-elect Clinton:

1. He can immediately seek a supplemental appropriation for Fiscal 1993 to fund this new Stafford loan cancellation program. It's not an entitlement; it needs to be funded. The Perkins program is an entitlement, so it's funding is automatic in Fiscal 1993 and thereafter.

2. Clinton can also seek a legislative change in the effective date for those who qualify for the new Stafford cancellation program to include students with existing loan balances. As enacted this new program only applies to students who are "new borrowers" after October 1, 1992. This is a very strict standard and it means that this program will not become fully effective until 1997.

3. I would not recommend that he call for any change in the terms of the cancellation program. He could seek to change the terms for the cancellation, however, any change that liberalizes the terms for cancellation will be costly and it will also open up the program to criticism. It's hard to argue with loan cancellation for student borrowers who work full-time for the minimum wage. And, I have no doubt that many student borrowers will, in fact, serve under those terms if challenged to do so by Clinton.

The minimum wage standard dovetails with the stipend provisions of the National and Community Service Act, which

permits organizations receiving grants from the Commission to pay stipends of this amount. Setting a higher compensation standard will just problems for the employers, who will be pressured to pay more in stipends and ask for more grants from the Commission. We want to keep the costs of these employees low to the employer so that they will set up programs to employ the student borrowers.

4. Clinton also needs to call for enactment of a similar generic loan cancellation program for Perkins loans and for an immediate effective date. That would mean that students who have both Stafford and Perkins loans would not be caught with conflicting standards. And it would make the whole program more attractive for student borrowers.

5. There are also a variety of ways in which the Department of Education can take regulatory action to ensure that the new loan cancellation and deferment provisions are fully implemented. Attached is a draft letter from Senator Bumpers that provides extensive commentary on the regulatory issues raised by the new loan cancellation and deferment provisions. This draft letter gives you an idea of how much work I have put into this issue over the past six years.

6. Then Clinton could fight for full funding for Fiscal 1994 in any amendments to Bush's budget and fight for full funding in the Fiscal 1994 D.O.E. appropriations bill for the program.

These actions would give Clinton an immediate success with his pledge to permit student borrowers to pay back their loans

with community service. Taking these actions does not preclude action later on his plans to enlarge the student loan program to include a much larger class of borrowers, to eliminate the guaranteed loan program to save the bank fees or to permit repayment with either community service or income contingent payments. But, those proposals will take longer and be more expensive. In fact, they may be too expensive, too controversial and too complicated to do that for some time, so it makes political sense for him to concentrate on the loan cancellation part of his pledge.

My estimate is that we could use this program to encourage 20-25,000 young people to serve. The Peace Corps only has 6,500 volunteers, so this would be three to four times the size of the Peace Corps. And, it would be much less costly to the government than running the whole program itself.

This is one of the big advantages of loan cancellation. The whole program is completely decentralized and non-bureaucratic. With the Commission's grants, there is endless red tape, O.M.B. circulars, audits, etc. With loan cancellation there is virtually no paperwork and the costs for training, paying, and supervising the student borrowers is entirely born by the private sector non-profits.

I am happy to help the transition teams on this issue. They are certainly looking for ways for Clinton to take dramatic action within the first 100 days and I have given him an important opportunity with the new Stafford loan cancellation

program. My phone is 202-224-3095.

1992 HIGHER EDUCATION ACT:

NEW PROGRAM FOR CANCELLATION OF STAFFORD LOANS FOR THOSE WHO PERFORM COMMUNITY SERVICE

SEC. 422. UNSUBSIDIZED LOANS; PERFORMANCE AGREEMENTS; LOAN FORGIVENESS.

Part B of title IV of the Act is amended by inserting after section 428G the following new sections:

"LOAN FORGIVENESS FOR TEACHERS, INDIVIDUALS PERFORMING NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE AND NURSES

"SEC. 428J. (a) STATEMENT OF PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to encourage individuals to—

- "(1) enter the teaching and nursing profession; and
- "(2) perform national and community service.

"(b) DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, is authorized to carry out a demonstration program of assuming the obligation to repay a loan made, insured or guaranteed under this part (excluding loans made under sections 428A, 428B, or 428C) for any new borrower after October 1, 1992, who—

"(A) is employed as a full-time teacher—

"(i) in a school which qualifies under section 465(a)(2)(A) for loan cancellation for Perkins loan recipients who teach in such schools; and

"(ii) of mathematics, science, foreign languages, special education, bilingual education, or any other field of expertise where the State educational agency determines there is a shortage of qualified teachers;

"(B) agrees in writing to volunteer for service under the Peace Corps Act or under the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, or to perform comparable service as a full-time employee of an organization which is exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, if the borrower does not receive compensation which exceeds the greater of—

"(i) the minimum wage rate described in section 6 of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938; or

"(ii) an amount equal to 100 percent of the poverty line for a family of two (as defined in section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act); or

"(C) is employed full-time as a nurse in a public hospital, a rural health clinic, a migrant health center, an Indian Health Service, an Indian health center, a Native Hawaiian health center or in an acute care or long-term care facility.

"(2) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary is authorized to issue such regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this section.

"(c) LOAN REPAYMENT.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall assume the obligation to repay—

"(A) 15 percent of the total amount of Stafford loans incurred by the student borrower during such borrower's last 2 years of undergraduate education for the first or second academic year in which such borrower meets the requirements described in subsection (a);

"(B) 20 percent of such total amount for such third or fourth academic year; and

"(C) 30 percent of such total amount for such fifth academic year.

"(2) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize the refunding of any repayment of a Stafford loan.

"(3) INTEREST.—If a portion of a loan is repaid by the Secretary under this section for any year, the proportionate amount of interest on such loan which accrues for such year shall be repaid by the Secretary.

"(4) SPECIAL RULE.—In the case where a student borrower who is not participating in loan repayment pursuant to this section returns to an institution of higher education after graduation from an institution of higher education for the purpose of obtaining a teaching certificate, the Secretary is authorized to assume the obligation to repay the total amount of Stafford loans incurred for a maximum of 2 academic years

in returning to an institution of higher education for the purpose of obtaining a teaching certificate or additional certification. Such Stafford loans shall only be repaid for borrowers who qualify for loan repayment pursuant to the provisions of this section, and shall be repaid in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (1).

“(d) REPAYMENT OF ELIGIBILITY LENDERS.—The Secretary shall pay to each eligible lender or holder for each fiscal year an amount equal to the aggregate amount of Stafford loans which are subject to repayment pursuant to this section for such year.

“(e) APPLICATION FOR REPAYMENT.—Each eligible individual desiring loan repayment under this section shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may reasonably require.

“(f) DEFINITIONS.—For the purpose of this section the term ‘eligible lender’ has the same meaning given such term in section 435(d).

“(g) EVALUATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct, by grant or contract, an independent national evaluation of the impact of the program assisted under this part on the fields of teaching, nursing, and community service.

“(2) COMPETITIVE BASIS.—The grant or contract described in paragraph (1) shall be awarded on a competitive basis.

“(3) CONTENTS.—The evaluation described in this section shall—

“(A) assess whether the program assisted under this section has brought into teaching, nursing, and community service a significant number of highly capable individuals who otherwise would not have entered such fields;

“(B) assess whether a significant number of students perform the service described in subsection (b) or opt to repay the loans instead of remaining in the career for which such student received loan repayment under this section;

“(C) identify the barriers to the effectiveness of the program assisted under this section;

“(D) assess the cost-effectiveness of such program in improving teacher, nursing, and community service worker quality and quantity and the ways to improve the cost-effectiveness of such program;

“(E) identify the reasons for which participants in the program have chosen to take part in such program; and

“(F) identify other areas of community service or employment which may serve as appropriate methods of loan repayment.

“(4) INTERIM EVALUATION REPORTS.—The Secretary shall prepare and submit to the President and the Congress such interim reports on the evaluation described in this section as the Secretary deems appropriate, and shall submit such a final report by January 1, 1997.

“(5) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 1993 and such sums as may be necessary for each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years.”

SEC. 432. EFFECTIVE DATES FOR AMENDMENTS TO PART B.

(b) NEW BORROWERS.—For purposes of the section, the term “new borrower” means, with respect to any date, an individual who on that date has no outstanding balance of principal or interest owing on any loan made, insured, or guaranteed under part B of title IV of the Act.

release

Corporation for National Service
1201 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20525

Release: 9/30/95
Contact: J. TOSCANO
202-606-5000 ext 277

SENATE CONFIRMS HARRIS WOFFORD AS NATIONAL SERVICE CHIEF

The U.S. Senate last night confirmed the nomination of Harris Wofford as chief executive officer of the Corporation for National Service.

As national service chief, Wofford will oversee programs that involve more than 1.2 million citizens of all ages and backgrounds in service to communities throughout the United States. Those programs include AmeriCorps (including AmeriCorps*VISTA, the AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps, and 400 programs of the AmeriCorps service network); the National Senior Service Corps (which includes Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program); and Learn and Serve America, which supports school and college-based student volunteer service.

Wofford says that one of his top goals is to team with Congress to strengthen the year old AmeriCorps initiative. The former Pennsylvania senator said, "This represents the most important challenge and opportunity to serve because -- like the C.C.C. (Civilian Conservation Corps) of the 1930s, the GI Bill, and the Peace Corps -- national service is the best kind of investment we can make in our nation's future."

"I will work with Republicans and Democrats in Congress," said Wofford, "to build national service, not as a government program, but as a private-public partnership based in the independent sector, so that it will be a non partisan institution in which all Americans can take pride."

In an earlier hearing on the former Senator's nomination, Labor and Human Resources Committee chairwoman Nancy Landon Kassebaum (R-KS) said, "Senator Wofford has really dedicated his life to community service and has been a long believer in its value." Senator Kassebaum noted that while some senators had questions about the Corporation's program, "I think if there is anybody who can convince someone it is a good idea, you are going to be the person."

With it's second year beginning October 12, AmeriCorps will involve more than 25,000 citizens in full-time service with over 400 local and national charitable groups. Learn and Serve America provides opportunities for 750,000 students to engage in service to their communities through their schools. Through the Senior Corps, about 450,000 RSVP volunteers serve at 760 local programs; more than 12,000 Senior Companions provide care and assistance to other older citizens, especially frail elderly; and more than 24,000 Foster Grandparent volunteers serve children with special needs.

Funding for the Corporation's programs is being considered by the Congress as part of the fiscal year 1996 appropriations process. The Senior Corps programs have been nearly fully funded in proposals in both houses of Congress. AmeriCorps*VISTA -- a national service program with nearly 4,000 service members which is separately funded from AmeriCorps -- has been seriously cut in the House proposal, but sustained a much more modest cut in the Senate. Funding for AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America was eliminated in both House and Senate appropriations proposals. The President has vowed to veto the VA-HUD appropriations bill if it contains no funding for the programs.

###

june 29, 1993

Joel,

Carrie Yourd just called me from Miller's office. Sen. Boren is organizing an effort to propose on the floor to strike the Public Lands Corps amendment. He feels that it is duplicative of the Civilian Community Corps, which Carrie says is funded by the DOD to employ former military to run youth corps "boot" camps (Carrie's description). If struck, Miller will fight to put the Land Corps amendment back in the act during conference, but Miller's office wants to nip it in the bud. Essentially, Carrie would like us - especially Espy - to do something, if we want to see the Land Corps remain in the bill.

Attached is Civilian Community
Corps bill

Kathryn

225-
522
2844

Boren Staff

Peter Borkhous

202-224-0147

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Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee

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Senate VA, HUD and Independent Agencies Subcommittee

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House VA, HUD and Independent Agencies Subcommittee

Majority Members

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FACT SHEET

NATIONAL SERVICE TRUST ACT OF 1993

The "National Service Trust Act of 1993" is innovative public policy founded on traditional American values: offering educational opportunity, demanding personal responsibility, and building the American community. In affirming these values, the initiative also rejects big bureaucracy -- reinventing government to unleash the initiative of the American people.

The President's support for service extends from the youngest elementary school students to our oldest citizens, and includes everything from part-time volunteer activities to full-time public service jobs.

The President's initiative will:

- Build the American community through a new domestic Peace Corps that brings Americans together to tackle pressing national problems.
- Offer educational opportunity and reward individual responsibility by providing educational awards to hundreds of thousands of Americans who serve our country.
- Reinvent government by streamlining Federal bureaucracies, relying on locally driven initiatives, and creating flexibility for students and competition among programs.

The Act will establish a Corporation for National Service that will offer Americans who do vital work in the national service initiative an educational award.

The Corporation will establish quality criteria and require measurable impacts, but within these bounds, communities will be able to design programs that meet their own pressing needs. Programs will be expected to educate their participants both in the particular skills their service demands and in the civic responsibility that our democracy requires. In all respects, the Act is designed to build partnerships -- among Federal Government, State governments, and the private sector; and within communities, among the schools, businesses, and civic organizations that seek to fight common problems. Assistance will be distributed on a competitive basis and no program will have a right to funding, but a wide variety of organizations will have a chance to establish programs that serve our country.

Definition of National Service

- Meets unmet educational, environmental, human, or public safety needs.
- Improves the life of the participant, through citizenship education and training.
- Does not displace or duplicate the functions of existing workers.

Organization

- To reduce waste and promote an entrepreneurial government culture, a new government Corporation for National Service will be established, combining the Commission on National and Community Service and ACTION.
- While maintaining existing programs such as VISTA, the new program makes investments in new initiatives; neither the Corporation nor the State commissions will operate them.
- A small bipartisan Board will share power with a Chairperson.
- Flexible and quality-driven personnel policies will include pay-for-performance and a 7-year limit on most tenures.
- The Corporation may solicit and accept private contributions.
- At the state level, commissions on national service will be established to mirror and cooperate with the Federal Corporation.
- Like the Corporation Board, commissions will be composed of bipartisan members from a variety of fields. To ensure a genuine Federal/State partnership, a representative of the Corporation will sit on the State commissions, and a State representative will sit on the Corporation Board.
- All programs will have to compete for support; none will be guaranteed funding.
- One-third of funds will be allocated by population-based formula to State commissions with approved plans for competitive distribution of funds; at least one-third to State commissions on a competitive basis for competitive distribution; and up to one-third will be reserved to the Corporation for allocation on a competitive basis.

Programs

- National quality criteria for programming will be developed for every type of program in conjunction with experts in the field.
- Performance goals and independent evaluations will be required in every program.

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A POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE NUNN-MCCURDY NATIONAL SERVICE BILL

Joel Berg, Draft 11/25/92

I. Brief Legislative History

In May of 1988, the DLC released the book Citizenship and National Service, which outlined proposals to tie almost all forms of federal student aid to the performance of community service. The book was authored by then DLC Policy Director Will Marshall and was based on an idea advocated by Northwestern University Professor Charles Moskos. The proposal received a brief flurry of publicity that was soon overshadowed by a Presidential Campaign in which Dukakis failed to adopt the plan and Bush announced his diversionary call for a "thousand points of light."

Following the election, on January 27 1989, Senator Sam Nunn and Representative Dave McCurdy, along with Senators such as Robb, Glenn, Breaux, and Sasser, and Mikulski and Representatives such as Penny and Kennelly, announced the introduction of S.3./H.R.660, the Citizenship and National Service Act (DOCUMENT 11). The bill was almost identical the proposal offered by the DLC the previous May.

With the introduction of a concrete legislative proposal, the national service debate ignited immediately. Interest groups from all sides of the ideological spectrum united to defeat the bill.

Group after group lined up to make outrageous claims about the calamity that would follow if the bill passed. The opposition was led by higher education officials who showed no reluctance to regularly make charges that had absolutely no basis in fact.

Opposition to the proposal was so immediate, so wide-spread, and so vitriolic that some original supporters and co-sponsors of the bill -- including Senator Mikulski of Maryland and Representative Kennelly of Connecticut -- moved to politically distance themselves from the idea by publicly stating opposition to student aid to service.

The proposal was immediately killed by the two Congressional Committees with most direct jurisdiction over the matter. Senator Kennedy of Massachusetts, Chair of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, gave a fair and civil hearing to Senator Nunn before quietly shelving the bill.

On the House side, Augustus Hawkins of California, then-Chair of the House Education and Labor Committee, conducted brief hearings in which the bill's supporters were overwhelmingly outnumbered the bill's opponents. McCurdy's own testimony was given a barely civil reception, as many Members of the Committee interrupted him frequently with harsh criticism; one member even implied McCurdy was racist and soon afterwards walked out of the hearing room.

At the time, the DLC and PPI did not possess the resources to mount an effective ideological and political counter-attack. As a consequence, Nunn, McCurdy, and DLC/PPI worked behind the scenes to pass through Congress an omnibus national and community service bill that included a few small scale pilot projects to test a version of national service.

The opposition to the Nunn-McCurdy Bill should provide helpful foreshadowing as to which groups may oppose BC's national service plan.

II. Groups Opposing the Bill

Groups and individuals that rarely agreed on anything joined together to condemn the DLC and Nunn-McCurdy national service proposals.

Peace groups opposed the proposals, saying it would boost the military, while the military opposed the bill, warning loudly that national service could wreck the All-Volunteer Force. Both liberals and conservatives opposed the bill, both believing that citizens have no real obligation to their society.

The immense opposition to the concept proved what a dramatic threat national service posed to the status quo.

A) Colleges and Universities

Led by the lobbying of the American Council of Education, the United Negro College Fund, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the College Board, and the Association of Urban Universities, the higher education community lined up in lock step to forcefully oppose the bill in strident language. (See DOCUMENT 17 for a flattering profile from Congressional Quarterly of these groups)

They generally made the following arguments:

- 1) Many poor and minority-groups students, who already face countless barriers to enrolling in college, could not afford to work for the \$100 a week stipend offered by the program.
- 2) Wealthy students who participated in the program would receive the same amount of financial aid as poor students.
- 3) Some students would still have to borrow large amounts of money -- on top of their national service voucher- - in order to be able to attend the college of their choice.

- 4) The Citizen Corps would be too costly -- the money would be better spent on increasing the budgets for existing student aid programs.
- 5) Students' desire for learning would be disrupted by a one or two-year hiatus.
- 6) States and localities would be unable to find enough useful work to occupy the time of hundreds of thousands of full-time servers.

The American Council of Education cooked up cost estimates, based on absurdly false assumptions, that the program would cost between \$30 billion to \$50 billion per year. These figures were re-printed widely.

Here is a summary of the reaction from "Many College Officials Oppose Plan That Would Require National Service as a Prerequisite for Federal Student Aid," by Robin Wilson, Chronicle of Higher Education, February 15, 1989: "As college officials learn more about a Congressional plan to require at least a year of national service as a prerequisite for receiving federal student aid, the reviews are coming back with near unanimity: bad idea. College presidents use such phrases as 'indentured servitude,' 'devastation,' and 'death blow' to describe the effects of the plan on both students and on the current financial aid system. Among the most common complaints are that the program would discourage poor students from enrolling in college, that wealthy students could enroll without serving, and that the plan would not insure that students could receive enough money to attend the college of their choice.... 'What you're doing is punishing the poor for being poor,' says Joseph S. Murphy, Chancellor of the City University of New York system. 'This is indentured servitude, which was practiced in Senator Nunn's state in the 19th Century, so it is based on his own cultural experience.'... In addition, college officials are worried about what would happen in the first year a community service plan took effect, when students were in their communities or in the military rather than enrolling in college. The absence of hundreds of thousands of students would drain many institutions of revenue they need to continue operating." (DOCUMENT 9)

The universities' arguments were highly contradictory in many respects. For instance, while vigorously opposing even the concept of linking aid to community service, they were perfectly content with the federal-work student program that linked student aid to **private** service such as working in a university cafeteria or library.

The higher education community-- much of which opposed the original G.I. bill because they feared it would turn college campuses into "hobo jungles" (DOCUMENT 12) -- had another agenda. They worried that they would lose the significant control over the financial aid process that they now enjoy; a universal and simplified system would vastly reduce their ability to steer favored students to certain aid programs and keep other types of students in the dark about available student aid. Increased federal funding might also hurt their own efforts to raise funds for their institutional financial aid. They clearly also feared that with this increased federal commitment to funding students might come increased federal scrutiny about how the universities spend federal

money. Perhaps college presidents expected more embarrassing revelations over excessive and luxurious spending practices like those that humiliated the President of Sanford University. The colleges also had understandable fears about how they would survive the first year of the program in which they would suffer a dramatic decline in enrollment while students perform their first year of service.

B) For Profit Trade Schools

For profit trade schools, also known as proprietary schools, used trade Associations like the National Association of Trade and Technical Schools to object to the Nunn-McCurdy bill. They feared -- rightfully so -- that the Nunn-McCurdy Bill would put many of their member institutions out of business. Senator Nunn has focused hearings of his own Investigations Committee into abuses in such schools, and he and Congressman McCurdy have not been shy about publicly pointing out that such schools are responsible for extraordinarily high default rates among their students.

The proprietary schools made similar arguments as did the colleges and the universities, but they pulled ever harder at liberal heartstrings by stressing how their programs greatly benefited poor, Black, and Hispanic populations. They argued that any attempts to restrict student aid going to their institutions would be elitist move that would limit opportunity for the "forgotten half" of American youth who don't attend college.

C) Student Groups

Students groups naturally stressed the impact that the legislation would have on students. They continually hammered away at the proposal with the claim that it would create a "two tired society" on campuses in which poor students have to work to pay for college while the rich do not. (Of course they ignored the reality that poor students already do work.) Said Penny Crawley, Chairwoman of the Michigan Collegiate Coalition, which represents student governments at 13 of the state's 15 public universities, in the October 2, 1989 Detroit Free Press: "We very strongly believe in public and community service, , but tying it to financial aid creates a draft of the economically disadvantaged. (DOCUMENT 7)

The most active student lobbying group is the United States Student Association (USSA), which took the position that "education is a right" and that no one should have to work to obtain it. At one USSA convention in which I participated in a panel discussion, a student complained to me of all the responsibilities faced by students before suggesting that middle aged people should be the ones serving because they have their lives in order and have more time to perform service. Finally, she scolded me personally, saying, "You just don't know what its like to be a young person."

These students groups are run by mostly white, upper middle class students who seem to have very little grasp on the reality of how many youth from backgrounds less fortunate than them are excluded by the current system. Hiding behind the rallying cry that "education is a right," they later opposed even a small national service pilot program that would provide **additional** aid to students who performed service. An USSA press release about the pilot project said it "places educational access in peril" and that it will manipulate students who rely on federal financial aid." (DOCUMENT 15)

D) Municipal Employee Unions

While AFSCME did not technically oppose the bill, they raised strong objections to it that helped effectively kill the measure in the two Congressional Committees. The union was most concerned that national service would induce states and municipalities into laying off workers (their union membership) and replacing them with sub-minimum wage national service participants.

Even strong anti-displacement language in the bill wasn't enough to prevent AFSCME President Gerald McEntee from testifying personally before the House Education and Labor Committee to express his reservations. (DOCUMENT 14)

E) Teachers Associations

Both NEA and AFT voiced strong reservations to the Nunn-McCurdy bill, expressing worries that the program would restrict educational access and promote municipal worker displacement. AFT President Albert Shanker testified himself before the House Education and Labor Committee.

F) Liberal Advocates

Liberals in Congress and elsewhere opposed the concept because they believed that government owed every young person an education but that the young owed the government nothing in return. Viewing poor and minority youths as perpetual clients, they were unable to envision a future in which youths would themselves provide service. They had such little faith in youth people that they thought their brains would "cool off" after a year or two of service and that they would lose all interest whatsoever in education. Ignoring the history of the G.I. Bill which proved that service would only increase the desire for education, the liberals argued that the Nunn/McCurdy plan would create insurmountable roadblocks to college for poor and minority youths.

House Education and Labor Committee Chair Gus Hawkins opened his March 15, 1989 hearings on national service with the following statement (excerpted): ""First, I'm very leery of tying service to student financial aid programs. Second, I want to insure that service is accompanied by training and education, where necessary. Third, I want to insure that any service bill leaving this committee has strong anti-displacement provisions as well as other labor protections. Finally, in an area of budget restraint, I do not want to see a large Federally-supported service program that drains scarce resources from other existing high priority programs." (DOCUMENT 11, pages 1-1)

Said Congressman William Ford (now Chair of the House Education and Labor Committee) in the October 2, 1989 Detroit Free Press: "Once more, the poor kids get cracked in the head and the handicapped get cracked in the head and the kids who are beyond the age where the military wants them get cracked in the head."(DOCUMENT 7)

Charles Hayes, a Democratic Member of the Committee from Chicago, implied that McCurdy was racist at worst or insensitive to Africans-Americans at best, said, "I heard years and years ago when I was fighting in the Civil Rights movement -- sometimes you almost have to live in this skin to understand the problems you have when it comes to jobs and education." Hayes then walked out of the hearing. (DOCUMENT 14)

Senator Claiborne Pell called making poor students work for aid "cruel." Congressional Quarterly, March 25, 1989 (Document 8)

G) The Military

The concept of national service forced the American military to deal with the uncomfortable reality that many of its soldiers joined the military mostly because it was the most attractive economic opportunity available to them. National service threatened to undo the fiction that patriotism was the sole reason that young men and women joined the military. Unable to openly express such a fear, the military claimed that national service would disrupt group cohesion, impact adversely on unit readiness, and hurt morale by creating more than one class of soldier.

In a July 14, 1989 letter to House Armed Services Committee Chair Les Aspin, the Defense Department Deputy General Counsel L. Neiderlehner wrote: "The Department opposes enactment of this bill because we believe, as written, it would reduce operational readiness, complicate mobilization, and increase federal expenditures significantly in a constrained fiscal environment." Said the accompanying document offering the official views of the Department: "The proposed legislation would likely lead to lower overall military recruit quality, as the civilian service options are significantly more attractive than all currently available military service options and those proposed

in the bill.... Because of the large influx of 2-year enlistments, the training base (and associated costs) would have to expand markedly. In addition, unit training work loads, personnel turbulence, and attrition experienced in active and Reserve operation units would all increase. Minimum overseas tour lengths would need to be cut, sharply increasing permanent change of station costs. The combined effects of these factors would drive sharp accession and end strength increases, disrupt unit cohesion, weaken esprit and moral, reduce individual proficiency and compromise unit readiness."

Said Thomas Byrne of the private Association of the Army, "We don't want high-caliber people who might otherwise join the Army off planting trees instead." (DOCUMENT 10) No wonder the Defense Department also gave very little attention to a report conducted by one of its own research arms concluding that national service would actually **help** military recruiting.

While BC's proposal is unlikely to have a specific military component, the Defense department is likely to worry over any program that will compete with its own recruitment efforts.

H) Anti-Draft Groups

Anti-Draft groups vigorously opposed the Nunn-McCurdy Bill, believing it to be nothing more than a stalking horse for the reintroduction of the military draft. These opponents frequently criticized what they perceived to be the hidden pro-draft intentions of Senator Nunn and the hawkish Democratic Leadership Council.

According to a fact sheet distributed by the National Interreligious Board of Conscientious Objectors (NISBCO): "All those (national service) proposals should be examined carefully, because they involve far more than they say they are." (DOCUMENT 2) Another NISBCO document says: "Many proponents, even of the most innocent proposals, privately concede that it is a cover-up for the return to the draft. Sen. Sam Nunn, who is behind the most widely publicized program, said it was a mistake to have ended the draft. " (DOCUMENT 3)

While most concerned that national service would lead to a military draft, these groups also levelled a series of specific objections against the concept:

- 1) The bill would economically coerce youths into service, thereby diluting the true spirit of service. "Service is not so much a duty, as a joyful, free response to the Love of God. Not a one or two year obligation, but a lifetime." (DOCUMENT 2)
- 2) The corps' attempts to imbue youths with values may backfire. "Drug use, sexual irresponsibility, and other problems could be aggravated among groups of young people gathered in programs far from the good influences of family, school, church, and synagogue." (DOCUMENT 3)
- 3) National service will train American young people to unquestioningly follow orders.

- 4) The government will use national service as a smokescreen to cut social services.
- 5) National service will help corporations keep wages low.
- 6) The national service program would likely exclude religious groups from participation.

The peace groups also made the familiar, if contradictory claims, that national service would restrict educational access and also cost too much.

These opponents used extremely sharp and moralistic language against the bill. The following is from National Service: Its Moral Appeal and Ethical Problems, by Edward Leroy Long, Jr, Professor Emeritus of Christian Ethics and Theology of Culture at Drew University, an article was distributed by the NISBCO (DOCUMENT #1): "As long as the making of money is equated with the 'real world,' and as long as large numbers of the American public view people in the service professions as slightly naive and even a bit pathetic (although admittedly dedicated), then to require people to do a term of such work may only generate further dislike for such roles. A great number involved in such service might well do it with reluctance and resentment -- treating it as an annoyance and considering it a punishment. Having 'paid their dues,' they would proceed, perhaps confirmed in their suspicion about the value of service, with the 'real' business of accumulating private affluence. Service could thus receive that stigma of appearing to be a necessary evil as well as a losing enterprise. Unless ways can be found to reorder the dominant values and reward schemes of our society, many of the ideals that would supposedly be advanced by a program of national service might actually be endangered by it."

Wrote John Swomley from the Fellowship of Reconciliation (DOCUMENT 4): "National service is a way of getting American youth who have no jobs to work for the government or private enterprise at less than the going rate of pay, even in a minimum wage, service economy. In that capacity, they would perform needed functions that otherwise affluent corporations and adult Americans would have to provide through higher wages or taxes. National Service would also take attention away from the flight of business overseas and the expansion of U.S. imperialism. Unfortunately, national service is being presented under the spurious guise of patriotism and community building."

I) Conservative/Libertarian Activists

While some conservatives -- most notably William F. Buckley -- support some form of national service, the idea is an anathema to most Libertarian Conservatives. They object that the program will be too bureaucratic and too costly, the program will institute an un-American form of government compulsion, and that the program will fail to solve social problems that could be better solved by the unfettered forces of the marketplace.

Bruce Chapman of the Hudson Institute wrote: "I know that the social engineers who devised this plan want opponents to feel selfish, but I don't. Instead, as a citizen and as a father, I feel exploited, because the use of government student loans and grants, for example, as a device to pry government-specified 'service' from recipients actually traduces the idealism of youth and advances the false claim to people's time as well as their money. National service also stigmatizes the honest labor of the poor, denigrates the genuine altruism of millions of Americans who donate their time to worthy causes without expectation of material reward, and implicitly downgrades the priority of national defense." (DOCUMENT 18)

One of the most persistent opponents of national service is Doug Bandow of the libertarian Cato Institute. In "Service With a Smell," Reason, June 1989, Bandow wrote: "The program would transform today's obnoxious entitlement ethic -- that college students are entitled to a taxpayer-subsidized education -- into an even more insidious one; that they are entitled to a taxpayer-subsidized education if they perform government-approved tasks. The obvious solution to letting young people wrongly believe that life offers benefits with no responsibilities would be to eliminate the unjust benefits. The program is also explicitly designed to fill only jobs not worth doing. The legislation requires the Citizen Corps ensure that none of its members displaced any current worker or impair 'existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements.' Anyway, the government has never found many useful tasks for social service workers... What does the DLC suggest? Working with the terminally ill, helping day-care centers, building playgrounds, handling police paperwork, and installing smoke detectors in the homes of senior citizens -- activities that hardly justify a massive new federal program. The bureaucracy required to administer a system involving so many young people would squash the local volunteer groups that are supposed to help carry out the program... We should not be fooled by all their kindler, gentler rhetoric about what would in fact be the greatest social-engineering scheme in U.S. history. Government-sponsored national service will be either elective, in which case it will duplicate private efforts, stifle existing organizations, and waste money. Or it will be mandatory and will subvert the compassionate impulses that animate true volunteerism and will violate the principles of what is supposed to be a free society. We need more individual service, not a program of government service." (DOCUMENT 10)

J. Volunteerism Advocates

Moderate Republicans such as George Bush and Senator Nancy Kassebaum -- as well as some Democrats -- opposed national service on the grounds that paying servers would dampen the American spirit of volunteerism. Kassebaum called the concept of "paid volunteers" an "oxymoron" and Bush objected to "bribing students" into service with vouchers or stipends. Bush, would supported a huge raise in cabinet salaries, opposed giving any financial compensation to servers whatsoever, saying "service is its own reward." Instead, they opt for diffuse government efforts to increase volunteerism.

III. Groups Supporting the Bill

A) Public Opinion Polls

Public opinion polls, including some commissioned by the DLC, consistently showed high levels of support among voters for the concept of linking student aid to voluntary national service. A September 1989 Gallup Poll showed that even a majority of teenagers supported some form of national service.

B) Editorial Writers

The majority of newspapers that editorialized on the proposal supported it. (See media summary by Adam Sohn).

C) Episcopal Church

The Episcopal Church of the United States -- led by its Washington lobbyist with strong ties to the DLC -- endorsed the Nunn/McCurdy concept.

D) The United States Junior Chamber of Commerce

The United States Junior Chamber of Commerce (the Jaycees) -- after considerable internal debate -- endorsed the concept. (DOCUMENT 19)

E) Students

Some individual student leaders -- not associated with the United States Student Association -- supported the idea. Mainstream and student newspaper reports also indicated that many rank-and-file students also supported the concept.

F) The National Service Secretariat

Donald J. Eberly, the founder and President of the Coalition for National Service, has been fighting for national service for three decades. However, his organization is basically a one-person operation that carries very little clout.

IV. Groups with Mixed Positions on the Bill

A) Youth Service Groups

Youth Service America (YSA), the umbrella group representing existing youth service organizations, offered limited support for the Nunn-McCurdy proposal. Wrote Co-Director Roger Landrum in the June 2, 1988 The Washington Post (DOCUMENT 5), "Conditioning federal grants and loans for college education or a first-home down payment in exchange for a couple of years of national or community service, military or civilian, is not an unreasonable quid pro quo." However, YSA worried that the new program would ignore existing youth corps and thus leave them out in the cold. Some service groups seems reluctant to give up their moral monopoly insured by having only small numbers of highly altruistic people engaged in community service.

B) Children's Advocacy Groups

A study released by the Children's Defense Fund offered strong support for engaging youth in community service, at the same time it opposed linking such service to federal financial aid. The May 1989 report, entitled "Service Opportunities for Youth," said "Given the proper guidance, direction, and supervision, young people respond well to the responsibility of service and sense the value of their efforts. This, in turn, increases youths' self-esteem and the likelihood of their becoming productive adults...However, establishing service as a prerequisite for federal aid to college students goes too far, creating a *de facto* mandatory service system that discriminates against motivated young people with the fewest resources." (DOCUMENT 13)

V. Additional Groups With Stakes in National Service

A) Financial Lending Institutions

Banks, lending institutions, and Sallie Mae will have a great stake in the debate over significant changes in current student loan programs.

B) The Commission on National and Community Service

The people appointed by Bush to the Commission on National and Community Service -- most of whom Republicans with very little experience in service but some of whom are Democrats committed to the DLC concept -- will want to have a significant role in the debate over national service. The professional staff of the commission will have an especially high stake in fighting to keep their own jobs.

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NS/Congress

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

Legislative Affairs Staff

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4/28/93

A BILL

To provide for the conservation, rehabilitation, and improvement of natural and cultural resources located on public or Indian lands, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SHORT TITLE

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the "Young American Conservation Corps Act of 1993".

FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

SEC. 2. (a) FINDINGS. The Congress finds that--

(1) public lands, resources, and facilities, including rangelands, wildlife refuges, forests, water resources, fishery facilities, historic and cultural sites, and urban and community resources, have become subject to increasing public use and resource production demands;

(2) the condition of many of these lands, resources, and facilities has deteriorated as a result of these increasing uses and demands and as a result of the inability of Government agencies to adequately staff and fund the maintenance necessary to arrest the deterioration;

(3) public land management agencies have a responsibility to assure that public lands and resources are managed--

(A) to assure continued productivity,

(B) to protect public health and safety, and

(C) to assure their wise and economic conservation,

maintenance, and use;

(4) a program designed to systematically guide and enhance the conservation, rehabilitation, and improvement of our public lands, resources, and facilities is urgently needed; and

(5) youth conservation programs have proven highly successful and cost effective in providing training and jobs for unemployed youth and in assisting land management agencies at all levels of government to reduce the backlog of neglected public land conservation, rehabilitation and improvement projects, and to carry out other public land resource management work.

(b) PURPOSE. It is the purpose of this Act to--

(1) reduce the backlog of conservation, rehabilitation, and improvement work on the public lands, prevent the further deterioration of public lands and resources and facilities, conserve energy and restore and maintain community lands, resources, and facilities;

(2) establish a Young American Conservation Corps to carry out a program to improve, restore, maintain, and conserve public lands and resources in the most cost-effective manner;

* (3) use such program to assist State and local governments in carrying out needed public land and resource conservation, rehabilitation, and improvement projects;

* (4) provide for implementation of the program in such manner as will foster conservation and the wise use of natural and cultural resources through the establishment of working relationships among the Federal, State, and local governments, Indian tribes, and other public and private organizations;

(5) use this program by training and other means to increase employment opportunities for young men and women especially those who

are economically, socially, physically, or educationally disadvantaged and who may not otherwise be productively employed;

(6) provide guidance and job placement information in coordination with State and local government and the private sector; and

* (7) form partnerships between Federal, State, and local government agencies and the private sector, and private individuals, to provide matching funds to assist in financing youth conservation programs.

DEFINITIONS

SEC. 3. For purposes of this Act:

(1) The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Agriculture, except where otherwise expressly provided.

(2) The terms "public lands" and "publicly owned lands" mean any lands and waters (or interest therein) administered by the United States or by any agency or instrumentality of a State or local government.

(3) The term "program" means the public lands conservation, rehabilitation, and improvement program established under this Act.

(4) The term "program agency" means any Federal agency or instrumentality with responsibility for the management of any public or Indian lands, any State agency designated by the Governor to manage the program in that State, and the governing body of any Indian tribe.

(5) The term "Indian tribe" means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other group which is recognized as an Indian tribe by the Secretary. Such term also includes any Native village corporation, regional corporation, and Native group established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.).

(6) The term "Indian" means a person who is a member of an Indian tribe.

(7) The term "Indian lands" means any real property owned by an Indian tribe, any real property held in trust by the United States for individual Indians or Indian tribes, and any real property held by individual Indians or Indian tribes which is subject to restrictions on alienation imposed by the United States.

(8) The term "employment security service" means the agency in each of the several States with responsibility for the administration of unemployment and employment programs, and the oversight of local labor conditions.

(9) The term "chief administrator" means the head of any program agency as that term is defined in paragraph (4).

(10) The terms "youth" or "participant", used interchangeably in this Act, mean any individual enrolled in the Young American Conservation Corps in accordance with Section 5.

(11) The term "State" means any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands.

PUBLIC LANDS CONSERVATION, REHABILITATION,
AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

SEC. 4. (a) ESTABLISHMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAM.

The Secretary, in cooperation with the Secretary of the Interior and after consultation with the Secretary of Labor, shall establish and administer a public lands conservation, rehabilitation, and improvement program to carry out the purposes of this Act. Under such program, the Secretary shall

provide assistance to program agencies for the establishment and operation of residential and nonresidential Young American Conservation Corps centers and for the implementation by the Young American Conservation Corps of projects designed to carry out such purposes.

(b) PROJECTS INCLUDED. The program established under this section may include, but shall not be limited to, projects such as--

(1) ecosystem restoration, which includes protection of wetlands, restoring riparian zones, improving watershed conditions, restoring fisheries and wildlife habitat, closing roads to reduce soil movement and sedimentation, cleanup of abandoned mine sites, and treating timber stands to restore vigor, improve health, and reduce the risk of damaging insect and disease outbreaks and wildfire;

(2) forest health restoration;

(3) forestry, nursery, and silvicultural operations;

(4) rangeland conservation, rehabilitation, and improvement;

(5) recreation and trail maintenance and improvement, and construction;

(6) rural and urban revitalization and community service;

(7) historical and cultural site preservation and maintenance;

(8) fish culture, habitat maintenance and improvement, and other fishery assistance;

(9) road and trail maintenance and improvement;

(10) erosion, flood, drought, and storm damage assistance and control;

(11) stream, lake, and waterfront harbor and port improvement, and pollution control;

(12) insect, disease, rodent, and fire prevention, and control;

(13) improvement of abandoned railroad beds and rights-of-way to serve as trails;

(14) energy conservation projects and renewable resource enhancement;

(15) recovery of biomass from public lands, particularly forestry lands; and

(16) reclamation and improvement of strip-mined lands.


(c) PREFERENCE FOR CERTAIN PROJECTS. The program shall provide a preference for those projects which--

(1) will provide long-term benefits to the public;

(2) will provide meaningful training and work experience to the youth involved;

(3) will be labor intensive; and

(4) can be planned and initiated promptly.

 (d) LIMITATIONS TO PUBLIC LANDS. Projects to be carried out under the program shall be limited to projects on public lands or Indian lands except where a project involving other lands will provide a documented public benefit and where reimbursement will be provided to the program agency for that portion of the total costs of the program which does not provide a public benefit. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any reimbursement referred to in the preceding sentence shall be retained by the program agency and shall be used by the agency for purposes of carrying out other projects under the program.

(e) CONSISTENCY. The Secretary and the chief administrators of other program agencies shall assure that projects selected under this Act for conservation, rehabilitation, or improvement of any public lands are consistent with the provisions of law relating to the management and

administration of such lands and with all other applicable provisions of law.

(f) CONSERVATION CENTERS. Each program agency may apply to the Secretary for approval of conservation centers to carry out projects under this Act. Conservation centers may be residential or nonresidential. The location and type of conservation centers shall be selected in such manner as will increase the enrollment of economically, socially, physically, and educationally disadvantaged youths, and of youths from areas of high unemployment, and will promote partnerships among government entities and the private sector.

(g) LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION. Any State carrying out a program under this Act shall provide a mechanism under which local governments in the State may be approved by the State to participate in the program and to carry out projects in accordance with the requirements of this Act.

(h) AGREEMENTS. Program agencies may enter into contracts and other appropriate arrangements with State and local government agencies and private organizations for the management of conservation centers under the program.

(i) JOINT PROJECTS. The Secretary is authorized to develop jointly with the Secretary of Labor regulations designed to allow, where appropriate, joint projects in which activities supported by funds authorized under this Act are coordinated with activities supported by funds authorized under employment and training statutes administered by the Department of Labor (including the Job Training Partnership Act) and by funds from the private sector. Such regulations shall provide standards for approval of joint projects which meet both the purposes of this Act and the purposes of such employment and training statutes under which funds are available to support the activities proposed for approval. Such

regulations shall also establish a single mechanism for approval of joint projects developed at the State or local level.

ENROLLMENT, FUNDING, AND MANAGEMENT

SEC. 5. (a) ENROLLMENT IN PROGRAM. (1) Enrollment in the Young American Conservation Corps shall be limited to individuals who, at the time of enrollment, are--

(A) unemployed;

(B) not less than sixteen or more than twenty-five years of age;

and

(C) citizens or lawful permanent residents of the United States or lawfully admitted alien parolees or refugees.

(2) Except in the case of a program limited to the months of June, July, and August, individuals who at the time of applying for enrollment have attained age sixteen but not attained age nineteen, and who are no longer enrolled in any secondary school shall not be enrolled unless they give adequate written assurances, under criteria to be established by the Secretary, that they did not leave school for the express purpose of enrolling.

(3) The selection of youth to serve in the Young American Conservation Corps in any conservation center shall be the responsibility of the chief administrator of the program agency. The youths shall be selected from those qualified persons who have--

(A) applied to, or been recruited by, the program agency, a State employment security, an administrative entity under the Job Training Partnership Act, community or community-based nonprofit organization, the sponsor of an Indian program, or the sponsor of a migrant or seasonal farmworker program; and

(B) been screened for eligibility and referred to the program agency by the State employment security service.

(4) In the recruitment and selection of youths, special consideration shall be given to both--

(A) economically, socially, physically, and educationally disadvantaged youths, and

(B) youths residing in areas, both rural and urban, which have substantial unemployment.

(5) (A) Except for a program limited to the months of June, July, and August, any qualified individual selected for enrollment may be enrolled for a period not to exceed 24 months. When the term of enrollment does not consist of one continuous 24-month term, the total of shorter terms may not exceed 24 months.

(B) No individual may remain enrolled in the Young American Conservation Corps after that individual has attained the age of twenty-six.

(b) SERVICES, FACILITIES, SUPPLIES, ET CETERA. The program agency shall provide such quarters, board, medical care, transportation, and other services, facilities supplies, and equipment as the Secretary deems necessary for conservation centers. Whenever possible, the Secretary shall make arrangements with the Secretary of Defense to have such logistical support provided by a military installation near the proposed center, including the provision of temporary tent centers where needed, transportation, and residential supervision. The Secretary shall establish basic standards of health, nutrition, sanitation, and safety for all conservation centers, and shall assure that such standards are enforced.

(c) CONSERVATION CENTER MANAGEMENT. The chief administrator of each conservation center shall have sufficient supervisory staff appointed or

arranged through the Secretary of Defense, which may include youths who have displayed exceptional leadership qualities.

(d) GRANTS AND AGREEMENTS. (1) The Secretary may award grants to, or enter into agreements with, program agencies for the funding and operation of conservation centers approved by the Secretary under this Act.

(2) The Secretary shall not make any grant to, or enter into any agreement with any program agency for the funding of any conservation center under this Act unless such agency certifies that projects carried out by the conservation center will not--

(A) result in the displacement of individuals currently employed (either directly or under contract with any private contractor) by the program agency concerned (including partial displacement through reduction of non-overtime hours, wages, or employment benefits);

(B) result in the employment of any individual when any other person is in a layoff status from the same or substantially equivalent job within the jurisdiction of the program agency concerned; or

(C) impair existing contracts for services.

(3) Payments under grants under this section may be made in advance or by way of reimbursement and at such intervals and on such conditions as the Secretary finds necessary.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS. There is authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary for the purpose of carrying out this act.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE STATUS

SEC. 6. (a) IN GENERAL. Except as otherwise specifically provided in the following paragraphs, participants and crew leaders shall not be deemed

Federal employees and shall not be subject to the provisions of law relating to Federal employment:

(1) For purposes of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 and Title II of the Social Security Act, participants and crew leaders shall be deemed employees of the United States and any service performed by any person as a participant shall be deemed to be performed in the employ of the United States.

(2) For purposes of Subchapter I of Chapter 81 of Title 5, United States Code, relating to the compensation of Federal employees for work injuries, participants and crew leaders shall be deemed civil employees of the United States within the meaning of the term "employee" as defined in Section 8101 of Title 5, United States Code, and the provisions of that subchapter shall apply, except--

(A) the term "performance of duty" shall not include any act of a participant or crew leader while absent from his or her assigned post of duty, except while participating in an activity authorized by or under the direction and supervision of the Secretary or the conservation center supervisory staff (including an activity while on pass or during travel to or from such post of duty); and

(B) compensation for disability shall not begin to accrue until the day following the date on which the injured participant's or crew leader's employment is terminated.

(3) For purposes of Chapter 171 of Title 28, United States Code, relating to tort claims procedure, participants and crew leaders shall be deemed employees of the United States within the meaning of the term "employee of the Government" as defined in Section 2671 of Title 28, United States Code.

(4) For purposes of Section 5911 of Title 5, United States Code, relating to allowances for quarters, youths and crew leaders shall be deemed employees of the United States within the meaning of the term "employee" as defined in that section.

(b) AMENDMENT OF TITLE 5. Section 8332(b) of Title 5, United States Code, is amended--

(1) by striking out "and" at the end of paragraph (11);

(2) by striking out the period at the end of paragraph (12) and inserting in lieu thereof "; and"; and

(3) by adding after paragraph (12) the following new paragraph:

"(13) service as a youth or participant or crew leader only if the youth or participant or crew leader in the Young American Conservation Corps later becomes subject to this subchapter."

USE OF VOLUNTEERS

SEC. 7. (a) Where any program agency has authority to use volunteer services in carrying out functions of the agency, such agency may use volunteer services for purposes of assisting projects related to conservation centers established under this Act and may expend funds made available for those purposes. Funds may be used to provide for services or costs incidental to the utilization of such volunteers, including transportation, supplies, lodging, subsistence, recruiting, training, and supervision.

(b) (1) The Secretary may recruit, without regard to the civil service classification laws, rules or regulations, the services of individuals contributed without compensation as volunteers for aiding or in facilitating the activities administered by the Secretary through the Forest Service.

(2) In accepting such services, the Secretary--

(A) shall not permit the use of volunteers in hazardous duty or law enforcement work, or in policymaking processes or to displace any employee, participant, crew leader, or other participant under this Act; and

(B) may provide for services or costs incidental to the utilization of volunteers, including transportation, supplies, lodging, subsistence, recruiting, training, and supervision.

(3) Volunteers under this subsection shall not be deemed employees of the United States except for the purposes of the tort claims provisions of Title 28, United States Code, and Subchapter I of Chapter 81 of Title 5, United States Code, relating to compensation for work injuries.

SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY

SEC. 8. (a) PAY. The Secretary shall establish standards for--

(1) rates of pay for youth which shall be not less than the wage required by section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1));

(2) rates of pay for crew leaders which shall be at a wage comparable to the compensation in effect for grades GS-3 to GS-7;

(3) reasonable hours and conditions of employment.

(4) post service evaluations performed at intervals as determined by the Secretary;

(5) a tracking system for program participants at the end of the program period; and

(6) repayment of school loans through community service or equivalent work.

(b) COORDINATION. The Secretary and the chief administrators of other program agencies carrying out programs under this Act shall coordinate the programs with related Federal, State, local, and private activities.

EDUCATION, GUIDANCE, AND PLACEMENT

SEC. 9. (a) ACADEMIC CREDIT. Whenever possible, the Secretary shall make arrangements for the award of academic credit by educational institutions and agencies to participants for competencies developed from work experience under this Act.

(b) STUDY. Program agencies may provide training and educational materials and services for participants and may enter into arrangements with academic institutions for academic study by participants during nonworking hours to upgrade literacy skills, obtain equivalency diplomas or college degrees, or enhance employable skills. Whenever possible, a participant seeking study or training not provided at his or her conservation center shall be offered assignment to a conservation center providing such study or training.

(c) CERTIFICATION. The program agencies shall provide certification of the training skills acquired by youths who have participated in the program.

(d) GUIDANCE AND PLACEMENT. The program agency shall provide such job guidance and placement information and assistance for youth as may be necessary. Such assistance shall be provided in coordination with appropriate State, local, and private agencies and organizations.

(e) POST SERVICE BENEFIT. The program agency shall provide post-service education and training benefits (such as scholarships and grants) for each participant in an amount of \$100 per month not to exceed \$2,400 for the enrollment period.

(f) USE OF POST SERVICE BENEFIT. A post service benefit provided under Subsection (e) shall only be used for--

(A) payment of a student loan from Federal or non-Federal sources;
or

(B) tuition, room and board, books and fees, and other costs associated with attendance (pursuant to Section 472 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 108711)) at an institution of higher education of higher learning on a full-time basis, or to pay the expenses incurred in the full-time participation in an apprenticeship program approved by the appropriate State agency.

EVALUATION AND PILOT PROJECTS

SEC. 10. (a) RESEARCH AND EVALUATION. The Secretary shall provide for research and evaluation to--

(1) determine costs and benefits, tangible and otherwise, of work performed under this Act and of training and employable skills and other benefits gained by participants, and

(2) identify options for improving program productivity and youth benefits.

(b) DEMONSTRATIONS. The Secretary may authorize pilot or experimental projects to demonstrate or test new or alternative arrangements or subjects of work and training for programs under this Act, which may include alternatives identified under Subsection (a) (2).

ANNUAL REPORT

SEC. 11. The Secretary shall prepare and submit to the President and to the Congress at least once each year a report detailing the activities carried out under this Act. Such report shall be submitted not later than

March 31 of each year following the date of enactment of this Act. The report shall describe (1) conservation work procedures, accomplishments and benefits; (2) the extent to which youth who are economically, socially, physically or educationally disadvantaged have been enrolled in and benefited by the program; (3) other youth benefits; (4) problems and opportunities encountered in carrying out the Act which require attention; (5) summary of evaluations completed on youth at program end; (6) a tracking system to determine the status of youth at a given amount of time after program end. The Secretary shall include in the report such recommendations as he considers appropriate.

LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

SEC. 12. The Secretary of Labor shall make available to the Secretary and to any program agency under this Act such labor market information as is appropriate for use in carrying out the purposes of this Act.

EMPLOYEE APPEAL RIGHTS

SEC. 13. (a) In the case of--

(1) the displacement of a Federal employee or the failure to reemploy a Federal employee in a layoff status, contrary to a certification under section 5(d)(2)(A) or (B) of this Act, or

(2) the displacement of a Federal employee by reason of the use of one or more volunteers under Section 7(b)(2)(A) of this Act, such employee is entitled to appeal such action to the Merit Systems Protection Board under Section 7701 of Title 5, United States Code.

(b) In the case of--

(1) The displacement of any other individual employed

(either directly or under contract with any private contractor) by a program agency or grantee, or the failure to reemploy an employee in layoff status, contrary to a certification under Section 205(d)(2)(A) or (B) of this Act, or

(2) the displacement of such individual by reason of the use of one or more volunteers under Section 7(b)(2)(A) of this Act, the requirements contained in Section 144 of the Job Training Partnership Act (Public Law 97-300) shall apply, and such individual shall be deemed an interested person for purposes of the application of such requirements.

(c) For purposes of this section, the term "displacement" includes, but is not limited to, any partial displacement through reduction of non-overtime hours, wages, or employment benefits.

EXTRA COPIES OF ATTACHMENTS (FOR POSSIBLE
DISTRIBUTION TO SENATOR BOND AND/OR HIS STAFF)

“Attachment A” ---- Memorandum by USDA Assistant General Counsel Ken Cohen explaining the legal basis for USDA continuing to sponsor AmeriCorps projects

“Attachment B” --- Letter from CNS CEO Harris Wofford to Senator Charles Grassley outlining the importance of USDA AmeriCorps projects, particularly those in rural America

“Attachment C” --- Description of USDA AmeriCorps projects in Missouri

“Attachment D” --- News clips about USDA AmeriCorps projects in Missouri

“Attachment E” --- Letter from Senator Leahy to Seantor Bond




United States
Department of
Agriculture

Office of the
General
Counsel

Wash.
D.C.
20250-1400

MAR 27 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR JOEL S. BERG
DIRECTOR
NATIONAL SERVICE

FROM Kenneth E. Cohen 
Assistant General Counsel
Research and Operations Division

SUBJECT Authority of USDA to Administer an AmeriCorps
Program Without a Grant From the Corporation for
National and Community Service

This memorandum is in response to your request for a legal opinion as to whether the Department of Agriculture ("USDA") has the authority to administer a national service program in the absence of a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service (the "Corporation") to support the program. For the reasons expressed below, it is my view (i) that USDA does have the authority to administer a national service program without a grant from the Corporation, but (ii) USDA does not have the authority to bestow upon program participants those benefits commonly associated with national service programs, i.e., living allowance, health insurance, child-care, and an educational award, unless USDA receives some assistance, even non-monetary assistance, from the Corporation.

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-610, 104 Stat. 3129, codified at 42 U.S.C. § 12501 et seq. (the "Act"), as amended by the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, Pub. L. No. 103-82, 107 Stat. 785, established the Corporation in order to administer various national service programs authorized under the Act and under the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973. 42 U.S.C. § 12651 et seq. Chief among these programs are the AmeriCorps programs.¹

¹ I.e., AmeriCorps National, AmeriCorps State, and AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps. The term "AmeriCorps" does not actually appear in the Act, but the regulations for the Corporation (45 CFR Chapter XXV) define "AmeriCorps" as "the combination of all AmeriCorps programs and participants." 45 CFR § 2510.20. The regulations then define an "AmeriCorps program" as "any program that receives approved AmeriCorps positions" or "any program that receives Corporation funds under section 121 of the Act," *id.*; an "AmeriCorps participant" is defined as "any individual who is serving in -- (1) An AmeriCorps program; (2) An approved AmeriCorps position;

Section 121 of the Act authorized the Corporation to enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with Federal agencies in order to provide assistance to the agencies in support of national service programs. 42 U.S.C. § 12571(b)(1). This same section also authorized Federal agencies receiving assistance from the Corporation to enter into subcontracts and subagreements with local entities carrying out national service programs to support those programs. (b)(4). The Act further provided that national service programs carried out with assistance provided under Section 121 must provide program participants with specific benefits, to wit: a living allowance, § 12594(a)(1); fully paid health insurance, (d)(1); child-care, (e)(1); and an educational award, § 12595(a).

In Fiscal Year 1995, USDA administered an extensive national service program using assistance, in the form of a grant, that it had received from the Corporation under Interagency Cooperative Agreement No. 94ADFD047, dated October 19, 1994. This agreement had been entered into by the Corporation and USDA pursuant to Section 121 of the Act. In administering this program, USDA provided program participants with the benefits required by 42 U.S.C. §§ 12594 and 12595.

Now, however, USDA faces the possibility that it will not receive grants from the Corporation to support USDA national service programs in Fiscal Year 1996 and beyond. Will the absence of such cash assistance provided under Section 121 preclude USDA from using its appropriations to administer a national service program and provide program participants with the benefits required by 42 U.S.C. §§ 12594 and 12595?

The first step in this inquiry is to ascertain what activities in the area of national service programs the Act presently authorizes Federal agencies to perform, since, in the absence of such authority, Federal agencies generally do not have the authority to provide the above-described benefits that are required for national service program participants. The Act, however, does not contain any express or specific grant of authority to Federal agencies to administer national service programs. Section 121 of the Act, which is the part of the Act that most approximates such a specific authority, merely states that "the Corporation may enter into a contract or cooperative agreement with another Federal agency to support a national service program carried out by the agency." The Act, therefore, only states how the Corporation may assist Federal agencies; in

or (3) Both," *id.* An "approved AmeriCorps position" is defined, in turn, as "an AmeriCorps position for which the Corporation has approved the provision of an AmeriCorps educational award as one of the benefits to be provided for successful service in the position." *Id.*

doing so, it appears simply to assume that Federal agencies may administer national service programs.

Nevertheless, the Act clearly states that only those programs that receive assistance under Section 121 are required to provide the full panoply of national service program benefits.² 42 U.S.C. §§ 12594(a)(1) (living allowance); (d)(1) (health insurance); (e)(1) (child care); § 12595(a) (educational award). Thus, if grants are unavailable as assistance under Section 121, the question becomes whether other forms of assistance, *i.e.*, non-monetary assistance, may be available from the Corporation that will trigger the USDA authority to spend its appropriations on the national service program benefits.

On this issue, the Act is clear. It mentions several forms of non-monetary assistance that could be the subject matter of an agreement between the Corporation and Federal agencies. For example, the Corporation may provide program assistance, in the form of planning assistance, operational assistance, or replication assistance, to entities -- including Federal agencies (see 42 U.S.C. § 12582(a)) -- that submit applications for the planning, establishment, operation, expansion, or relocation of a national service program. 42 U.S.C. § 12574. The Corporation also is authorized to provide technical assistance to those entities, such as Federal agencies, that are described in Section 121 of the Act. § 12575(b). Finally, the Corporation may provide training assistance to support programs already receiving assistance under Section 121. § 12575(a). Thus, there is a cornucopia of non-monetary assistance that the Corporation may provide to Federal agencies through a cooperative agreement that would qualify as assistance under Section 121.³ Once a

² Thus, the Act appears to countenance Federal agencies establishing a species of national service programs that would not bestow upon participants the benefits described in §§ 140 and 141 of the Act. For USDA, this is fully consistent with the Secretary's authority to accept voluntary service. 7 U.S.C. § 2272. However, since I understand your inquiry to be whether USDA may administer a national service program complete with the benefits described in the Act, I will venture no further down this legal cul-de-sac.

³ I do not believe, however, that the availability of educational awards for participants in a national service program may qualify, in and of itself, as Section 121 assistance since such awards, by the very terms of the Act, shall be available to participants in national service programs that are already receiving "assistance provided . . . under [Section 121.]" 42 U.S.C. § 12595(a) (emphasis added). Thus, to characterize the educational awards as Section 121 assistance would amount to

Federal agency receives such assistance from the Corporation, it may then provide to the participants in its national service program the benefits required by 42 U.S.C. §§ 12594 and 12595.

Moreover, Section 121 of the Act does not state that the assistance which Federal agencies receive from the Corporation must be a grant. Section 121(b) refers to cooperative agreements, which envisage substantial involvement on the part of the cooperators, but does not require the transfer of money. Further, Section 121 (b) expressly says that the "support provided by the Corporation pursuant to the contract or cooperative agreement may include the transfer to the Federal agency of funds available to the Corporation." 42 U.S.C. § 12571(b)(1). The necessary corollary of this provision is that such contracts or cooperative agreements may include other forms of assistance besides funds.

This view of USDA's authority to administer national service programs in the absence of a grant from the Corporation is shared by the Corporation itself. Terry Russell, General Counsel for the Corporation, has opined that:

[T]he National and Community Service Act reflects Congressional intent to provide authority to Federal agencies to operate national service programs -- regardless of whether operational funds are transferred from the Corporation to the federal agencies.⁴

Mr. Russell's views provide me with additional comfort for my opinion because, as I indicated to you in an earlier memorandum,⁵ the Corporation has been charged by Congress with administering the Act, and courts of review are deferential to agencies in the agencies' reasonable interpretation of statutes within their purview. Therefore, courts would be deferential to the Corporation in its view that the Act authorizes Federal agencies to operate national service programs without operational funds from the Corporation.

Therefore, I conclude that USDA has the authority to administer a national service program, such as an AmeriCorps program, without a grant from the Corporation, provided that USDA

circular reasoning.

⁴ Memorandum from Terry Russell to Kenneth E. Cohen, Assistant General Counsel, Research and Operations Division, Office of the General Counsel, USDA, at 2 (March 12, 1996).

⁵ Memorandum from Kenneth E. Cohen to Joel Berg, Deputy Director, Office of Public Affairs, at 1 (March 11, 1994).

enters into an agreement with the Corporation to receive non-monetary assistance, such as that referred to in 42 U.S.C. §§ 12574 and 12575.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Michael F. Kiely of this office at (202) 720-4600.

September 4, 1996

The Honorable Charles Grassley
 135 Hart Senate Office Building
 U.S. Senate
 Washington, D. C. 20510-1501

CORPORATION
 FOR NATIONAL
 SERVICE

Dear Senator Grassley,

I would like to bring you up to date on our efforts to significantly expand the use of education award only programs, and propose that we meet to discuss one particular aspect of this effort.

Following our agreement last spring, we notified all state National Service Commissions of the education award only opportunity and we have been discussing it with State Commission Executive Directors around the country, with major non-profit organizations, and with college and university leaders. We will now very shortly announce the AmeriCorps Education Awards Program, making up to 5000 education awards available under this creative initiative. We envision a simplified application process, greater flexibility for participating programs, and reduced reporting burdens, as well as dramatically reduced federal costs. We are launching an aggressive outreach effort to bring this program to the attention of the independent sector, institutions of higher education, and others. I am enclosing the federal register announcement which includes program summary information.

The matter I want to discuss with you relates to my wish to ensure that rural America has a full opportunity to participate in this program. As I believe you are aware, for the past two years the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has successfully utilized more than a thousand AmeriCorps Members in local, rural service programs. These programs evidence remarkable achievements because of their success in leveraging unpaid community volunteers, and because AmeriCorps Members have proven their effectiveness in accomplishing important anti-hunger, rural development, and natural resource management objectives.

As you also know, we have ceased all Corporation program grants to federal agencies, including USDA. Secretary Glickman, however, hopes to be able to continue the USDA's service programs using USDA appropriations and voluntary local contributions — without any grant support from the Corporation for National Service.

1201 New York Avenue, NW
 Washington, DC 20525
 Telephone 202-606-5000

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

Honorable Charles Grassley

Page two

September 4, 1996

He assures me that these programs will continue to be developed and managed at the community level to respond to local needs and concerns, and that, with few exceptions, these efforts involve the active partnership of community-based organizations.

The question is whether our National Service Trust can continue to make available education awards to assist the education of men and women serving full-time in these USDA programs. I hope very much that you and Senator Bond will agree that the continued availability of education awards for participants in these USDA service programs is appropriate.

Let me give further background. We are statutorily required to emphasize programs that serve rural areas. In the majority of our rural programming we have done so through these USDA programs -- in part because many needy rural communities do not have a range of non-profit community organizations in a position to take on the responsibility of developing and managing AmeriCorps programs. If the USDA is not able to continue its national service efforts, there will be a loss of many effective rural service programs. Since the education award has been a key part of the appeal in recruiting service participants, its availability is vital to the continuation of these programs.

Let me emphasize again that this approach would not involve a grant from the Corporation -- or any transfer of Corporation funds -- to USDA. The USDA service participants would receive their living allowance from the USDA. We have the authority to treat such USDA participants as holding national service positions and therefore being entitled to the \$4725 education awards after successfully completing their service. Like other education award recipients, the participants do not get the money themselves (nor does it go through USDA). Instead, the money goes from the National Service Trust to colleges, universities, and vocational schools to pay the recipient's education costs or to lending institutions to help pay existing education loans.

I understand that Senator Leahy, who was instrumental in the development of the USDA Anti-Hunger Corps as well as other rural initiatives that have involved AmeriCorps Members, supports this approach to continuing to meet unmet needs in too-often neglected rural areas, and I hope you will offer your support as well.

I look forward to the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this further, and I know Secretary Glickman would be glad to join me to meet with you as well.

Honorable Charles Grassley
Page three
September 4, 1996

Chuck, thank you again for your leadership in helping to make national service a program in which all Americans can take pride.

Sincerely,



Harris Wofford
Chief Executive Office

Enclosure

USDA AmeriCorps Projects in Missouri

In Missouri, USDA sponsored 11 full-time AmeriCorps Members last year, sponsored 5 full-time AmeriCorps Members this year, and is sponsoring five additional AmeriCorps Members this summer in a special project focused on recovering excess food for distribution to citizens in need.

Last Year (1994-1995) Program Year

Eleven AmeriCorps Members aided flood recovery work on 53,000 acres of land; provided conservation education to 1,770 students; helped maintain 27 flood-retarding dams; assisted 95 landowners in assessing herbicide runoff into the water supply; worked with 11 farmers to develop water management plans; completed flood prevention work on 3,600 acres of land; and restored 995 acres of wetlands.

This Year (1995-1996) Program Year

Five AmeriCorps Members had performed "Farm-a-Syst" water quality evaluations for over 300 farm families, over 60% of whom adopted all or some of the water quality protection measures recommended by the AmeriCorps Members. *This project has been aided significantly by the support of the Missouri Farm Bureau, the Missouri Pork Producers Association, the University Extension Service of Missouri, and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.* The AmeriCorps Members also provided conservation education to over 2,000 students and 900 adults, of whom more than 90% later demonstrated improved knowledge of conservation issues.

This Summer and Fall ("Summer of Gleaning" Initiative)

As part of Secretary Glickman's personal initiative to increase the nation's commitment to recovering excess food for distribution to hungry citizens, AmeriCorps Members are serving this summer and fall in a food recovery project in the Kansas City area in partnership with local organizations. In just the first few weeks of the project, the USDA AmeriCorps Members recovered over 500 pounds of food, which will provide about 330 meals.

AmeriCorps Water Quality Project in Mid-Missouri

September 11, 1996

- ** The USDA - AmeriCorps Water Quality Project in mid-Missouri is one of many projects in Missouri, and nationwide, within the larger AmeriCorps Program.
- ** Five USDA - AmeriCorps Members work in Extension Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office in Boone, Cole, Callaway, Howard, Cooper, and Moniteau Counties to help rural residents assess water quality protection around their home and farm (esp. farmsteads) and provide water quality education to students and adults. The project is sponsored by the NRCS and University of Missouri Extension Service with additional support from the Mo. Dept. of Natural Resources, Water Pollution Control Program.
- ** The Mid-Missouri Water Quality Project is co-sponsored by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of Missouri Extension Service, and the Missouri Department of natural Resources. Additional support is provided by the Missouri Farm Bureau and Missouri Pork Producers Association.
- ** The USDA - AmeriCorps Members started in October 1995. They assess water quality concerns using self-guided worksheets from the Farm*A*Syst Program. Farm*A*Syst was developed by the Extension Service and NRCS at the national level and modified at the state level in order to be appropriate for local conditions and problems.

- ** USDA - AmeriCorps members have provided over 7,800 hours of service.
- ** 300 farmstead assessments have been performed.
- ** Over 60 percent of assessed farmsteads have installed water quality protection measures as a result of the AmeriCorps efforts.
- ** Over 2,000 students have received education about water quality concerns, the water cycle, and other water resource issues. AmeriCorps members have given lessons to students at schools, 4-H meetings, FFA meetings, scouts, and others.
- ** Over 900 adults have received education about water quality concerns, the water cycle, and other water resource issues. Presentations and workshops have been conducted with a number of organizations including Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Extension Councils, Farm Bureau, and others.

- ** The current mid-Missouri project will end in September 1996 at which time new members will be selected and the project will move to another part of the state.

For more information about the USDA - AmeriCorps Water Quality Project in mid-Missouri contact Ross Braun, NRCS, Parkade Center #250, Columbia, MO 65203, (573) 876-0912, rossb@mo.nrcs.usda.gov or Bob Broz, University Extension, Agricultural Engineering Building, Columbia, MO 65211, (573) 882-0085, bob_broz@muccmail.missouri.edu.

QUOTES FROM MISSOURI FARMERS ABOUT THE USDA AMERICORPS FARM-A-SYST PROJECT

Mark Rothermich - Auxvasse - Because of the Farm-A-Syst program, I have set one priority to change the place that pesticides are stored and make them more secure. I think the program alerts you to potential water quality hazards you might not think of.

Gary Linnebringer - Hatton - I became aware that I should have my fuel storage farther from the barn and garage. I already recycle my used oil through the automatic chain oiler on my New Holland baler.

Mary Woods - Auxvasse - I became aware that my new sewer system, installed three years ago will have to be improved and brought up to specifications if I have a problem. I did attend a demonstration well filling and have filled my old cistern, but I became aware that I might be able to get funds through the FSA to fill my deep well.

Carolyn Retter Adams - Auxvasse - I learned my lagoon was installed correctly and that I might be able to secure FSA financing to finish closing a cistern near the old house that was torn down. Being on County water further insures that I have good quality water.

Ray Rothermich - Auxvasse - The Farm-A-Syst reminded me once again that my fuel tanks were too close to my buildings and that I need to provide more controlled storage of my fertilizer and pesticides.

Phillip Martin - Centralia - I have a small daughter who's health is very important to me. The Farm-A-Syst made me realize that things that I saw every day and never thought about could be potential health hazards to my family.

Frank and John Glen - Columbia - We try to keep things looking good and take farm life very seriously. We are on a county water district but went through the Farm-A-Syst to see if we could improve our farm management on possible pollution hazards. The Farm-A-Syst has helped us decide which management practices need to be changed to insure land property values aren't hurt and that we are good stewards of the land.

Updated 9/13/96

MISSOURI "SUMMER OF GLEANING" AMERICORPS PROJECT

The USDA AmeriCorps Summer of Gleaning project in Missouri started later than other Summer of Gleaning projects and has thus been in operation only a few weeks. However, in that short time, three AmeriCorps Members have already led volunteer efforts that gleaned 500 pounds of apples, which were distributed to citizens in need by the non-profit group Harvesters.

Non-compensated volunteers recruited by AmeriCorps are scheduled to help glean at least 500 pounds of pears this coming Saturday. Volunteers have been personal friends and acquaintances of the AmeriCorps Members, as well as students from St. Teresa's Academy and members of the local Girl Scout council.

The project will also focus on rescuing perishable prepared food.

The number of partners for this project is already impressive. Both the pears and apples were donated by private orchard owners. Project partners include:

Harvesters, the local Food Chain affiliate in Kansas City

Elite Catering Service, which will donate its extra foods directly to Renaissance West --- a drug treatment center for women and their children --- which has lost a significant portion of its regular funding and is going to be able to feed its patients and children largely because of this project

ConStar Plastics (a container company)

Black Archives of Mid-America

Harrisonville City Market

University Extension Service of Missouri



AmeriCorps/USDA . . . in the news

Print Media Coverage From Missouri

Volunteer offers to assist farmers after the flood

By Tammy Tucker
Staff writer

After the floodwaters recede, St. Charles County farmers will concentrate on pulling their lives back together. And they may get some help with assessing damage and completing paperwork.

Trish McCracken, an AmeriCorps volunteer in St. Charles County, will be available to help flood-stricken farmers complete those tasks. AmeriCorps is the national version of the Peace Corps under President Clinton's domestic plan.

McCracken, who works out of the Soil and Water Conservation District office in St. Charles County, is one of many volunteers around the country setting up programs and performing community

service. She is one of 12 AmeriCorps volunteers in Missouri who are doing work for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

McCracken said that once the floodwaters recede, she would be busy helping farmers so that they can salvage what they can from this year's crops.

"I'm going to be helping them past the red tape," she said. "I'll do their paperwork, visual exams, and anything else that is required. It's my job to help the public."

But, she said, "We can't do anything until the water goes down. I don't know yet what kind of assistance would be available."

McCracken said no special criteria exist for the farmers to seek her assistance.

"Hopefully, they can try and get their crops out at the last minute or worry about other farm land they might have," McCracken said. "They need to get on with their lives, rather than worrying about the flood."

St. Charles Journal
St. Charles, Missouri
June 14, 1995

Page 2A Sunday, June 11, 1995—JOURNAL

U.S. Ag secretary assures farmers of flood assistance

By Tammy Tucker
Staff writer

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman visited Defiance Friday to assure flood victims that the federal government has not forgotten about them.

Glickman discussed the recent flooding situation with local farmers, AmeriCorps volunteers from around the state and County Executive Joe Ortwerth.

Ortwerth told Glickman that about 43 percent of St. Charles County lies in a floodplain. Much of the land in the floodplain is farmed.

Two of the past three years have been tough ones for farmers because of flooding.

Glickman said the first goal of the federal government must be to help farmers get through this year. The second, long-term goal would be to raise levees in floodplain areas.

However, Glickman cautioned that achievement of that goal depends on various factors.

"Some things get done more easily than others," Glickman said. "One problem is that nobody is truly in charge, though the Corps (of Engineers) is probably more in charge than anyone else."

Glickman said the Department of Agriculture needs to look at the value of the land and its production before committing to any kind of financing for the

raising of levees.

"I don't know enough about levees to know what exactly goes into it," Glickman said. "I do know that taxpayers' dollars are going out to pay for assistance. There's a lot of revenue used to pay for disasters when they occur."

Ortwerth said he was "extremely impressed" by Glickman's commitment to help farmers stricken by the flood.

"We have continued to be dismayed by the efforts of the federal government to help the flooded areas," Ortwerth said. "But it's clear that he (Glickman) is acutely aware of the losses here in the county."

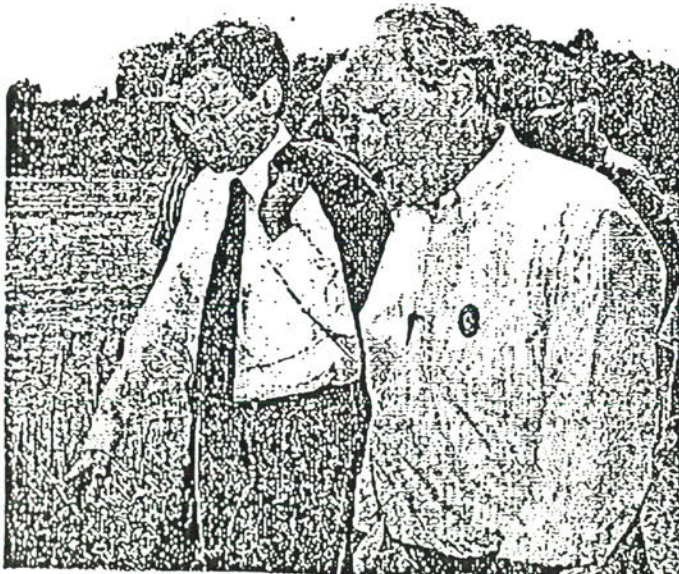
Ortwerth said he hoped Glick-

man's visit would result in better protection for the county's floodplains.

"We can only hope for a more coherent plan to raise the levees to allow for protection where the bottomlands are heavily farmed," Ortwerth said. "Even a moderate raise in the level of the levees would be better."

As Glickman looked at the floodwaters surrounding the Katy Trail, he expressed amazement.

"This vast area of water shocks me," Glickman said. "The scope of the water brings home the scope of this disaster. But we will do our best to get the farmers through this flood."



John Fressa photo

County Executive Joe Ortwerth (left) accompanies U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman on a visit to Defiance Friday to discuss federal assistance for flood-weary farmers.

Fulton Sun Gazette
Fulton, Missouri
March 24, 1996

Program can help rural residents determine: Is your drinking water safe?

A voluntary and confidential program called the Farmstead Assessment System can help farmers and rural residents determine how safe their drinking water is. The Farm *A* Syst, as it is more commonly known, is a tool that can be used to assess the possibility of groundwater contamination.

The Farm *A* Syst is made up of seven worksheets that look at drinking water well condition; pesticide, fertilizer and petroleum storage; household wastewater management; hazardous waste management; and animal manure management. It also looks at the soil type present at the farmstead.

After the worksheets are com-

pleted, recommendations are made for any activity that showed a high-risk potential for groundwater contamination. The assessment only takes one hour and can be beneficial even to those who no longer use well water.

Here in Missouri we have five AmeriCorps members who are assisting rural residents in completing the Farm *A* Systs. Tara

Richardson has been assigned to the Callaway County Extension office to work in Callaway, Audrain and Osage counties. So far, Tara has worked with 35 rural residents in performing Farm *A* Systs. She is hoping to do a total of 80 Farm *A* Systs before the end of August. For more information, contact the Callaway County extension office at 573-642-0755.



Roy Sykes photo

Trish McCracken, an AmeriCorps volunteer, looking at a ruptured levee off Dwiggins Road. The levee is in the North County Levee District.

A working education

AmeriCorps program repays volunteers with knowledge

By Laura Bradford
Correspondent

With the help of the Clinton administration and her own hard work, the past 10 months have earned Trish McCracken "money" toward her education.

The St. Peters woman just completed her term as an AmeriCorps volunteer. The domestic Peace Corps program — introduced by President Bill Clinton — rewards its members for their service with an education.

AmeriCorps volunteers can be found working with various federal agencies, public school districts and organizations such as the Multiple Sclerosis Society. McCracken served her time with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, working out of an office in St. Charles County.

Each AmeriCorps member embarks on a community service project for a predetermined number of hours and is given a small living allowance. Once a volunteer completes the term of service, he or she receives an education voucher, which must be used within seven years. The voucher, which is not redeemable for cash, may be applied toward obtaining a college education or a master's degree or paying off student loans.

McCracken's 1,700 hours of service earned her a \$4,700 voucher, which she plans to use to pay off her student loans. She has a bachelor's degree in biology from Lindenwood College; she also has a teaching certificate in secondary education.

See EDUCATION, Page 2A

MANEATER
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
SEPTEMBER 29, 1995

AmeriCorps enters second year of service

BRAD CRAWFORD
Reporter

For Chris Fulcher, an MU graduate student, AmeriCorps was the perfect way to follow up his Peace Corps experience.

Fulcher, a graduate student at the University of Missouri-Columbia in the agricultural economics department is an expert on Geographic Information Systems. Fulcher employed GIS, a tool for conducting spatial analysis, to aid flood recovery decisions in St. Charles County near St. Louis.

"My goal has been to take this high-tech information and bring it to the local level. This is a major undertaking," Fulcher said.

As part of being a consultant for GIS, Fulcher gave talks to St. Charles' city and county officials on using GIS to analyze watersheds and evaluate flood areas.

Missouri AmeriCorps members will kick

off their second year of national service next month in a joint Kansas-Missouri ceremony. The Oct. 12 celebration at Kansas City Convention Center will include swearing in new members and a ceremony commemorating the first year of President Bill Clinton's national service program. The convention will mark the end of service for 12 of mid-Missouri's members from last year.

AmeriCorps programs in Missouri are managed by the lieutenant governor's office and Program Director Steve Schad. He oversees eight programs statewide with more than 400 members.

"I haven't met an AmeriCorps member yet who hasn't said that it was a critical transformation in their life," Schad said. "It creates an ethic of service that carries on throughout their lives."

Missouri's AmeriCorps program is strengthened by corporate partnerships that

include Anheuser-Busch, Hallmark, and Sprint. Businesses nationwide view the program as a wise investment.

"It's clearly a program with a lot of support across the country. It's hard to get past the financial end of it, but the money is coming back to the communities," Schad said. "For every dollar invested, they see a \$1.60-\$2.60 return."

The program's future looks less bright in Washington. A Senate subcommittee headed by Christopher Bond, R-Mo., voted last week to defund the program. Bond's press secretary, Catherine Kaliniak, defended the senator's position on AmeriCorps.

"Senator Bond had to make a series of tough choices on program funding. Community development block grants were a higher priority than AmeriCorps," Kaliniak said.

The program has now become a sign of

the struggle for power between Clinton and the Republican Congress. Bond has suggested he might support AmeriCorps as part of a deal to get a bill signed.

"It seems AmeriCorps is being used as a bargaining chip for Republicans to gain leverage in budget negotiations," said M College Democrat's adviser Valerie Heitshusen.

Republicans supported AmeriCorps earlier, but that changed.

"I agree that public service is an important value to instill in our young people, but I do not believe this program represents the type of program the federal government can afford to continue," Congressman James Talent, R-Chesterfield, said in a press release. "Although the initial concept of AmeriCorps may have been noble, this program has become a system of paid 'volunteerism' for political causes."

Missouri RURALIST

1007 North College Avenue, Columbia, Mo. 65201 • 314-875-5445

A test you can't fail

Confidential assessments of risks to your farm's water quality

BY STEVE FAIRCHILD

A voluntary program called Farm-A-Syst is bringing rural water sources and management of possible pollutants into the spotlight. The program critiques how farmstead practices might affect ground water and is reminding farmers that they have some control in the purity of their water.

Farm-A-Syst, an extended acronym for Farmstead Assessment System, doesn't scrutinize field crop practices. Instead, the program concen-

trates on potential problems on the farmstead — petroleum and pesticide storage, manure management, and others.

A Farm-A-Syst evaluation is no more than a series of 10 worksheets. The worksheets use a ranking system for risks. The pesticide storage and handling worksheet, for example, catalogs what is good and bad on the farmstead: how much pesticide is stored on the farm? Is downslope from the well? Are pesticides stored on impermeable surfaces? Is there an anti-backflow device for the waterline used to mix pesti-

cides? The hazardous waste worksheet looks at disposal of cleaners, solvents and other possible contaminants.

Farm-A-Syst is a national effort, but each state has a different approach. Missouri's is unique because it is one of the few that uses AmeriCorps volunteers to deliver the program. AmeriCorps is a program championed by President Clinton that aims to resemble a Peace Corps here at home. Volunteers in AmeriCorps receive a living allowance and a stipend to be applied toward education.

David Myers, the AmeriCorps Volunteer stationed in Boone County, says much of what he finds during his farm assessments is easily corrected.

"After you've been on the farm a long time, working every day, you get busy and just don't think of some of these things. This way, we can leave it in writing and the farmers can look at the package whenever they want to."

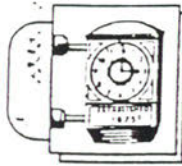
Before going on a farm visit, Myers does some background work, checking the farm's soil types at the National Resources Conservation Service. During the farm visit, he likes to spend 20 minutes walking the farmstead with the owner. Myers and the farmer fill out the worksheets together. Myers adamantly points out that no one but he and the farmer see the finished assessment.

As farmers show they are concerned about the environment, we'll probably see more programs like Farm-A-Syst. Because it's voluntary and confidential, it could be a good way to make sure a farm is able to continue to meet regulatory requirements.

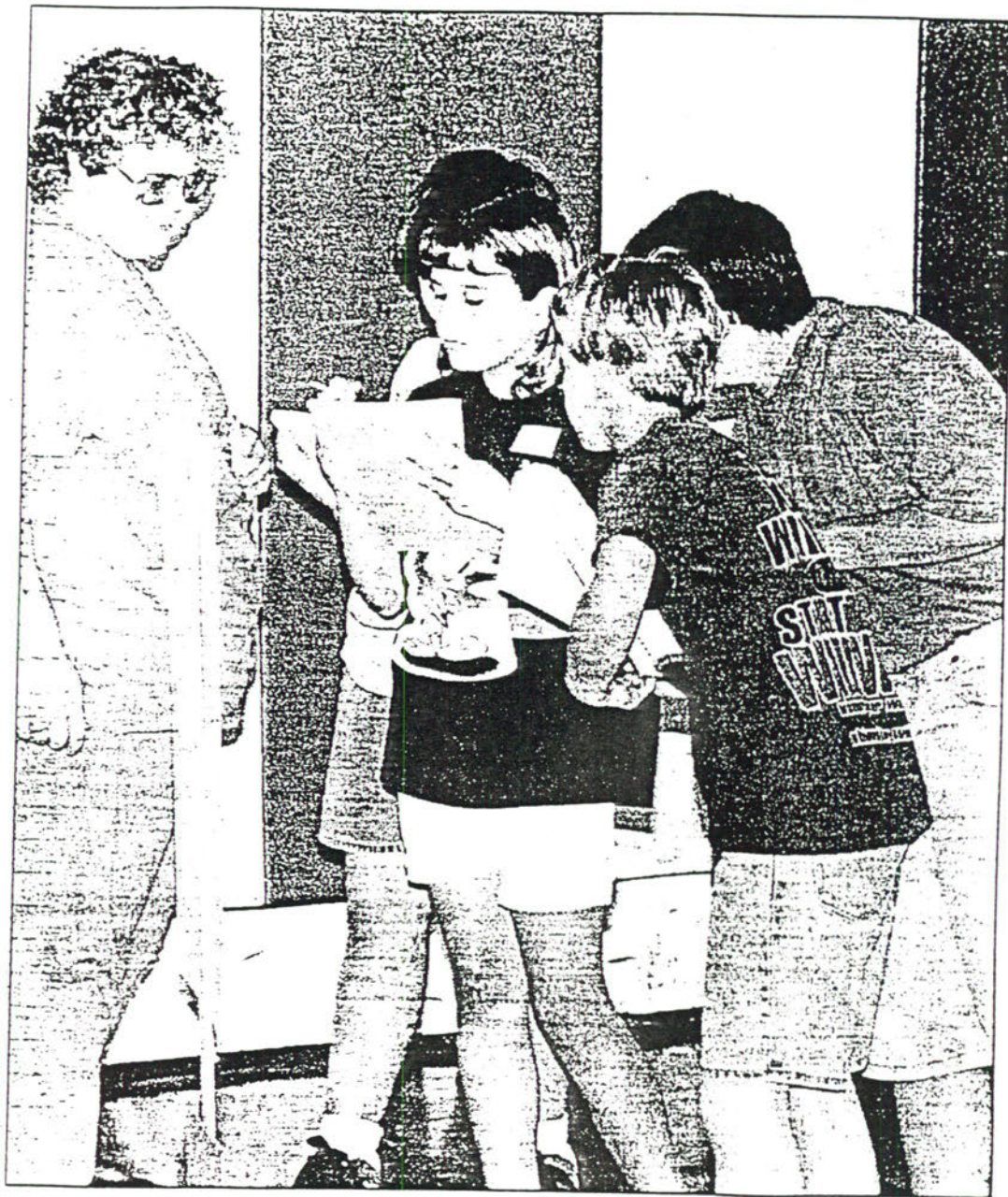
Farmers interested in participating in Farm-A-Syst should contact their local extension agent or the State Water Quality Extension office at 573-882-4885. ❖



David Myers, AmeriCorps volunteer in Boone County.



School



Course of molecules

Jeanne Engelmeyer helps some fifth and sixth graders trace the route of a water molecule in a game at the Tipton Elementary School gym last Thursday. Engelmeyer, who represents Cooper County, and other AmeriCorp members David Myers, Boone County, and Tara Richardson, Callaway County, presented the program to the students so they can better understand the importance of water quality.

ST. CHARLES POST
ST. CHARLES, MISSOURI
MAY 26, 1995

ST. CHARLES COUNTY

5th-Graders To Join Natural Resources Festival

More than 450 fifth-graders from St. Charles County will participate in a Natural Resources Festival May 3 at the Busch Memorial Conservation Area.

The festival will teach pupils about conservation of natural resources. Students will touch and compare animal coverings, such as skin, scales and feathers. They'll learn how terraces and waterways keep soil in place as they become make-believe raindrops and travel down a slope. They'll walk through a prairie to see how prairie restoration can help wildlife.

They'll take part in such activities as "Soil Spies," "Animal Wrappers" and "Speed Bumps."

The St. Charles Soil & Water Conservation District and the Missouri Department of Conservation are sponsoring the event.

Dan Crigler, a wildlife management biologist for the Conservation Department, said, "The Busch Area is the ideal place to hold this type of event because we've set up examples of land-management techniques that conserve our natural resources. We are anxious to share our knowledge and foster proper land stewardship for future generations."

Sessions will be led by profession-

als from such agencies as the Soil and Water District, the Missouri Department of Conservation, the National Weather Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, St. Louis Science Center, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, University Extension and other conservation partners.

Other presenters include students from Francis Howell High School's stream team and SAFE (Students Acting for the Environment), Recycle Round-Up, Wild Canid Survival and Research Center and the World

Bird Sanctuary.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for students in our community to spend a day outside, get their hands dirty and expand their knowledge of natural resources," said Coordinator Trish McCracken. She added, "We have 400 students on a waiting list now, so I hope the success of this festival will lead to many more festivals in the years to come."

The festival is a pilot event and community service project coordinated by McCracken, an AmeriCorps member.

SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 1995

Agriculture Secretary Backs Flood Control

Glickman Tours River Bottoms, Promises U.S. Help For Farmers

By Tim O'Neill
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman toured flooded Missouri River bottoms Friday, promised federal help for farmers and said he'd like to see more flood control for the fertile flatlands.

"I'm not one of those people who want this land to go back to nature," said Glickman, as he visited Defiance in St. Charles County.

"This is some of the best agricultural land in the country. The government will pay out way more in disaster [payments] than the cost of fixing levees."

Glickman said he didn't know enough about the federal levee program to say whether farm levees

along the Missouri River should be built higher. But he said government agencies, including his own, should talk about revising the Army Corps of Engineers' way of calculating how much money should be spent on levees.

The corps bases the amounts it will spend on a levee according to the value it assigns to the properties being protected. Generally, the higher the value, the higher the levee. Agricultural levee districts must pay a share of construction and repair costs.

The big Corps of Engineers levees along the Mississippi River below St. Louis are higher than the agricultural levees along the Missouri. The Mississippi levees held this year, but the



Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman (center) talks Friday with Joe Simpson while touring a flooded farm near Defiance, Mo. Simpson is a member of the Clinton administration's public-service program called Americorps. Kevin Manning/Post-Dispatch

Missouri topped or broke most of the levees along its banks.

Glickman's main job Friday was to tell Missouri farmers that the U.S. Department of Agriculture is offering special assistance and financial

breaks to farmers whose operations were damaged by floods and flash floods this spring. He met with farmers in Montgomery City and then went to Defiance, where he walked down a gravel road with floodwater

on both sides to repeat the news to about 10 St. Charles County farmers.

"I can't promise the moon, but we'll make things as flexible as we can," he said.

His announcement includes:

- More time for farmers to file notice of crop loss for insurance claims.
- Price-support loans for flooded

See GLICKMAN, Page 3

Glickman

From page one

crops that weren't planted in that program.

■ \$25 million for flood repairs in seven states, with most of that going to people in Missouri and Louisiana.

At Defiance, the flood broke through the Darst Bottom levee three weeks ago and covered the fields almost to the Katy Trail. By Friday, with the Missouri down 6½ feet since the crest May 21, water still covered most of the bottoms. Where the water had receded, the soil was thick gumbo mud.

Don Howell, president of the Darst Bottom Levee Board, said he and

several other farmers there had planted their corn before the flood came. The crop was ruined. If the river drops and the weather gets drier, they still have time to plant soybeans this summer, he said.

Layton Rehmeier, another farmer near Defiance, told Glickman that this flood probably didn't damage the land like the 1993 flood did. "But you don't look for this mess two years after '93," Rehmeier said.

Glickman also used the visit as an opportunity to promote Americorps, the public-service program dear to President Bill Clinton that many Republicans on Capitol Hill want to kill. Glickman posed in the road for pictures with about 15 Americorps workers, including a group from East St. Louis.

AmeriCorps worker calls program a 'good deal'

By LISA YORKGITIS
News Tribune

Earlier this year, Ed Gillmore of Jefferson City was exploring ways to continue working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture when he found out about AmeriCorps, the new national service program.

The national program enables him to earn a living stipend for about 10 months' work as well as \$4,725 for tuition or loan payments. Plus, he said, it will give him an edge in case a full-time job becomes available.

"It's a good deal," said Gillmore, 31, a father of two children who became an AmeriCorps worker in October. As an animal sciences graduate from the University of Missouri-Columbia, Gillmore said the education award will help repay his loans. He also is considering graduate school.

Gillmore works in Cole, Callaway and Osage counties with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, formerly called the Soil Conservation Service. More than a dozen AmeriCorps members work

★ AmeriCorps

From page one

with the service throughout Missouri. Other AmeriCorps members scheduled to work in Mid-Missouri include two people who will conduct pesticide safety training through Rural Missouri Inc., based in Jefferson City.

As an AmeriCorps worker, Gillmore helps farmers develop ways to reduce soil and land erosion, increase crop yields and protect water supplies.

"Our main goal is to conserve our natural resources," he said.

On a given day, he may help a producer develop a crop rotation

Although the office didn't have much time to prepare for having an AmeriCorps member, the staff quickly found a place for the new worker.

"It wasn't like we had to scramble," Van De Velde said.

Gillmore's position with AmeriCorps enables him to work with producers across a variety of landscapes in his three-county area.

Earlier this week, he visited farmer Cletus "Jake" Schellman in the Cole Junction bottom along with a wildlife biologist and another worker at the district office.



AmeriCorps worker Ed Gillmore, left, examines a possible wetlands area on the property of Cletus "Jake" Schellman center, at Cole Junction. With them is wildlife biologist Reggie Bennett.

Julie Smith/News Tribune

NEWS TRIBUNE
JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI
NOVEMBER 31, 1995

AmeriCorps members help make life easier

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Amy Gronquist was so intent on hanging up a kindergartner's hand-drawn poster declaring the neighborhood "drug free" that she didn't even notice the symbolism at first.

At the left was a picture of Martin Luther King Jr.; at the right was a framed copy of his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

Gronquist, too, has a dream. She longs for the day when children like those at Hamilton Elementary School in St. Louis don't have to make posters to warn drug-peddling thugs to stay away.

Gronquist, 23, is working to make that dream a reality as a member of President Clinton's national service program, AmeriCorps.

AmeriCorps pays its 20,000 members — including more than 400 in Missouri — a \$7,945 stipend and a \$4,725 education award in return for a year's service in one of four areas: education, health and human needs, the environment and public safety.

There are 15 AmeriCorps projects under way in Missouri. Members do everything from tutor at-risk youths in Cape Girardeau to pick up trash in St. Joseph neighborhoods to test water quality in Columbia.

"I wanted to do something for other people," Gronquist said. "The program is based on the idea that if you have a common goal and work together, you can make a difference. I like that."

Gronquist, who is from Jamestown, N.Y., is assigned to the

ly, we are in times of very tight money. We have higher priorities than funding volunteers."

Clinton — who set up AmeriCorps in 1993 — stood firm, saying he wouldn't back a budget that didn't include money for his pet program.

A number of corporate chiefs, including Anheuser-Busch's August A. Busch III, also wrote to lawmakers in hopes of saving AmeriCorps from the GOP budget scalpel. By law, nongovernment sources, usually businesses, must pay at least 25 percent of operational costs and 15 percent of each member's stipend.

"AmeriCorps plays a key role in developing our nation's future work force, providing practical skills and educational opportunities that will be essential to America's competitiveness in the marketplace," Busch wrote.

Marilyn Hoffman, director of Success Centers at Lincoln University, which has established tutoring centers in three low-income neighborhoods in Jefferson City through an AmeriCorps grant, waves off complaints about the costs.

"Our program is funded through a \$110,000 grant and will impact several hundred students," she said. "If we can keep five kids from going to prison, than we've more than earned our keep."

Indeed, state prison officials estimate it costs \$10,285 a year to house one inmate.

AmeriCorps member Debbie Burke said she often supplies mate-

American Youth Foundation in St. Louis. She spends five days a week mentoring elementary students and, among other things, teaching them to steer clear of drugs.

The foundation has two federal grants totaling more than \$1 million. In 18 months, members have performed 230,000 hours of service that otherwise might not have been done, said Bruce Bailey, a program director.

"To us, this is very much like a war," he said. "We believe that what we are doing in inner cities is every bit as valuable as the work the soldiers involved in the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia are doing."

Bailey said members have taught conflict-resolution to 1,600 middle school youths. They have walked beats with police to make 700 senior citizens feel safer in their neighborhoods. They spent more than 1,800 hours sandbagging when the Mississippi River flooded last year.

After the April 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, and before the Federal Emergency Management Agency requested their help, AmeriCorps members from St. Louis arrived in Oklahoma. They helped distribute donated clothing and food pouring in from across the country.

"The team effort truly showed what young Americans can do when given the chance to participate in a meaningful way," FEMA Director James Lee Witt said in a letter to members.

But not everyone praises the program. It has run into trouble on Capitol Hill, where some Republicans complain about its \$470 million price tag. At one point, both the GOP-led House and Senate had sliced it out of next year's budget.

"Undoubtedly, there are some areas where it has done some good," said Sen. Christopher S. Bond, R-Mo., chairman of a Senate Appropriations subcommittee. "Unfortunately,

materials to help students complete homework. For instance, one boy needed to keep a journal on a pet for science class. His apartment complex didn't allow animals, so for two weeks Burke carried her son's white mouse to the center for the boy to observe.

Kris Frank of Holts Summit said her 14-year-old son, Joseph, had improved his reading and math grades since going to the centers.

"He was falling behind to the point where he was going to have to repeat this year," she said. "Now he's up to where he should be."

Burke, 36, said she considered dropping out of Lincoln University where she's majoring in education because of money. AmeriCorps allowed her to continue her studies, she said.

"In my mind, it's the perfect solution," Burke said. "I get to continue my education, I get to help others and I get experience in my field."

Michelle Johnson Harvey, a 35-year-old single mother of two who is studying education at Penn Valley Community College, credits AmeriCorps with turning around her life and her Blue Hills neighborhood in Kansas City.

Harvey works hand in hand with police and other community workers to fight crime and drugs, tutor students and other things. AmeriCorps members have given police information that has led to the closing of 25 crack houses, Officer John Wilson said.

Harvey goes door to door, encouraging residents to take back their neighborhood.

"I was tired of seeing all the crime that was going on in our neighborhood," Harvey said. As for how AmeriCorps has changed her life, she said: "I wanted to set an example for my daughters. To show them that you can believe in their community and that they can make a difference."

Program assesses water quality

By **LARA HEARNBURG**
Staff writer

People know contaminated water can make you sick. But what most people don't know is how safe their water is. And what some don't know, too, is that if you have a well, you are responsible for your own drinking-water quality.

At a recent meeting at the Boone County University Extension Center, David Meyers of the Americorp Rural Development Team for mid-Missouri presented the Americorp Farm-A-Syst action program for safe drinking water in mid-Missouri. Between now and September 1996, Meyers will help more than 100 Boone County landowners assess the quality of their drinking water.

"The program provides accurate first-hand information about how your farmstead buildings and activities, such as pesticide storage, fuel storage and livestock activities, might affect your drinking water," Meyers said.

The federal program provides individual site evaluations to help landowners identify potential pol-

lution risks and plan how to deal with them. The site evaluation is confidential, voluntary and free if it is completed by Meyers or another member of the Americorp Rural Development Team for mid-Missouri.

Team member Tara Richardson said the land and water evaluation can help landowners protect their family's health, the groundwater quality and the value of the land.

The evaluation also can help landowners learn about state laws and regulations governing chemical and fuel storage, waste management and well maintenance. Meyers said that often during assessments, landowners will see laws they didn't even know existed.

"If there's a problem," Meyers said, "nobody is going to run and tell teacher. Instead, you have a chance to fix it."

All evaluations include suggestions for both immediate action and future plans. The assessments also let landowners know of any cost-share programs that might be available to help them.

Another team member, Audrey Harmon, said, "The biggest goal of

the program is just to get information out to people."

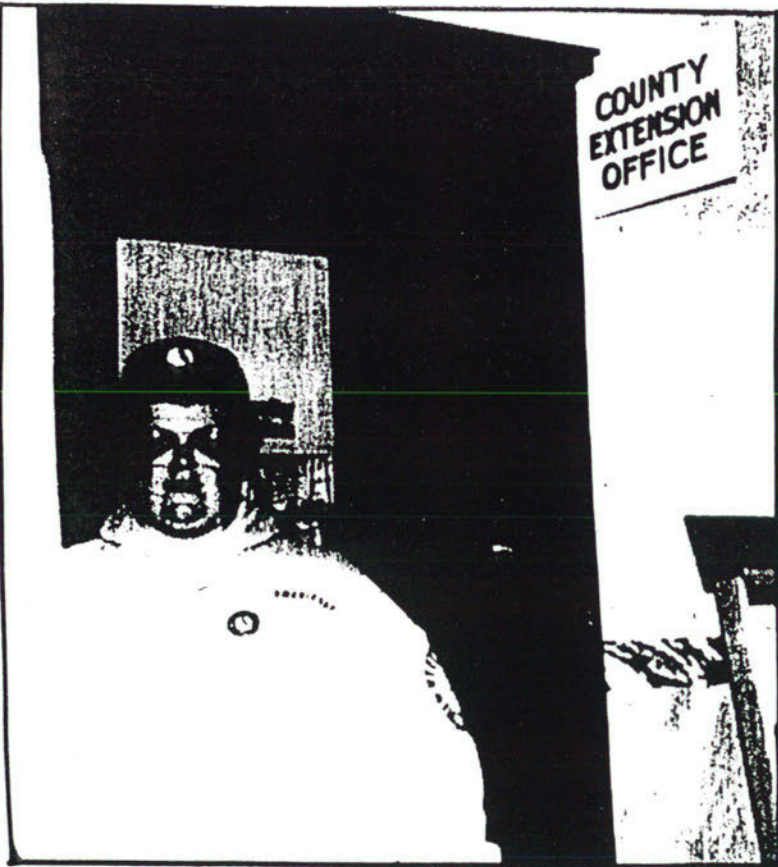
All of the Americorp team members stressed that the information they gather is given to the landowner to keep.

Meyers said the services are available to all farmers and landowners who have their own drinking-water source. He also said landowners who have old well facilities on their property might not be aware of how it can affect their drinking water.

Any landowner who is interested in an evaluation or has any questions about the program can contact Meyers at the Boone County University Extension Center at (314) 445-9792.

Boonville Daily News
Boonville, Missouri
November 2, 1995

Program offers ground water checks - and community service



By Tiffany Eckert
Staff Writer

It is supposed to be clear and refreshing as it pours into the glass, but in some cases, it is full of harmful bacteria. What is this substance? It is the water in your cup.

But thanks to a former Tipton resident and a national community service program initiated under President Bill Clinton, landowners in Cooper County now have a way to test their ground water in search of dangerous microbes and hazardous pollutants.

Jeane Engelmeyer, a fourth year agri-business student at State Fair Community College, has begun her first stint as an AmeriCorp member by setting up a water quality assessment program called FARM-A-SYST. Engelmeyer will be working out of the University Extension office in the Cooper County Courthouse.

The primary function of FARM-A-SYST is to make sure drinking water is safe and clean by testing ground water for bacteria, microorganisms and pollution, Engelmeyer said.

And educational presentations and water quality publications from the University of Missouri will make information on water quality and conservation more understandable.

"I've lived on an 80-acre farm all my life," Engelmeyer said. "I love farming and I love working with farmers."

Engelmeyer said she hopes farmers and landowners will utilize the services made available through this program.

"AmeriCorp is here to bring communities together," Engelmeyer said. "The goal is to make every rural community a little stronger."

It was during her last year at college in Sedalia that Engelmeyer made two important discoveries. Through her studies, she learned how many environmental and educational needs rural communities have. At the same time, she realized her tuition costs were starting to bear down on her.

There was one clear solution as she saw it: join the AmeriCorp Program.

She did, and now the people of

Cooper County will be the beneficiaries.

Engelmeyer was just one of thousands of people who have joined AmeriCorp. It all began in September 1993, when Bill Clinton signed the National Community Service Trust Act. This initiative was designed in the spirit Franklin Roosevelt's 1930's social programs which provided jobs for displaced Americans during the Depression.

Today, AmeriCorp seeks to benefit young Americans who might not otherwise find a productive way to serve their community.

Participants give their time and resources in exchange for a limited wage, then receive a post service educational award of \$4,725 after a full year of service.

A meeting to discuss what services are available through AmeriCorp will be held at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 16, on the first floor of the Cooper County courthouse. Engelmeyer will discuss the benefits of FARM-A-SYST as well as how a water quality assessment can be arranged.

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4602

April 5, 1996

ATTACHMENT E

The Honorable Kit Bond
Chairman
Subcommittee on VA, HUD and Independent Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Kit,

I am writing to clarify my understanding of the ability of federal agencies to sponsor AmeriCorps projects once the Corporation for National Service ceases providing direct grants of operating funds to such agencies.

I am most concerned about the future of the AmeriCorps program sponsored by the Department of Agriculture (USDA). In Vermont, the USDA sponsors an Anti-Hunger Team, a Rural Development Team and a Public Lands and Environment Team that have received bipartisan support throughout the state. I understand that the USDA also has well-functioning AmeriCorps projects in over 40 other states, including Missouri. In many of these states, the USDA provides virtually the only AmeriCorps presence in rural communities.

While I fully understand your position that the Corporation no longer make direct grants to federal agencies, I would like to explore with you an approach that will provide effective AmeriCorps projects sponsored by the USDA the opportunity to continue.

I strongly believe that the USDA should continue to be able to use its own appropriated funds to support AmeriCorps projects, with no grant funds to the Department from the Corporation involved. AmeriCorps participants in these projects, upon successful completion of service, would be eligible for the educational awards directly from the National Service Trust Fund.

This approach has three important advantages. First, it adheres to the position that no Corporation funds be awarded to federal agencies. Second, it is consistent with the agreement of Members of the Senate and the Corporation that partnerships be expanded to provide "education awards only" to AmeriCorps projects, while the projects themselves provide all operating funds. Third, since the projects would be funded from current USDA appropriations, additional expenditure of tax dollars would not be required.

The Honorable Kit Bond

April 5, 1996

Page 2

I have asked the USDA and the Corporation to comment on this approach and put together a proposal on how it could be best executed. I look forward to working with you to continue a strong AmeriCorps program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick Leahy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "P".

PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator

PJL/mew