



June 14, 2018

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
United States Senate
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray,

As leaders of cities across the United States, we are writing in support of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the federal agency that administers national service programs, including AmeriCorps VISTA.

The Administration's (FY) 2019 budget proposal to eliminate CNCS ignores overwhelming public support and decades of strong bipartisan legislative support for CNCS and its programs. These programs and the people who are a part of them help us make our cities better places to live and improve the lives of our citizens. They deserve continued and unwavering support.

Just one example is the Cities of Service Love Your Block program through which AmeriCorps VISTA members help our communities revitalize their neighborhoods, one block at a time. From painting over graffiti with colorful murals to removing trash from playgrounds, citizen volunteers are combating urban blight and making their blocks better places to live. AmeriCorps VISTA members help us engage low-income community members in the revitalization process, empowering them to take charge of their own neighborhoods and build lasting relationships with each other and their city.

Many of our cities participate in the Cities of Service Prepared Together AmeriCorps program, through which VISTA members are embedded in city halls and serve as local preparedness ambassadors and experts in Impact Volunteering — a Cities of Service strategy that engages citizen volunteers to identify and solve public problems alongside municipal government. The AmeriCorps VISTA members increase local capacity and equip low-income communities to better prepare for, handle, and recover from disasters, including extreme weather events.

There are thousands of programs like this one and hundreds of thousands of Americans each year who provide essential services to other citizens — including more than 750,000 veterans and their families — in local communities across the country that will disappear if CNCS is eliminated.

The opposite of a drain on the budget or a tax burden, total funding for CNCS is less than three hundredths of one percent of the federal budget. In addition, for every \$10 in federal money appropriated, another \$15 is separately raised from private sources to fund AmeriCorps partnerships across the country. Unemployed individuals who volunteer are 27 percent more likely to secure full-time employment than those who do not volunteer.

Eliminating the Corporation for National and Community Service and its programs would be the opposite of making America great. It would tell millions of Americans and hundreds of thousands of dedicated AmeriCorps members that making a difference doesn't matter, and it would tell those who rely on AmeriCorps programs that they are on their own.

The programs administered by CNCS are exactly what the nation requires to ensure citizens' needs are met in a cost-effective, efficient way. We urge you, and every member of Congress who believes in the ability of our citizens to create lasting change for our nation, to invest in CNCS, and ensure that national service continues to provide vital support to communities across the country.

Thank you for your leadership and support.

Sincerely,

Ras J. Baraka, Mayor of Newark, New Jersey
Ethan Berkowitz, Mayor of Anchorage, Alaska
Ravi S. Bhalla, Mayor of Hoboken, New Jersey
Byron W. Brown, Mayor of Buffalo, New York
Tom Butt, Mayor of Richmond, California
Michael E. Duggan, Mayor of Detroit, Michigan
Steven Fulop, Mayor of Jersey City, New Jersey
Suzanne Jones, Mayor of Boulder, Colorado
James F. Kenney, Mayor of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Sam T. Liccardo, Mayor of San Jose, California
Juslyn Manalo, Mayor of Daly City, California
Libby Schaaf, Mayor of Oakland, California
Andy Schor, Mayor of Lansing, Michigan