

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McCarthy, Chairman Alexander, Chairman Blunt, Chairman Scott, Chairman DeLauro, Ranking Member Murray and Ranking Member Foxx:

We are writing to encourage you to expand and strengthen AmeriCorps and Senior Corps in the next coronavirus relief package. Americans are still grappling with the crippling impact of COVID-19, and national service programs are being asked to step up to help fill critical gaps in services.

Earlier this year, Senators Chris Coons (D-DE) and Roger Wicker (R-MS) introduced S. 3964, the Cultivating Opportunity and Response to the Pandemic through National Service (CORPS) Act to strengthen and expand national service over a three-year period with the goal of including the funding and provisions from that legislation in the COVID-19 relief package. The CORPS Act has strong bipartisan support with 8 Republicans and 8 Democrats cosponsoring. The CORPS Act calls for the expansion of AmeriCorps positions from 75,000 to 150,000 in the first year, 200,000 in the second year and to 250,000 by year three. The bill prioritizes funding for activities directly related to COVID-19 and expands national service in rural and high poverty communities. It also encourages participation by members of low income and underrepresented communities by increasing the living allowance, doubling the education award, and making college more affordable for those who serve.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members across the country have acted quickly and creatively to address gaps in services and persistent inequities that have only been exacerbated by the virus. The national service members have delivered millions of meals, conducted hundreds of thousands of wellness checks, expanded access to health screenings, set up temporary isolation sites, organized blood drives and are providing virtual teaching, tutoring, and mentoring to students. National service is making a tremendous difference, but we need more boots on the ground to address the needs in our communities.

The U.S. is also facing its highest unemployment rates since the Great Depression and the effects of COVID-19 on jobs and the economy will be felt well into the future. Increasing the number of AmeriCorps service positions can help those who are unemployed and recent college and high school graduates develop workplace skills while contributing to our recovery. During their service, members earn a living stipend and a scholarship to help pay back student loans or to go on to college.

In May 2020, TargetPoint Consulting conducted a poll of registered voters in sixteen battleground states. The public opinion research found that the American people clearly recognize the value of AmeriCorps and Senior Corps at this extraordinary time. Eighty percent of voters across party lines support increasing the federal investment in national service to further help communities respond to and recover from COVID-19. This includes 70 percent of Republicans and 90 percent of Democrats.

As you continue to negotiate another coronavirus stimulus package, we urge you to include S. 3964. According to a recent study from ICF, every \$1 in federal taxes invested in AmeriCorps and Senior Corps return over \$17 to society, program members, and the government. Any additional money invested in the federal national service programs would provide a significant benefit to taxpayers while providing critical aid and relief during the pandemic. The CORPS Act is a bipartisan approach to an urgent problem and its funding and legislative provisions should be included in any coronavirus relief and economic stimulus legislation that is considered by Congress.

Sincerely,