

The U.S. House of Representatives is proposing to eliminate AmeriCorps, the 30-year program that provides the people power that local nonprofit, faith-based, and community organizations train and deploy to respond to our country's most immediate and critical needs.

If this happens, it will have a devastating effect on Texas communities that rely on the service of more than 3,200 AmeriCorps members each year to address complex social challenges and provide support to vulnerable populations. In a state as vast and diverse as Texas, AmeriCorps offers a responsive and scalable solution that adapts to the unique needs of local communities by centering human connection and relationship.

For example, as teacher attrition rates in Texas reached a record high of 13.4% last year, AmeriCorps members provided individualized educational support to students both in and out of the classroom. Approximately 22,000 students improved in their academic performance, and an estimated 25,000 students enrolled in post-secondary education thanks to evidence-based interventions provided by AmeriCorps members. In addition, AmeriCorps members reached more than 43,000 Texans with social services that improved local health and safety, including increased access to medical care, food security, and disaster readiness. This year, Texas is piloting a dedicated Youth Mental Health Corps that will offer one-on-one and small group case management to nearly 600 students, while also providing skills development for 80 AmeriCorps members. This workforce pipeline advancing the behavioral health field is critical in Texas, where 251 of 254 counties have been federally designated as mental health professional shortage areas.

Without AmeriCorps, more than 700 nonprofits, schools, and agencies will struggle to bridge gaps and ensure a unified and coordinated approach to supporting Texans in need. In addition, at a time when Texas faces shortages in teachers, government workers, and other public service positions, cuts to AmeriCorps would eliminate a valuable career pathway for potential leaders who care about making a difference in their communities.

AmeriCorps funding also supports state service commissions like OneStar that play a vital role in ensuring that states have a voice in how millions of dollars in federal funding are used at the local level. State service commissions are attuned to the needs of our communities and can direct resources to meet local priorities. In addition to stewarding AmeriCorps grants, OneStar also plays key roles in advancing volunteerism and harnessing the power of service in Texas. This includes coordinating regional volunteer centers, recognizing excellence in volunteerism statewide, organizing disaster philanthropy efforts, and advocating for a stronger statewide nonprofit sector.

Without AmeriCorps and state service commissions, states would lose the opportunity to leverage federal resources that are responsive to state-identified needs. Without a state service commission, there would be no one to foster innovation, coordinate statewide collaboration, or advance efforts to scale service and volunteerism. Texas would end a 50-year legacy of supporting and harnessing the power of service to strengthen local communities.