

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 17, 2016

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
& Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
& Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

We thank you for your past support of national service programs and respectfully ask that you provide sufficient funding for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) in fiscal year (FY) 2017. This strategic investment in national service will support CNCS's vital programs and help our country meet the goals of the bipartisan Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-13).

CNCS is our country's leading provider of grants that support and promote national service and volunteerism. Through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, VISTA, National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), the Social Innovation Fund, and the Volunteer Generation Fund, CNCS engages more than 344,000 national service participants in results-driven service at more than 50,000 locations across the country each year. Working hand in hand with thousands of nonprofit organizations – including the American Red Cross, City Year, Habitat for Humanity, Public Allies, United Way, Catholic Charities, and Teach For America – these dedicated Americans recruit and manage millions of additional volunteers as they work to promote employment opportunities, deliver disaster relief, prepare a better-trained workforce, tutor and mentor at-risk youth, promote health and wellness, and provide essential services to some of our most vulnerable populations, including children and seniors, as well as veterans.

National service is a public-private partnership that recognizes that no one sector can meet our challenges alone, and that America is at its best when citizens work together joined in common purpose. CNCS – which leverages more than \$1.25 billion in resources from the private sector, foundations, and local agencies – is helping organizations across the country work in creative ways to tackle our most persistent and costly challenges by:

- Assisting local communities with relief and recovery efforts after natural disasters, including the devastating tornadoes that hit Missouri, Mississippi, and Oklahoma over the past several years; the mudslides in Washington; and areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina and Superstorm Sandy;
- Serving nearly 750,000 veterans and military families in more than 200 communities, helping them to access benefits and services, obtain job training, and ensure their children receive mentoring and tutoring services;
- Increasing access to safe, affordable housing for thousands of families;
- Providing additional student supports in one out of four persistently low-achieving schools; and
- Harnessing the skills and wisdom of older generations to provide over 800,000 seniors and Americans with disabilities with in-home support.

National service programs harness the energy and ingenuity of our nation's most valuable resource – our citizens – to address community needs and help local economies grow. A recent study by economists at Columbia University found that for every dollar invested in national service, there is a \$3.95 return to society in terms of higher earnings, increased output, and other community benefits. By transforming the lives of those who volunteer, national service programs are also a smart investment in our country's future. National service expands opportunity and enables participants, especially young Americans, to gain marketable job skills and pursue higher education, which increases their employability and earning potential. A report released by CNCS found that unemployed individuals who volunteer are 27 percent more likely to secure employment than those who do not volunteer.

We are aware of the difficult fiscal choices our country faces, but it is our hope that you continue to recognize the important work of CNCS and its volunteers. We urge you to ensure that in FY 2017, CNCS receives sufficient funding to best serve our communities.

Sincerely,



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Kelly A. Ayotte
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator




Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



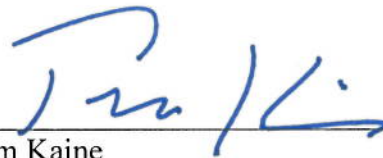
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



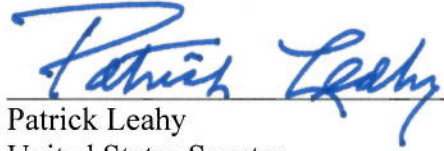
Jack Reed
United States Senator



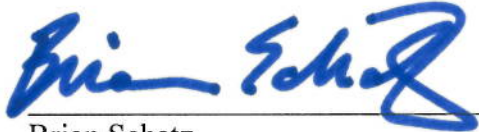
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



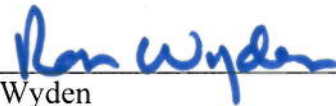
Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



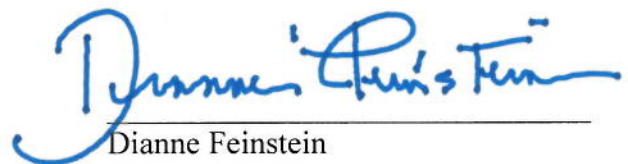
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



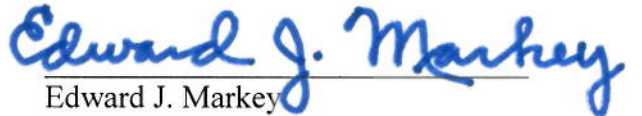
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



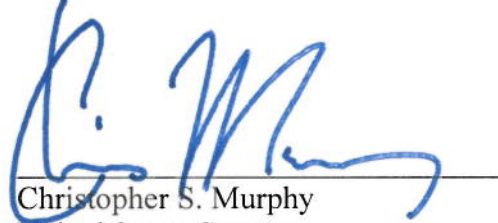
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



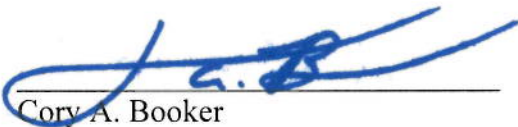
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



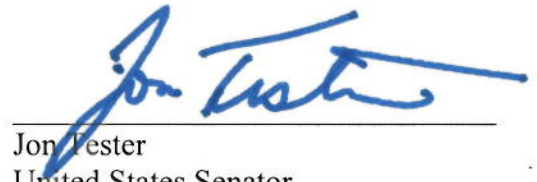
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



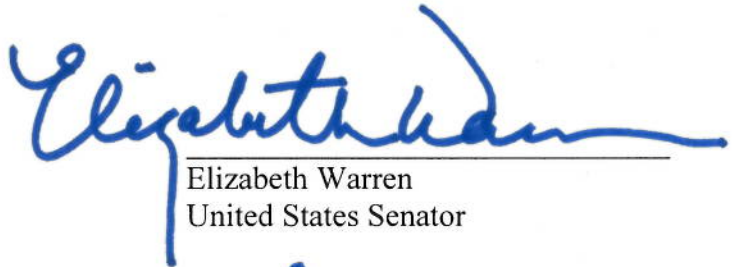
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



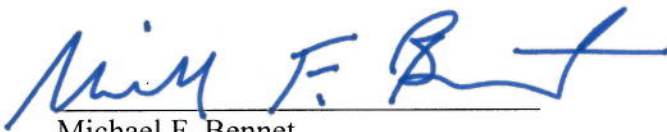
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator