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SIX REASONS WHY BILL CLINTON'S NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAM IS A BAD IDEA

INTRODUCTION

Congress soon will consider President Clinton's National Service Trust Act, an expensive legislative proposal to enroll American students in new federal community service programs. The bill (H.R. 2010 and S. 919) is sponsored in the House by Representative Matthew Martinez, the California Democrat, and in the Senate by Senator Edward Kennedy, the Massachusetts Democrat. Under Clinton's plan, students age 17 or older would be paid a stipend of at least the minimum wage,¹ health and child care benefits, and a \$5,000 educational voucher for each year, up to two years, that they work in service programs selected by federal officials. If students participate in the program before enrolling in college, the voucher would go directly to the college. If they participate after college, the voucher could be used to pay back their student loans. When all the benefits are taken into account, selected students who participate in Clinton's national service program will receive more in government assistance than veterans who put their lives on the line in military service.

Designed to "expand educational opportunity, reward individual responsibility, and build the American community together to tackle common problems,"² the legislation in fact does little to accomplish these laudable goals. While promoted as a program fostering community spirit among America's youth, the National Service Trust (NST) is nothing more than another expensive government jobs program. The NST is a bad idea for six reasons:

- 1 The students could, however, make up to twice the minimum wage, or \$8.50 an hour, since the organizations and government agencies employing the students are permitted to supplement the National Service salary.
- 2 "National Service Initiative: Outline of Legislation," The White House, April 30, 1993, p. 1.

REASON #1: The National Service Trust does not reward individual responsibility.

REASON #2: The National Service Trust does little to expand educational opportunity.

REASON #3: Opportunities for government-sponsored and -funded national service already exist.

REASON #4: The National Service Trust is expensive.

REASON #5: The National Service Trust creates more government bureaucracy.

REASON #6: The National Service Trust is unnecessary government intrusion into the already effective volunteer sector.

THE NATIONAL SERVICE TRUST ACT

In proposing the NST program, President Clinton declared: "National service will be America at its best—building community, offering opportunity, and rewarding responsibility. National service is a challenge for Americans from every background and way of life, and it values something far more than money. National service is nothing less than the American way to change America."³

President Clinton hopes that the NST will employ 25,000 workers by the 1993-1994 school year at a cost of \$394 million. He concedes that the annual cost to the taxpayer will increase to \$1.25 billion in 1995, to \$2.4 billion by 1996, and to \$3.4 billion by 1997, when the NST will employ 150,000 workers. And this \$7.4 billion four-year total could reach \$9.5 billion in the program's fifth year.⁴

The NST program would be administered by an eleven-member panel nominated by the President and approved by Congress. The NST Act sets up a new federal agency, the Corporation for National Service (CNS), and then mandates that each state set up its own commission for national service. The CNS eventually would assume the existing responsibilities of the Commission on National and Community Service and ACTION, the agency that runs the Volunteers in Service to America program (VISTA). The bill details the structure, governance, and oversight of the CNS, as well as the structure, duties, and transition of the state commissions.⁵

Taxpayers interested in the details of the new program, however, will find few specifics in the NST Act. It is not clear what kind of potential programs they will be expected to fund, how workers who wish to participate will be selected, the nature of the tasks they will be performing, or the overall cost of the program. In other words, given

3 Mark Pitsch, "Clinton Launches Sales Campaign for Service Plan," *Education Week*, Volume 12, No. 24 (March 10, 1993), p. 1.

4 Associated Press, "Panels OK Clinton's National Service Payback Plan," *The Capital* (Annapolis), June 17, 1993, p. A2.

5 The Act allows existing state agencies to assume the responsibility of the state commissions for a period of one year.

the breadth of its mission, the bill offers taxpayers a recipe for open-ended federal spending. For example, the NST Act specifies that "National service must address unmet educational, environmental, human, or public safety needs. National priorities may be established within these areas." It further states that "National service must improve the life of the participants, through citizenship education and training." But the Act does not specify the nature of these "unmet needs" nor the scope or character of the national priorities. It also fails to define "citizenship education," which, in the context of the current cultural divisions over sensitive social issues, could mean virtually anything.

The NST initiative also extends and expands four existing national service programs:

- 1) **The Serve-America program**, a federal service program for school age children;
- 2) **The Higher Innovative Projects for Community Service**, a government program which gives grants to postsecondary institutions to encourage student community service projects;
- 3) **Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA)**, which places a select number of college graduates in service projects in underprivileged American communities;⁶
- 4) **The Older American Volunteer Programs**, including the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), which provides a variety of volunteer opportunities for individuals 60 and over; the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), which provides volunteer opportunities for primarily low-income volunteers aged 60 and over to provide supportive services to children; and the Senior Companion Program (SCP), which awards stipends and benefits to volunteers aged 60 and over who provide supportive services to older persons in homes or institutions.

SIX REASONS WHY THE NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAM IS A BAD IDEA

REASON #1: The National Service Trust does not reward individual responsibility.

Despite the President's appealing rhetoric, the NST program is not a genuine community service or volunteer program. The program offers substantial subsidies, in the form of federal vouchers and ancillary benefits, for relatively little personal sacrifice. In fact, in many instances, the NST jobs offer larger financial compensation than these students could receive in private sector employment. Each NST worker will receive a package of at least \$4.25 (the minimum wage) plus federally subsidized health care, federally subsidized child care, and a \$5,000 stipend. Beyond these taxpayer subsidies, the Act permits the states and service organizations to supplement the federal compensation package. Service workers could be paid up to twice the minimum wage, \$8.50, and still retain their eligibility for the education voucher.

⁶ Clinton often calls his National Service Trust a "domestic peace corps." A domestic peace corps already exists in VISTA, created in 1965 and funded at \$34.7 million in 1993.

Moreover, the benefits accrued from participation in the NST program would not count as income in determining a student's eligibility for a Pell grant, a need-based grant awarded to low-income students by the U.S. government to help pay for postsecondary education costs. The same is true for welfare benefits, Medicaid, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), or any other "Federal, State, or local program financed in whole or in part with Federal funds."⁷ Worse yet, the Clinton Administration also hopes to make the benefits even more generous by making them nontaxable.⁸ In total, salaries and benefits would amount to close to \$20,000 per volunteer. With the government-permitted private match by the organizations, wages and benefits would be \$29,000. This amount exceeds the median income of workers in the private sector, including those with years of experience, which is \$29,400 for males and \$20,500 for females. Participation in the NST program thus hardly involves the sort of personal sacrifice that most Americans associate with national service. Chester E. Finn, Jr., former Assistant Secretary of Education in the Reagan Administration, observes that individuals will get "dual compensation in the act of serving and in forgiveness of their loan."⁹ Asks Finn, "Are we talking about a serious thing or a symbolic event?"

The NST program would also award educational benefits to "volunteer" government workers higher than those now available to military volunteers. Veterans groups, including Disabled American Veterans, the American Legion, and Veterans of Foreign Wars, are opposed to the National Trust Service plan precisely because it gives more generous benefits for safe and easy community service than the government gives for potentially dangerous military service. The military program awards \$4,666 for each year of service to veterans, who may be asked to risk their lives in service to their country. Larry Rivers, head of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, says, "My reaction is, that's not fair."¹⁰ Asks John F. Heilman, national legislative director for Disabled American Veterans, "How many people who perform this new national service have the potential to be sent home to their parents in a body bag?"¹¹

The generosity of the benefits of the new federal NST program also sends a mixed message about volunteering. Volunteering is not a "job"; it is an act of self-sacrifice. Moreover, volunteering is an activity that is increasingly popular among students already. Surveys by the Gallup Organization and Independent Sector show that private sector community service is thriving. In 1991, the latest year for which data are available, 94.2 million Americans age 18 and over volunteered in some capacity, with an average of 4.2 hours a week. These Americans were moved not by the lure of a lucrative government job, but by a spirit of true volunteerism and genuine service. The NST program gives the notion of volunteering a materialistic slant. Many students will either participate merely to pay off student loans or "volunteer" to avoid responsibility, hoping to delay a more stressful or less desirable job in the private sector.

7 H.R. 2010 (May 6, 1993), Sec. 140 (a)(5), p. 54.

8 The Administration may need to seek separate legislation to make benefits tax-exempt.

9 Carol Innerst, "Odd Alliances Form in Debate Over National Service," *The Washington Times*, March 8, 1993, p. A1.

10 Ruth Marcus, "Clinton Presents National Service Plan," *The Washington Post*, p. A11.

11 Scott Jaschik, "Clinton's National-Service Plan Disappoints Students and Colleges," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 12, 1993, p. A27.

Finally, congressional proponents of the NST program are not considering the impact of the plan on the individuals who are already volunteering. Paid NST participants with a relatively lucrative government benefits package often would work with people who have a long history of volunteering and who get nothing in return but the satisfaction which comes from helping the less fortunate. Full-time paid NST workers could achieve higher status and get better duties than genuine part-time volunteers. The NST organizations approved by the government may exacerbate this problem because it is often easier to coordinate and manage full-time paid workers than to supervise part-time volunteers. In the end, the program may work against the realization of its goals and discourage those individuals who are already giving of themselves and receiving no financial reward.

REASON #2: The National Service Trust does little to expand educational opportunity.

Just as Clinton's NST program fails to encourage true community service, it likewise does little to accomplish its stated goal of "expanding educational opportunity." The NST program will benefit 25,000 students in 1994 and increase to a mere 150,000 people by 1997—less than 1 percent of the 16 million students currently enrolled in post-high school education. The federal government currently helps 3.9 million students pay their education expenses through the Guaranteed Student Loan Program and provides Pell Grants of up to \$2,300 to 2,582,911 students. Combined government grant and loan programs will cost the American taxpayer \$25,086,000,000 in 1993, or \$4,181 per student. These programs serve 6,020,000 students. The NST program, by contrast, will cost the taxpayer \$22,667 per student participant per year, or a total of \$45,000 for two years of "service."¹² But only a small portion of this money—\$5,000 for each year of participation—will go to meeting educational expenses.

Recognizing the small number of students who would benefit from this expensive government program, colleges and university officials are quick to call the NST a "work program," not student aid. Jim Appleberry, president of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) said that it is a "mistake and error" to construe the NST as a move to increase access to college education. Rather, he argues, the NST proposal is "to encourage people to take care of one another."¹³ Even Senator David Durenberger, the Republican from Minnesota, one of the leading Senate supporters of the NST program, believes that "the President is once again raising expectations that can't be met."¹⁴ Senator Durenberger worries that students will simply view the NST as a way of meeting their college costs, and acknowledges that the program will do little to increase access to higher education.¹⁵

College student aid administrators throughout the country are concerned that the NST program will take money away from federal aid programs that actually do expand access to education. The reason: The NST program would be authorized to start spending \$7.4

12 This cost per participant is reached by dividing Mr. Clinton's estimated 1997 cost of \$3.4 billion by the 150,000 students he hopes to employ in 1997.

13 "National Service is Not Student Aid, Higher Ed Coalition Says," *Education Daily*, April 21, 1993, p. 4.

14 Rochelle Sharpe, "Clinton's Student Loan, Service Plans Come Under Scrutiny on Capitol Hill," *The Wall Street Journal*, May 5, 1993.

15 *Ibid.*

billion over four years when the Pell Grant Program faces a \$2 billion deficit and cuts are already proposed in other student aid programs. Phyllis K. Hooyman, director of financial aid at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, states: "During a time when federal student grant programs are under the budget ax, we may be directing precious federal monies to non-needy students."¹⁶ And Peggy Gordon Elliott, president of the University of Akron, says that "national service is not, and must not be seen as a student aid program. If we had infinite resources, this would not be an unworthy program." But, she added, "This is like a rich dessert when we can't afford basic nourishment."¹⁷

Even among students, there is skepticism that the NST program will expand their educational opportunities. Shirley Leunt, editor of *The Daily Princetonian*, Princeton University's student newspaper, says, "A lot of people are involved in community service here, but I'm not sure that a lot of students see it as a viable way to pay for college."¹⁸ Jay Judge, summer editor in chief of the *Indiana Daily Student* and a senior at Indiana University, bluntly says: "It sounds like a snow job. [President Clinton is] offering something to a small number of students and playing it up as a much bigger program."¹⁹ And Glenn D. Magpantay, president of the Student Association of the State University of New York, says that the NST \$5,000 educational voucher will do little to help poor students pay for their education. "This program is going to be very amenable to middle-income students," he says, "but this does very little for low-income students—the students we are losing."²⁰

REASON #3: Opportunities for government-funded and -sponsored national service already exist.

Despite political rhetoric to the contrary, federal national service opportunities already abound for students, as well as for any other interested citizen. Consider the chart in the Appendix, which outlines the existing national service programs administered by the federal government and funded by American taxpayers.

Taxpayers, who are already spending \$1.5 billion on federal service plans, do not need yet another federal national service program, a program far grander and billions of dollars more expensive than any of the existing programs. And students, who are the beneficiaries of numerous government aid programs, do not need to be induced to volunteer to help the less fortunate when opportunities to serve already exist for anyone who is genuinely interested.

16 Jaschik, *op. cit.*

17 *Ibid.*

18 Jim Zook, "Clinton Foresees Enlisting 100,000 Youths in His National Service Program by 1997," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 10, 1993, p. A27.

19 Jaschik, *op. cit.*

20 *Ibid.*

REASON #4: The National Service Trust is expensive.

As already indicated, the NST legislation is expensive both in terms of actual costs as well as opportunity costs such as the work experience and education students must forgo while they perform their service. Although the Administration's legislation does not contain specifics about the cost of the NST, President Clinton predicts that the program will cost \$7.4 billion from 1994 through 1997, with federal spending increases in future years. The President himself says that if there is more student interest than slots available, he will "go back to the Congress and ask for more money."²¹ Furthermore, the proposed \$7.4 billion plan does not include the "opportunity" costs, or the costs inherent in taking qualified students out of the private sector job market and placing them in government "make-work projects."

For overburdened taxpayers, the \$7.4 billion price tag for the NST is prohibitive, especially when compared to the cost of the Peace Corps and VISTA, two respected service programs that the President often invokes in pressing for the NST. Founded by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, the Peace Corps has deployed just 130,000 volunteers over three decades.²² The Peace Corps received a total of \$3.6 billion in federal support during its 31 years of existence. The 1992 Peace Corps budget reached \$200 million, an increase of \$14 million over 1991.²³ During 1966, its peak year, the Peace Corps employed the services of only 15,556 volunteers.²⁴ By early 1989, this body had been reduced to 5,100 members.²⁵ This allocation of funding and personnel is minimal compared to the NST program envisioned by the President and its supporters on Capitol Hill.

Similarly, the NST is significantly larger than the Volunteers in Service to America program (VISTA), created in 1965 as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society. Down to 3,400 volunteers this year from its peak in FY 1975 of over 4,500, VISTA's 1992 budget reached \$37.5 million, its biggest ever.²⁶

While the proposed NST legislation is more modest in size and benefits than President Clinton promised during the 1992 presidential campaign, the legislation establishes an open-ended framework for rapid and sustained growth in federal spending. In his February 17, 1993, State of the Union address, President Clinton stated: "Our national service program will make college loans available to all Americans, and challenge them to give something back to their country—as teachers, police officers, community service workers. This will be an historic change on a scale with the creation of the Land Grant Colleges and the G.I. Bill." Clearly, the NST, once passed by Congress, will not be limited to 150,000 workers, or less than 1 percent of all students enrolled in higher education. Nor will the price tag remain at \$7.4 billion.

21 Pitsch, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

22 Associated Press, "Foreign Volunteers Turn Peace Corps Tables on U.S. Poverty," *The Washington Post*, August 26, 1990, p. A13.

23 Kurt Shillinger, "Peace Corps Enters the '90s Invited into Eastern Europe," *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 1, 1991, p. 7.

24 Al Kamen, "Traditionalists Upset at Peace Corps," *The Washington Post*, January 2, 1991, p. A1.

25 *Ibid.*

26 Bill Barrett, VISTA Public Information Officer, telephone interview, March 12, 1993.

In addition to these actual costs, there are also what economists call “opportunity costs” to society. These are the costs of pulling 150,000 students directly out of the private sector work force for two years. These costs include the time students lose from learning the skills they will use in their future careers and the loss of the services of qualified students to society. There is also the possibility that these students could learn poor work habits and later find it difficult to secure and retain a more demanding private sector job where performance is more directly rewarded and where a lack of performance can lead to termination of employment.

For example, students in highly technical fields such as engineering or computer science are not helped by two years of work unrelated to their academic training. And the proposed NST program is not likely to teach students specialized skills they can use later in their careers. The two-year loss of the skills of these productive individuals is a direct economic cost to society. Similarly, many students who would enroll in the NST program to serve in poor communities could better help the less fortunate by finishing their education and getting workable skills that they can then share. The NST program will merely delay the entry of these students into true service positions as doctors, lawyers, teachers, policemen, social workers, for example, for two years. The service of professionals is surely more valuable than the service of inexperienced youthful volunteers. The NST participants will also be two years farther away from promotions or salary increases they could expect, and the government will lose the taxes they would have paid as productive members of society.

Finally, If student volunteers mistake their experience in community service programs as a genuine model of work in the “real world,” participation in the NST could make it difficult for students to adopt to working conditions in the private sector. Likewise, if previous federal experience is any guide, the new “volunteer” positions, as defined by the NST, could just as easily become “make-work” government “jobs.” If government work programs for young Americans are not managed carefully, they can effectively sabotage the work ethic because the programs do not hold employees to the same high work standards that private employers do. The General Accounting Office (GAO) noted as long ago as 1969 that many individuals hired in the federal government’s summer jobs programs actually “regressed in their conception of what should reasonably be required in return for wages paid.”²⁷ Likewise, then-Senator Lawton Chiles, the Florida Democrat who is now Governor of Florida, complained in 1979 that young people enrolled in such programs “get such a strong message of cynicism and corruption that it cannot fail to carry over into their attitudes about work, crime, and society.”²⁸

Public service programs often divorce jobs from work. Youth workers in Bridgeport, Connecticut, for example, were assigned to a local organization called SWEAT (Students Who Entertain Artistic Thoughts) and were paid to go to a local dance, visit movie director Spike Lee’s Block Party in New York, and have a “brotherhood picnic.” And students in Washington, D.C.’s summer jobs program spend their work time playing basketball, even though large tracts of the city look like New York City’s Bronx.²⁹

27 James Bovard, “Clinton’s Summer Jobs Sham,” *The Wall Street Journal*, March 5, 1993.

28 *Ibid.*

29 *Ibid.*

According to Robert Woodson of Washington, D.C.'s National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, "The programs create a false sense of work in kids and make it more difficult for them when they go out and try to get a real job."³⁰

REASON #5: The national service trust creates more government bureaucracy.

Much of the actual cost of the new NST program will go toward creating a massive new federal bureaucracy, with new mandates to the states to create their own similar bureaucracies. The Clinton Administration plans to administer the NST through a new government Corporation for National Service (CNS). Both the existing Commission on National and Community Service and ACTION would be merged into this new federal agency. The CNS would henceforth be responsible for administering all programs authorized under the National and Community Service Act and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act, including VISTA and the Older American Volunteer Programs. As envisioned under the NST Act, the new agency would also fund new "training and technical assistance, service clearinghouses and other activities." The NST Act also imposes a new mandate on states that "in order to receive a grant, each state must establish a commission on national service." Of course, President Clinton's NST legislation Act is replete with new federal paperwork obligations.

Under the proposed NST legislation, students will work in programs chosen by state governments through the Corporation for National Service, an agency over which Congress would have limited control. Bureaucrats will decide which "jobs" should be done and they will subsidize the service organizations they favor. This opens up new avenues for potential waste, fraud, and corruption among the hundreds of jurisdictions throughout the country and among the new state commissions. Not only would state and local bureaucrats receive substantial amounts of new federal money, they would also have the ability to direct large numbers of middle-class students (230 in each congressional district) performing menial minimum-wage labor for approved service organizations.

There is ample historical basis for anticipating such abuse. Consider the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) of 1973. Initially enacted as a block grant to promote community service, CETA became notorious for its waste, fraud, and abuse.³¹ CETA used taxpayers' money to pay for such job-creating activities as an artificial rock in Oregon for rockclimbers to learn safety skills, conducting a nude sculpture class in Miami for aspiring artists to practice braille reading on each other's bodies, and sending CETA workers door-to-door in Florida to recruit people for food stamps.³² Even the heretofore unimpeachable Peace Corps, the most successful federal volunteer program, has been blemished. An internal investigative agency in spring 1992 accused the group's senior officials of severe cronyism.³³

30 *Ibid.*

31 Claude E. Barfield, *Rethinking Federalism: Block Grants and Federal, State, and Local Responsibilities* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1981), p. 17.

32 Bovard, *op. cit.*

33 Al Kamen, "Peace Corps Torn Over Internal Report," *The Washington Post*, April 24, 1992, p. A25.

Political scientist Williamson M. Evers, a visiting scholar at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, observes that as a national service organization gets bigger "it gets less like the Peace Corps [with 16,000 participants at its peak] and more like the Army or the post office. When you ask people like those who run the post office to shape the souls of American youth, you're asking for a mess and maybe a disaster."³⁴

REASON #6: The national service trust is unnecessary government intrusion into the already effective volunteer sector.

Taxpayers do not need yet another program to do what millions of Americans are already doing. At least 94 million Americans currently participate in volunteer service activities. A 1990 Gallup poll found that 54 percent of Americans participated in volunteer activity of one sort or another.³⁵ There are already numerous state- and city-level volunteer programs that young people may join. By enacting the NST, the federal government will compete with these already successful organizations by requiring taxpayers to subsidize some groups at the expense of others. The federal government does not need to duplicate the services that these groups already provide. Kathleen Selz, director of the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps says that it "will be a challenge" for these groups to expand to include potential new NST workers.³⁶

Campus-based volunteer student groups are already expanding. More schools are also encouraging students to volunteer by expanding their regular curriculum to include service jobs.³⁷ The Federal Commission on National and Community Service is calling on schools and colleges to encourage more students to perform volunteer work.³⁸ And almost every college and university in America gives students opportunities to earn school credit for participating in community service activities. For example, Rutgers University, the site chosen by President Clinton to announce the NST program, integrates community service into the undergraduate curriculum, the Civic Education and Community Service Program. The coursework includes a combination of traditional academic disciplines related to volunteer services performed in the communities that are home to Rutgers campuses.³⁹

Similarly Loyola University in Chicago features programs designed to inspire students to help improve Chicago's urban blight. The university sponsors partnerships with area schools and a community policing project for criminal justice and sociology students. Other academic programs attract students to service-oriented careers, such as social work and nursing.

34 Carol Innerst, "Odd Alliances Form in Debate over National Service," *The Washington Times*, March 8, 1993, p. A1.

35 J. Peder Zane, "As Social Need Rises, So Does Volunteerism," *The New York Times*, January 6, 1992, p. A1.

36 Matthew Cooper, "Wanted: National Service: Clinton's Favorite Idea Must Clear Big Hurdles Before it Takes Off," *U.S. News and World Report*, March 8, 1993, p. 34.

37 Mary Jordan, "Hot Course on Campus: Volunteerism 101," *The Washington Post*, March 2, 1992, p. A1.

38 "What You Can Do For Your Country," Report of the Commission on National and Community Service (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1993).

39 Zook, *op. cit.*

Even Sidwell Friends School, the private school Chelsea Clinton, the President's daughter, attends at a cost of \$10,885, requires community service. At Sidwell, there are campus student work programs and voluntary service projects on and off campus for all grades, mandatory service projects for ninth-graders, and thirty hours of off-campus community service required for graduation, according to a Sidwell brochure.

Domestic volunteer organizations currently have more applicants than they can handle. The Federal Commission on National and Community Service already has warned Congress that the NST plan could overwhelm America's service areas. In its first report to Congress, the Commission says that the nation's service organizations could handle an increase of only 100,000 volunteers during the next three years. Catherine Milton, Executive Director of the Commission says that "(O)ne has to be careful in how one expands community service programs."⁴⁰ According to Milton, any federal program to encourage community service must ensure that the organizations can handle the influx of people and that the volunteers do meaningful work. This has been, as noted, a genuine problem under other federal programs.

Members of Congress also should consider the impact of the new NST on grass roots volunteer programs. Leaders at Youth Service America, a grass roots non-profit volunteer organization that promotes community service projects, worry that the new NST program will swallow them up, rather than simply feed them young workers. Roger Landrom, president of Youth Service America asks, "Is this model going to build on the strengths and models that are already out there in the field, as opposed to just running roughshod over them with a lot of government-centered efforts?"⁴¹

Members of Congress also should realize that many advocates of the NST want national service to become compulsory and wish to establish it as a foundation for a more extensive government employment program. For example, the work of Professor Benjamin Barber at Rutgers University was cited by President Clinton when he announced the national service plan. Professor Barber, an outspoken critic of limited government, believes that most private, independent service efforts "encourage self-interestedness." He argues instead for compulsory universal citizen service in government-run programs.

CONCLUSION

President Clinton's National Service Trust will not "expand educational opportunity, reward individual responsibility, and build the American community together to tackle common problems." National service would not, in fact, encourage volunteerism and genuine service, but distort its meaning. The NST program would not, like the military or Peace Corps, require any special sacrifice or risk. Rather it would confer upon its participants the same kinds of public honor, and greater government benefits, without expecting the same levels of individual responsibility.

⁴⁰ "Clinton Plan Could Swamp Service Groups, Panel Says," *Education Daily*, Vol. 26, No. 10 (January 15, 1993), p. 1.

⁴¹ Gerald F. Seib, "National Service Already Attracts Volunteers Even Before the Debate in Congress has Begun," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 13, 1993, p. A20.

If the President's goal is to expand educational opportunity, the NST's \$7.4 billion would be better spent in direct aid to students. If he hopes to stimulate service, he could amend the tax code to allow for tax credits or increased deductions for those individuals who donate a specified amount of their time or money. If he wants to bring the American community together, he is better off reducing federal spending rather than adding to the already huge national debt. He should refuse to create a new government bureaucracy that will give more taxpayer money to organizations or special interests approved by the same bureaucrats and legislators who support government expansion.

Just as individuals and corporations never have the time and money to perform every task that they wish, neither can government officials, using taxpayer dollars, fix every problem of society. While the goals of the NST are laudable, the NST will not lead to expanded educational opportunity and increased individual responsibility. It will merely be another expensive, bureaucratic government spending program. For America's taxpayers, national service is an expensive venture with few, if any, net gains.

Allyson M. Tucker
Manager, Center for Educational Policy

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APPENDIX

HOW FEDERAL FUNDS CURRENTLY SUPPORT COMMUNITY SERVICE

(Appropriations in FY 1993 \$ unless otherwise indicated)

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AGE	TOTAL VOLUNTEERS	COST TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
Commission on National and Community Service	CNCS was created by Congress under the National and Community Service Act of 1990 to encourage progress in the area of community and national service.	(see below)	(see below)	\$75.5 million
1) Conservation and Youth Service Corps	Full-time service programs in community improvement that also often incorporate basic job skills and GED programs.	16-24 year olds	15,000 year round; 4,600 June-Augusts	\$22.5 million from grants awarded by CNCS, \$12 million from JTPA and other federal sources
2) Serve-America	A wide range of programs at state and local level to promote the integration of service in school curricula. CNCS grants awarded to mostly state school agencies which then awarded subgrants to local organizations.	6-18 year olds and parents	not available	\$16.2 million from grants awarded by CNCS
3) Higher Education	Programs designed to involve higher education institutions in community service, research, evaluation, and volunteer teacher training. CNCS awarded grants to 58 institutions and consortia.	18-22 year olds	not available	\$5.2 million from grants awarded by CNCS
4) National Service Demonstration Programs	Mostly large scale programs that are experimenting with forms of national service. CNCS awarded 8 grants in 1992.	depends on the program	not available	\$20.1 million from grants awarded by CNCS
5) Civilian Community Corps	Resident-based program emphasizes performance of community service activities that provide community benefits and opportunities for service, learning, and skills development. This program is comprised of 2 parts: 1) the National Service Program and 2) the Summer National Service Program.	16-24 year olds in National Service Program; 14-18 year olds in Summer National Service Program	not available	\$20 million
6) Civilian Community Corps Defense Downsizing Projects	Congress authorized and appropriated additional funds to be used for service programs that relate to defense downsizing. The use of this additional funding was not stipulated by Congress and the CNCS has not decided how the funding will be allocated.	not known	not known	\$20 million

1. Added by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1993

HOW FEDERAL FUNDS CURRENTLY SUPPORT COMMUNITY SERVICE

(continued)
(Appropriations in FY 1993 \$ unless otherwise indicated)

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AGE	TOTAL VOLUNTEERS	COST TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
ACTION	An independent government agency that administers national and community service programs in the following seven areas.	depends on the program	500,000	\$169.6 million
1) VISTA	There are 700 Volunteers in Service to America projects nationwide that provide full-time service opportunities in combatting poverty. Volunteers are placed in a wide variety of service organizations nationwide.	ages 18 and up	4,000	\$34.7 million
2) RSVP	The Retired Senior Volunteer Program targets senior citizen involvement in a wide range of local community service organizations	ages 60 and up	432,500	\$33.7 million
3) Foster Grandparent	This program involves senior citizens in mentor programs for disadvantaged parents and children. Education and social services are also involved.	ages 60 and up	approx. 20,000	\$64.8 million
4) Senior Companion Program	This program is aimed at care for the elderly. Volunteers provide individualized care for the elderly. Low-income senior citizens make up volunteers.	ages 60 and up	7,800	\$29.5 million
5) Student Community Service Program	ACTION administered and funded approximately 100 separate youth service programs nationwide that focus on anti-poverty efforts.	16-22 year olds	approx. 12,600	\$958,000
6) Special Volunteer Program	ACTION funded 97 projects with innovative approaches to community service. It currently concentrates on anti-drug abuse efforts as the Action Drug Alliance Program.	all ages	10,800	\$982,000
7) VISTA Literacy Corps	VISTA administers this small program that has supported 80 literacy projects nationwide. Volunteers are involved in tutoring, teaching and mentoring.	ages 18 and up	600	\$5 million
Peace Corps	An independent federal agency that provides 2-year service for volunteers in 86 countries. Its main purpose is to promote peace and international friendship through cultural exchange, education and health services.	ages 18 and up	6,300	\$186 million

HOW FEDERAL FUNDS CURRENTLY SUPPORT COMMUNITY SERVICE

(continued)
(Appropriations in FY 1993 \$ unless otherwise indicated)

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AGE	TOTAL VOLUNTEERS	COST TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
Loan Forgiveness within the Stafford Loan Program	The Secretary of Education is authorized to carry out a demonstration program to provide loan forgiveness to Stafford borrowers who are employed as certain types of teachers, nurses, and individuals performing national and community service.	NA	NA	not funded
Community Service Learning Program	This program is a small part of the Federal Work-Study Program. Each institution participating in Work-Study may use up to 10% of allocated funds to conduct and encourage community service. In 1992-93, only 80 schools of the 4,000 receiving Work-Study funds took advantage of this program employing students in community service organizations.	all ages	NA	Effective for the 1993-94 academic year, schools can use up to \$61.7 million for CSLP.
National Health Service Corps	This program is administered by HHS and has 3 principal components designed to supplement understaffed health care facilities — a scholarship program, 2 loan repayment programs (one state and one federal), and a volunteer program for non-obligated health professionals. Recipients must serve a minimum of two years in a Health Professions Shortage Area.	all ages — students of health professions	1992 - 1,030	\$118.7 million
Indian Health Service	This loan repayment program brings health professionals to work on Indian reservations and regions for 2 years.	all ages	985	\$10.5 million
Loan Repayment Authority of the Public Health Service Act	This is the first part of a program under Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act designed to increase the number of nurses in health care shortage areas.	all ages — nursing graduate students	NA	not funded
Scholarship Authority of the Public Health Service Act	This is the second part of a program under Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act Designed to increase the number of nurses in health care shortage areas.	all ages — undergrad. nursing students	NA	not funded
Senior Community Service Employment Program	This program is a part of the Older Americans Act and it is designed to employ low-income, unemployed senior citizens in community service organizations in the areas of health care and education.	ages 55 and up	56,600 job slots requested in 1991-92	\$390.1 million

HOW FEDERAL FUNDS CURRENTLY SUPPORT COMMUNITY SERVICE

(continued)
(Appropriations in FY 1993 \$ unless otherwise indicated)

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AGE	TOTAL VOLUNTEERS	COST TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
National Guard Civilian Youth Opportunities Pilot Program²	This National Guard program provides military-based training through supervised work experience in conservation and community service. Service time is 22 weeks plus a 12-18 month "mentorship" period.	High School dropouts	NA	\$44 million
Points of Light Foundation	Non-profit organization, initiated by the Bush Administration, which seeks to heighten public awareness of volunteerism and provides leadership and resources to a network of about 450 member groups.	all ages	number increases each day	\$5 million
HOPE VI	HUD program which promotes cooperation between political leaders and residents of distressed communities in large cities to foster the transformation of these areas into productive residential and commercial centers. Up to 20% of these funds may be used for self-sufficiency and community "sweat equity" service programs. The Commission on National and Community Service approves the applications for, but does not actually administer the program.	not known	NA	\$50 million³

TOTAL = Approximately \$1.5 billion

2) Added by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1993.

3) Since the authorization for this program specifies that "up to" 20% of the total appropriation may be used for community service, this amount is the maximum amount that could be spent, assuming that all 20% was used for this purpose.

Source: House Education and Labor Committee