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National Service Proposal-Responses to Discussion Outline

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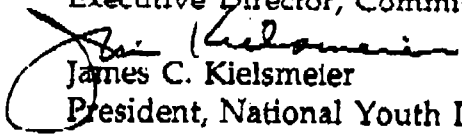


NATIONAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP
COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM: URGENT

To: Eli Segal
Director, Office of National Service

Catherine Milton
Executive Director, Commission on National and Community Service

From: 
James C. Kielsmeyer
President, National Youth Leadership Council

Subject: Summer of Service Training Plan

Date: March 15, 1993

The basic idea of Summer of Service is something I endorse with great enthusiasm. I particularly support the focus on meeting the needs of children for whom our high expectations require a high societal investment through education, health intervention, etc. * Summer is a very good time for this type of venture with so many children out of school. I do, however, have great concern about the training design and believe its flaws could jeopardize the entire program.

Four days of centralized training for directors and mid-level supervisors makes sense given my estimates of group size (10 sites, 15 people per site, 150 total to be trained). However, 5 days of 1000 to 1800 participants at the same place at the same time is not manageable as a training - a rally, an expensive youth conference perhaps - but not a training. Based on my 28 years of training experience as an Army officer, Outward Bound instructor/course director, operator of Summer WalkAbout and manager of the NYLC training model, the largest youth service training model in the country for educators, I offer the following points regarding Summer of Service:

- Travel costs for a large centralized training will be enormous and will quickly be calculated by the press ($1800 \times \$500 = \$900,000$) and weighed against the professed benefit of the program. "Could this nearly one million dollars in travel be better spent on direct service to needy children versus a costly program component?"

* Children commonly referred to as 'at-risk'

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Kielsmeier Page 2

- The real value of short term large group training, especially when there is little planning time, is minimal. The participants will barely be able to adjust to the site before it is over. Moreover, the most effective training for this age group involves considerable small group interaction, a high staff to participant ratio and a considerable number of active learning/ experiential activity sites such as ropes courses, service projects and break out classrooms. I know of no national facility that can provide enough experiential training venues for a group of 1000 - 1800. Concentrating a quality staff at a single place to do this is also problematic.

- Summer of Service is a huge 'learning by doing' model. Participants must be trained in the style they will operate in during the 9 weeks. To not train this way is hypocritical - like trying to train teachers to be innovative service-learning practitioners in a traditional setting - and ineffective. The press, colleagues in the education and training fields and participants themselves will quickly point all of this out, especially on site when you want optimal media coverage. This could be a terrible start to an otherwise good project.

I believe, however, the goals of preparing Summer of Service participants for useful roles this summer can be accomplished if the training is decentralized, and delivered experientially with highest caliber staff. Conducted this way it will also be more cost effective. A few specific suggestions:

- Keep the centralized 4 day project director training at a single site but focus it as a training of trainers. Encourage site directors to select a core group of Summer of Service participants to serve as co-trainers and participate with older staff. They will be very effective as trainers for their peers.

- Select 4-5 national training sites based on proximity to selected programs. Program participants should be able to bus to the sites.

- Make the training hands-on, high energy and up beat. Try to do the pedantic form completion element/logistics back at their home location not at the national training.

- Recruit the best experiential trainers and make the experience first class.

- Consider an electronic town meeting format linking the President at the front end to all the training sites - better yet at the conclusion of training when young people will have questions.

- Another option would be a Presidential visit to several sites during the training. If the training is experiential, this would be an optimal time for the President to interact with students, hammer some nails on a house project or read to young children - all authentic elements of a hands-on training. Good media, good morale boost.

- If a centralized national meeting is desired at the front, consider a smaller representative group from each site. This type of representative group could also gather at the end of the summer with the President, again keeping travel costs down.

- Along with understanding of program philosophy, training should include the following:

- Basics of child development
- Appreciation for people of different cultures
- Team building
- Hands-on service experience
- Risk management
- Physical conditioning
- How to's of working with young people
- Next steps on Summer of Service include SEA Change grants

More specific content related to their projects could be taught back home.

This is a basic sketch. As with every risk-taking venture the key to success is a good plan implemented by good leadership. I'm happy to help further if needed.

Rick

NATIONAL SERVICE SECRETARIAT
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Phone: 202-244-5828

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March 13, 1993

To: Susan Stroud

From: Don Eberly 

Subject: Clinton National Service Proposal

Thank you for your invitation to comment on the Discussion Outline. I will offer my comments briefly and will be happy to elaborate on any of them at your convenience.

I think it is right to focus on a national service program within the framework of a broad-based call to service. However, I would plan in the next few years to engage more people in the GI Bill model (post-service educational benefit) than in the mirror image of the GI Bill model (loan forgiveness). The reason is that we know the GI Bill model works and can proceed on a substantial scale. The mirror image of the GI Bill should begin on an experimental basis and grow gradually.

A Conservation Corps should be included as part of the GI Bill model. It should include activities sponsored by Agriculture and Interior as well as those sponsored by state departments of natural resources and non-profit organizations. I would make arrangements with the Pentagon to bring departing military personnel onto the Conservation Corps staff for logistical support, as President Roosevelt did 60 years ago with the CCC.

Decentralized placements should pretty much follow the model of Subtitle D in the NCSA of 1990. With both the Conservation Corps and the decentralized placements, we can go full steam ahead with full-time stipended placements while treating part-time stipended placements as experimental.

The differential benefits proposal should be excised this weekend, before media commentators start giving President Clinton a hard time over it.

It would be helpful to examine two flow charts associated with the President's draft proposal. The first would show the flow of money from federal, state and other sources and who has responsibility for what. For example, there must be some federal criteria for approved positions and programs but I need to see what criteria are being proposed. The idea of state National Service Commissions is good but I need more details before I can

be convinced that they will not be impediments to the process.

The second flow chart would show how applicants -- both in the GI Bill model and the payback model -- go through the system and end up in suitable placements.

The proposed phase-in of 25,000 by the end of FY 94 is OK (I assume that is in addition to current program levels) but I would raise the FY 1997 target figure from 100,000 to about 300,000.

I support well-integrated teams but I don't support them at the expense of service delivery. I have seen teams with members ranging from college graduates to dropouts whose service output is curtailed because everyone does the same thing. We need to aim for teams requiring varied talents. Some examples are bookmobiles, vaccination campaigns, and removal of lead-based paint poisoning. Having said this, I would not exclude the Ph.D. environmentalist from a conservation work crew if that is where she wants to serve.

Let me know if I can help. Best wishes.

To: Jack Low

From: Wendy Kopp
Founder & President
Teach For America

Fax: 212-789-9289
Ph: 212-789-9302x175

I was excited to see the Discussion Outline of the Clinton National Service Proposal. I am really happy with the direction of the Proposal, and I wanted to contribute just a few thoughts.

First, the proposal leaves me wondering whether individuals who make more than the minimum wage stipend and benefits will also be eligible for student loan forgiveness. We believe that it is important to offer this benefit to members of professional corps. While professional corps members' salaries are often higher than those of other participants in national service, their opportunity costs are also higher, and the responsibility they assume is often greater.

Second, I question whether the federal government should run a national training program (as described in "federal role" section). I worry that a national training program would have to be too many things to too many people to be truly effective. I have found that training programs are most successful when they are grounded in the reality with which corps members will work when they are out in the field. Also, I have seen that training programs are necessarily very different between organizations; each creates its own culture, as determined by the organizers and the participants. Finally, it seems that there would be logistical problems created by organizations' different start dates.

Third, I worry about the State role. I have seen first-hand the bureaucratic maze that states have created to regulate and control the education system, and I worry that they will do something similar with the service field. While this is clearly not the intention of the Proposal, I fear that it may nonetheless be the result. If states are charged with developing a plan for service, and with ensuring the equitable treatment of urban and rural areas, won't they put in place controls which will hamper service initiatives as much as they will help them? Furthermore, I question the value-added of the described Commissions. We have found that informal networks naturally develop between service organizations in any particular region. These networks are invaluable in ensuring learning across programs and in encouraging joint ventures and initiatives to increase and broaden impact. And these informal networks don't have the capacity to create regulations and restrictions which could easily do more harm than good.

Again, I am really happy with the majority of this Proposal. In particular, the sections on infrastructure and nonfederal funding seem perfect to me.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jack Lew, General Counsel
Office of National Service, White House

FROM: *Bernadette Chi* Bernadette Chi, CalServe Regional Coordinator
California Department of Education and
Member, Young People for National Service

SUBJECT: Response to the Clinton National Service Proposal

DATE: March 15, 1993

As an intern with the former Office of National Service (Fall, 1989), I am very happy to offer my response and the input of a diverse group of high-school and college-aged young people in Los Angeles to the National Service Proposal. I received this information from the Alliance for Service-Learning in Educational Reform, and hope that it is not too late to be considered. I will follow the format that was given in the proposal, and offer specific suggestions.

Types of Placements:

- o Placements should be developed through existing organizations and at the local level. For entrepreneurial efforts, they should be coordinated with existing community-based organizations to ensure sustainability and continuing support at the local level for this national program.

Selection of Participants:

- o The age range for participants was not disclosed. We suggest that the range include ages 16 to 30 to reach non-college bound youth (who may not have other opportunities to serve their communities and need to be reached early) and to include non-traditional returning students (they are increasing in number on California campuses) and graduate students (where most loans are accrued).
- o The national system that will coordinate, place, and support the thousands of participants should not create a huge bureaucracy at the federal level. Such support and coordination is necessary, but regional or even state offices with clearinghouses should be responsible for the follow-up and support with local efforts primarily responsible for the day-to-day supervision, training needs, and peer support.
- o What about housing needs? Local training, identification of local resources, supervisor training, and peer support? After speaking with several VISTA volunteers, local training, clear supervision, and peer support were critical to the success of their placements and to their individual growth.

Benefits:

- o Will these benefits be taxable? Is it a total of \$20,000 loan forgiveness for two years of national service? The post-service benefit should also be valid at trade and vocational schools.

Leveraging Nonfederal Matches:

- o Local, in-kind matches should be included.

Federal Role:

- o Again, how will the coordination take place without creating another unresponsive bureaucracy? As an employee of a state agency, I would strong suggest some public-private ventures that allow for some accountability measures with the flexibility of non-profit, private programs. The program must meet local needs and have strong local influence. Training needs to be emphasized at the local level as well, both for participants as well as host organizations and supervisors. Without such orientation and training, placements will be difficult and unfulfilling.
- o VISTA should continue to place older Americans, but should channel younger participants to the National Service program. How will this program operate with the Commission on National and Community Service? Will the White House operate the program? What is the role of ACTION? Coordination must take place at the very top with clear roles for the many federal, national organizations that currently exist.

State Role:

- o To inform and educate the states, the national service program should require that the State designate a viable state agency to coordinate information, resources, and initiatives at the state level. An advisory committee or commission should include youth members.

Income Contingent Loan Repayment:

- o The young people in the group strongly supported such options for loan repayment. The main question: will the interest that is accrued over a longer repayment period (for lower paying jobs) counteract the reduction in disincentive that this loan repayment program proposes? Because the interest accrued over a longer period is higher in amount, young people may still opt for higher paying jobs to avoid it.

Final recommendation

- o We strongly recommend that several young people assist in the design and administration of the actual program. If we want this program to reach diverse young people and truly empower them as leaders, give them some access to leadership at the top. If you need suggestions on young people in California or in the Washington D.C. area, please let me know.

If there is anything else I can do to assist you in developing a quality national service program, please contact me at 213/487-5590, c/o Constitutional Rights Foundation, 601 South Kingsley Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90005. I would love to participate! (And I have the college loans to prove it.) I have seen that young people want to participate in positive ways to their communities. We just need to give them the opportunity. Thank you for your consideration.

cc: Susan Stroud

Volunteer Maryland!

March 15, 1993

Mr. Jack Lew
Special Assistant to the President
& General Counsel,
Office of National Service
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Lew:

We are very excited about the President's recent call to service which challenges all Americans to help meet the troubles of our time. We deeply appreciate this opportunity to offer our ideas for a national service program.

We know that time is of the essence as you are on a fast track to introduce legislation to Congress soon. Hence, our comments regarding the President's National Service proposal will be brief and to the point.

Go For It!

First and foremost, we believe that the President's service proposal is the crucial catalyst needed to fully renew our nation's service ethic. All of the items in the National Service proposal outline are important, especially:

Building a service infrastructure among public, private and non-profit organizations that operate service programs;

Creating State National Service Commissions appointed by Governors to oversee and plan service programs within a state;

Selecting a diverse group of national service participants to work on a full-time and part-time basis in service corps and in individual placement service programs across the country.



WILLIAM DONALD SCHAEFER, GOVERNOR
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Set High Standards

We urge the federal government to set high standards for all national service programs, but not to create requirements that become too rigid and prevent service programs from tailoring their program to respond to local needs and/or the needs of their local national service participants.

Include the Older American

We believe that no one is too old to learn and no one is too old to serve their country.

We are seeing in Volunteer Maryland!, one of the national service demonstration projects funded by the Commission on National and Community Service, older people giving a year of invaluable service. Many of these older participants will use the post-service benefit so that they can go to college for the first time. The training and new skills that the older participants receive is extremely beneficial to our work force.

We have also found that the pairing of older and younger participants in Volunteer Maryland! is very valuable to the personal growth and development of the younger participants.

Look for Exponential Results

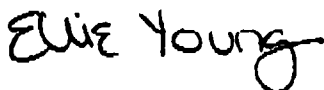
We hope that the 100,000 participants in the President's National Service Program will seize the opportunity to become leaders in the service movement by calling others into service, and we urge you to stress this in the Legislation. Here's what we mean:

The national service participant who dedicates a year to immunizing young children in a rural town can be the catalyst for citizen volunteering. The national service participant could involve middle school youth as volunteer "huggers" after the youngsters receive their shots and involve single Dad's in operating the mobile immunization van.

In Volunteer Maryland! we call this the "multiplier effect" because it creates unique and needed service opportunities for people in the community as well as the national service participants. This is the essence of Volunteer Maryland's service program.

Again, we applaud your efforts and will wholeheartedly support the administration's efforts to create a national service program. We view this as an historic opportunity to engage thousands of people in making a lasting difference. We know that service changes lives forever. Please do not hesitate to call on us if you need further information or have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Falk Young
Executive Director