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Service Organizations: Teach for America

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March 11, 1993

Mr. Eli Segal
Assistant to the President
Old Executive Office Building, Rm. 145
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Segal,

Finally, I am writing to follow up on our meeting of a few weeks ago. I very much appreciate the time you took to talk about your plans for national service and how Teach For America might be involved. This letter covers a number of topics:

- Teach For America's long-term plan;
- What we believe Teach For America would bring to the national service initiative;
- What we would like to see in the national service legislation;
- Ideas of how college students could fulfill a service commitment in schools outside of full-time teaching positions;
- An invitation to President Clinton requesting that he speak with over 1,000 of our corps members this summer; and
- A brief description of the program Teach For America started in Arkansas at President Clinton's invitation.

Teach For America's Long-Term Plan

We have come to believe that, if Teach For America had the support of the Office of National Service and of President Clinton, we could grow in the following way:

<u>Year Recruited</u>	<u>New CMs</u>	<u>Total CMs</u>	<u># Communities</u>
1992 (spring)	600	1300	12
1993	600	1200	15
1994	1,000	1,600	22
1995	1,500	2,500	29

Given that Teach For America's growth is determined by funding, the size and quality of our applicant pool, and the extent of school districts' needs, we hope to develop new sources of funding, implement new recruitment strategies and incentives, expand to additional sites, and place teachers in the high-need area of special education.

In order to grow at this pace, Teach For America must become a public/private partnership, with half of its funding coming from the federal government and half coming from the private sector. An expanded development team will generate the necessary private funds from the following sources:

- National Direct Mail Campaign
- National Corporate & Foundation Sponsorships
- Local Sponsor A Teacher Campaign
- Local Corporate & Foundation Grants

Given that Teach For America is committed to maintaining its level of selectivity, it will be necessary to dramatically increase the size of the applicant pool. In order to do this,

we hope to launch an aggressive public relations campaign together with the Clinton Administration. Our goal will be to become a household word all across the country by the fall of 1993. Furthermore, we hope that the federal government will guarantee corps members loan forgiveness, and believe that this measure would increase our applicant pool significantly in numbers and in diversity.

In order to expand Teach For America's impact and to better serve the needs of under-resourced public schools, Teach For America hopes to expand to additional communities. As of this coming fall, Teach For America will be placing corps members in 15 urban and rural communities; we hope to add approximately seven sites in each of the coming two years. In addition, we hope to begin placing corps members in school districts' highest need area – special education. In order to determine the desirability of placing corps members as special education teachers, Teach For America has run pilot projects in Arkansas and Louisiana. Through these projects, we have developed an effective model for the development and support of special education teachers, and we have seen that the corps members we have placed in special education classes are very effective teachers. We will be ready to replicate these pilot projects in all of our placement sites beginning in the fall of 1994.

What Teach For America Will Bring to the National Service Movement

Each time President Clinton spoke of national service during the campaign, he spoke of placing thousands of recent college graduates as teachers. Teach For America is a proven program which, with President Clinton's support, can do exactly that.

Teach For America is popular among college students, in the public, and most importantly, in the public school districts in which we place corps members. We have succeeded in making teaching in our nation's most under-resourced schools a highly attractive career option among the most talented college seniors by surrounding Teach For America with an aura of selectivity and status. Furthermore, our corps members are having a tremendous immediate impact in their classrooms and schools. Each day, they go above and beyond in an effort to engage and motivate their students. Their energy and enthusiasm is contagious not only in their classrooms, but with the other faculty in their schools. Moreover, Teach For America is without question building a force of future education leaders and advocates. Of the charter corps members who completed their two-year commitments this past June, more than 60 percent are still teaching, and an additional 10 percent have remained in the field of education. All of the charter corps members have been deeply impacted by their experiences.

President Clinton could enable Teach For America to more than double in size. This means that twice as many college students would have the opportunity to teach in our nation's most under-resourced schools, and that twice as many students would be directly influenced by the teachers and role models we recruit. It means that Teach For America's impact would be exponentially greater in the schools and communities of our nation.

Teach For America is a critical component of the national service initiative. It fills pressing, critical needs. It is a high-quality program which has not only a positive immediate impact, but also a long-term impact on the profession of teaching. Finally, its prestige and challenge makes national service an attractive option to some of our nation's

most talented, committed college seniors who are most heavily recruited for well-paying jobs in every sector.

What We Hope Will Be Included in the Service Legislation

We hope that the Service Legislation will provide for the existence of "professional corps," which require short-term commitments to public service jobs in critical needs areas. Professional corps are a critical component of the national service framework for a number of reasons:

- (1) It is important to show young people that service need not be merely a short-term endeavor, and that it is possible to commit a lifetime to problem-solving in the public interest;
- (2) Members of professional corps fill critical needs which local communities and organizations view as pressing; and
- (3) It is important to make national service attractive to those college seniors who have the most other career opportunities, and who are naturally influenced by the prestige and challenge of the program.

While professional corps are cost-effective in that they leverage salaries from other sources, operating costs can be as high as \$12,000 per corps member over a two-year period. These costs cover the following:

- (1) Aggressive recruitment, to ensure a diverse applicant pool of some of our nation's most talented graduating college seniors;
- (2) Intensive selection process, to ensure a corps of individuals who meet the highest standards of the profession;
- (3) Careful placement, to ensure that corps members' experiences have a positive impact on those being served and on the corps members' own commitment to the profession; and
- (4) Coherent, extensive program of pre-service and ongoing professional development, to ensure that corps members continue to feel part of something larger throughout their commitment, and to ensure that corps members receive the professional development necessary to ensure that they are effective during their initial commitment and that they have the foundation to become leaders in the profession over the long term.

In addition, it is important to provide those members of professional corps who have student loans with a guarantee of loan forgiveness. 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.

The most feasible and powerful way of building and sustaining professional corps such as Teach For America would be to institutionalize them as public/private partnerships. Through such partnerships, the federal government would provide half of the organization's budget, while a broad and diverse group of citizens and organizations would donate the remaining funds necessary to sponsor the recruitment, selection, and training of each corps member. The broader and more diverse the private sector portion of the funding base, the greater the professional corps' impact on the American consciousness.

Thus, in order to provide for the creation and institutionalization of professional corps, the new service legislation should provide for the following:

vs. "service"
as essentially
non-professional
& temporary.

Our "no
stipend"
model
(in "limited
circumstances")

fed govt to
fund nat'l
organization ?

- (1) Funding half of the budgets of "professional corps," up to a cost of \$3,000 per corps member per year. All funded programs should involve aggressive recruitment, intensive selection, careful placement, and a coherent, extensive program of pre-service and ongoing professional development.
- (2) A guarantee of loan cancellation for those corps members who have student loans.

Service in Schools

While Teach For America is committed to inspiring a highly selective group of recent college graduates to commit two years to full-time teaching positions in schools which would not otherwise be able to attract certified teachers, we believe it is possible to recruit large numbers of additional recent college graduates to commit one year to perform other forms of service in schools. These individuals would fulfill needs identified by school principals, such as tutoring students, teaching classes which the schools don't currently have the resources to provide, serving as teachers' aids, monitoring study halls, running extra-curricular activities, and so on.

This program would probably be most effective if operated in a decentralized fashion. Non-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, states, and school districts could apply for funding that would enable them to recruit, select, and support individuals to commit one year to work in local public school. We believe that between 5,000 and 10,000 college students each year could be recruited for such a commitment.

The local organizations would be responsible for the following:

- Recruiting and selecting college graduates to commit one year to the program;
- Running a 1-2 week orientation to the schools, school districts, and communities in which corps members would be working;
- Facilitating the relocation of corps members by providing information about housing and transportation, and by temporarily providing food and housing;
- Facilitating the district's "processing" of the corps members so that they can work in schools;
- Identifying supportive school principals, and working with them to identify roles for the corps members;
- Providing ongoing support to corps members by organizing weekend conferences, social events, newsletters, and so on; and
- Organizing a close-of-service conference to allow corps members to celebrate the completion of their commitments and to reflect on their experiences.

Invitation to President Clinton

Each summer, Teach For America brings all of its corps members together in Los Angeles for summer training sessions. This summer, we will be running a six-week pre-service Institute for 600 new 1993 corps members, a week-long second summer program for our 600 1992 members, and a four-day reunion for members of the 1991 corps who are completing their two-year commitments. We would be deeply honored to have President Clinton address our corps members. Preferences are as follows:

No role
for Teach
for America
in this 1 year
program.

- (1) Monday, August 2, 6-9 p.m.
Commencement Exercises for 1991 Corps. Over 1,000 corps members in attendance.
- (2) Friday, July 30, 7-10 p.m.
All-Corps Event. Over 1,000 corps members in attendance.
- (3) Tuesday, June 29, 10-12 noon
Opening Ceremony to Teach For America for 600 1993 Corps Members.
- (4) Friday, August 6, 7-9 p.m.
Closing Ceremony of Pre-Service Institute for 600 1993 Corps members.

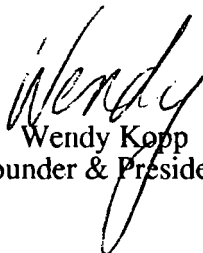
Teach For America in Arkansas

President Clinton invited Teach For America to place corps members in the Mississippi Delta in Arkansas when he was the Governor of Arkansas in 1991. Now, 27 corps members are teaching from Earle to Crossett and as far west as Kingsland. James, in Megan Gurley's special education class in Earle, now *volunteers* to read. Mary Battershell's seventh-grade class in Little Rock didn't know North from South, East from West. Now they're learning it. Beth Steege's children in Elaine had not seen the Mississippi River (about 20 miles away). Now they're planning a field trip to view and learn about the mighty Mississippi. Mike Fee is now a Deputy Registrar in Helena, AR. With his English classes, he led a voter registration drive for the 1992 elections. Tony Beld, also in Helena, is taking his French class to France this summer. Chris Ritter, who is teaching in Mariana, took one of his high school special education students to teach a math concept he had mastered to the fifth graders of another corps member at a nearby elementary school.

The students of all of our Arkansas corps members have written letters to President Clinton. We will be sending them shortly, together with a Teach For America sweatshirt which we hope President Clinton will wear!

Again, I appreciate all that you're doing to promote national service and hope we can work with you. I look forward to talking again soon.

Sincerely,



Wendy Kopp
Founder & President