

Reading /
Volunteers

CC Mike Cohen

Bill Kincaid

Diana

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 24, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR BRUCE REED

FROM: SUSAN BROPHY *JB*
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

Enclosed please find a copy of a letter that was sent to the President by Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and others.

The President has requested that he see and sign every letter going to Capitol Hill. We did not want to fully answer the issues addressed in the Members' letter without advice from your office; therefore, I am requesting that your office draft a response and return it to Chris Walker.

Thank you very much for your assistance in this matter. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Chris at 456-7500.

Enclosure

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 21, 1997

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500.

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Dear Mr. President:

We write to you as both Democrats and Republicans, to express our desire to work with you and your Administration to fully utilize the talents of the nation's elderly in improving the test scores and academic performance of our country's young students.

The issue of improving academic performance and tapping the extraordinary energy and creativity of our seniors is not partisan. The challenge is to develop concrete, practical ways for building a new alliance between our schools and older volunteers. We have several suggestions that we believe would be helpful in this regard:

- At your April summit on volunteerism, the Summit for America's Future, allocate time to discuss expanding the role of seniors as volunteers in America's schools. The United States possesses not only the largest and fastest-growing population of older persons in its history, but the healthiest, best-educated, and most vigorous. Older Americans may well constitute our only increasing natural resource. We believe that senior volunteers should be a highly visible part of the summit.

At present, fewer than one percent of the total 55 and older population is actively involved in National Service Senior Corps literacy programs. A recent study for the U.S. Administration on Aging finds that 14 million Americans over the age of 65 would like to become involved in volunteer service. Seniors say they have not volunteered because no one has ever asked and provided the opportunity to them. Surely our country can find better ways to mobilize and involve older Americans as contributing partners in our schools.

- Include in any bipartisan reading initiative bill to be developed in this Congress, projects to identify the most successful ideas and best practices to increase the involvement of older volunteers in grades K-12; and
- Encourage all Area Agencies and State Units on Aging, as part of their duties under the Older Americans Act, to publicize local volunteer programs that focus on students academic performance. This network is an ideal way to find activist seniors, and link them with our public schools.

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In our view, these suggestions would be timely and cost-effective. Your goals are laudable and we look forward to working with you to mobilize a new intergenerational partnership that will be good for young and old alike.

Sincerely,

For Wyle

Jack Reed

CHUCK HAGEL

Susan Collins

Ly E. Haig

Garry Keil

John Warner

Sam Brown

Chuck Grassley

John Glenn

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Miss Feingold

Carol Bradley Braun

John Braum

Herb Kohl