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7 CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

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11 REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC LISTENING SESSION

12 Held Wednesday, May 13, 2009

13 1:00 p.m.

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21 Greene County Library Centre

22 4653 South Campbell

23 Springfield, Missouri

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1 MS. GOREN: Good afternoon. Welcome.
2 Welcome to the first of our listening sessions. I'm
3 Nicki Goren. I'm the acting CEO for the Corporation
4 for National and Community Service. We're very
5 excited to be here today.

6 Before I get to how today's going to work,
7 I just want to start with a few things. We want to
8 thank all of you for coming. This is a great turnout.
9 We're very excited to start this dialogue with all of
10 you. I want to thank our host here, The Library
11 Centre. This is the nicest library I've ever been in.
12 And not probably, definitely. D.C. could learn a
13 thing or two about this.

14 I want to thank our Corporation state
15 office staff, who really did an amazing job pulling
16 this together. Thank you to all of you. I think also
17 the great relationship that our state office staffs in
18 both Kansas and Missouri have with the state
19 commission staff in these two states makes these kinds
20 of partnerships work, and we're really grateful.

21 So as you know, as you probably have been

22 reading, this is really an historic time for our
23 field, for the field of national and community
24 service. We've seen a huge commitment from the
25 incoming administration, starting with Martin Luther

1 King Day, when President-elect Obama made Martin
2 Luther King Day serve as a cornerstone of his
3 inaugural events and made a call to service across the
4 country, which resulted in the biggest Martin Luther
5 King Day of Service ever.

6 And it's just continued since then with
7 money in the Recovery Act to support national
8 community service and now this Edward M. Kennedy Serve
9 America Act legislation, which is the most sweeping
10 extension of national service in a long, long time.

11 And so we're very excited about what it
12 means for us. And he has showed that we not only have
13 the support of the President and we have support among
14 bipartisan and the congressional majority and just a
15 growing consensus among leaders in this country that
16 service is a critical part of solving our nation's
17 most pressing challenges. And it's not just a nice
18 thing to do, it's something we have to come to do for
19 the betterment of our country. So we're very excited
20 about the opportunities that all this gives us.

21 Just a quick overview of Missouri and

22 Kansas, which I think are the two most represented
23 states, although I will ask. I know -- how many
24 people do we have here from Missouri? The majority.
25 Kansas? Good. Arkansas? I heard Florida was going

1 to be here. Do we have Florida? No? Oregon? Any
2 other states?

3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Illinois.

4 MS. GOREN: Illinois?

5 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Iowa.

6 MS. GOREN: Iowa?

7 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Oklahoma.

8 MS. GOREN: Oklahoma? That's great. It's
9 great that you traveled this distance to come and be
10 with us today.

11 In Missouri and Kansas alone, we've --
12 there's roughly \$20 million of support in national
13 service across those states each year. There's 63
14 Senior Corps projects between the two states.
15 Recently there's been about a million dollar infusion
16 of recovery funds to support approximately 100 VISTA
17 members across the two states. So we're very excited
18 about what's going on in this part of the country.

19 We're here today to get your input on
20 implementation of the Serve America Act as well as
21 input on what will become our new strategic plan for

22 the corporation. As many of you know, we've had a
23 strategic plan that expires in 2010 that we basically
24 were operating under for the last five years. It's
25 time to do a new strategic plan.

1 It's very timely in doing it at this point
2 in the changing administrations and at this point as
3 we have this new mandate under the Serve America Act
4 to expand what we're doing and create new
5 opportunities for service. So all of this input is
6 going to go both into implementation as well as ideas
7 to what the new strategic plan will look like.

8 In a moment I'm going to turn it over to
9 our general counsel, Frank Trinity, who will give you
10 a quick overview of the specific provisions of bill --
11 that's Frank over there -- and Kristin McSwain, our
12 chief of program operations, will moderate the
13 discussion once we get started. And she'll walk you
14 through how it's going to work in a few minutes.

15 Generally speaking, the objectives of the
16 Serve America Act are fivefold: number one, to expand
17 opportunities for Americans to serve; number two, to
18 break down the silos between our current programs,
19 reduce unnecessary burdens for our grantees,
20 demonstrate outcomes and impacts and seed or drive
21 innovation into the nonprofit sector.

22 As most of you know, the Act takes effect
23 on October 1st of 2009, the first day of the 2010
24 fiscal year. But we need to be working now to get all
25 the input we need to get and develop any rules that we

1 need to develop and guidance and NOFAs and all the
2 things that we need to do as we roll out the Serve
3 America Act over the next year.

4 And we can't really start without this
5 process. So I'm really glad that we have grantees,
6 potential grantees, the nonprofit world at large,
7 participants in Senior Corps, AmeriCorps and Learn and
8 Serve, our board, our staff, the general public giving
9 valuable perspectives to this process.

10 I do want to get -- just so we have another
11 sense of who is in the room, how many of you are
12 representing Senior Corps here today? Great. And how
13 about AmeriCorps? Great. VISTA? State commissions?
14 Learn and Serve? Good. We have a good mix. How many
15 of you are not affiliated with any current programs of
16 the Corporation? That's great. That's great. We
17 have a really good mix. This is a great start.

18 I think the issues are complicated. I
19 think that you probably have as many questions as we
20 do. There's -- none of the things in this Act
21 necessarily lead to easy answers. And I think

22 ultimately we probably will end up in a place where we
23 can't agree on everything, but we're going to try and
24 come out in this implementation process with the best
25 approach to achieving the goals of the Act. And

1 again, it's just a fantastic opportunity.

2 So I thank you in advance for taking the
3 time to participate, and I'm sure it will be fruitful.
4 And I'm going to turn it over to Frank for his
5 overview.

6 MR. TRINITY: Thank you, Nicki. Okay.
7 Today's overview will be about 20 minutes. And one of
8 the reasons we're doing this at the beginning is we
9 heard when we were setting up the listening sessions
10 that some folks may not know what's actually in the
11 legislation, so we wanted to actually start with that.

12 I want to thank some of my general counsel
13 colleagues who helped prepare this: Phil Green,
14 Heather Johnson, Doug Boulton. By necessity, this
15 information will be offered at a fairly high level.
16 And I know that many of you will have questions. I
17 encourage you to ask them either during the listening
18 session so we can actually get them in the pipeline to
19 respond to everybody or, if you're running a program,
20 through your regular point of contact. And we want to
21 be hearing from you and giving you as much information

22 as we can. Also, on our Web site, which at the end
23 I'll show you the page, we have a very detailed
24 summary of the legislation. We're also working on a
25 side-by-side which shows current law and then the

1 change in the Serve America Act. And finally, we're
2 hoping that we're going to get a version of the bill
3 which actually shows, if you strike out certain parts
4 of the legislation, how it's actually going to look
5 when the law is implemented on October 1st.

6 As Nicki said, this will expand
7 opportunities, break down silos, eliminate unnecessary
8 burdens and focus on outcomes. I wanted to also state
9 that this is the first reauthorization that the Agency
10 has ever had. I've been with the Agency since 1995,
11 and I've been working on it since 1996, actually, so
12 it took a lot to get this through.

13 And it really represented a lot of hard
14 work on the part of the committees in Congress on both
15 sides of the aisle. And a law like this can't get
16 passed as quickly as this did without a tremendous
17 amount of communication, cooperation, compromise.

18 And I think we were all heartened to hear
19 all the positive comments on the floor of the House
20 and the Senate. And many of the members of Congress
21 weren't speaking from talking points. They were

22 talking about programs in their districts, many of

23 them that you work on and that you need.

24 And it was very clear that we've reached a

25 tipping point in our country where there is a

1 consensus that national community service is something
2 that we need to support as a country and we need to
3 expand as a country. And particularly hearing Senator
4 Hatch in his many comments on the floor of the Senate,
5 it was very heartening to see the country coming
6 together.

7 Let me just talk a little bit about this
8 slide in terms of expanding opportunities. So it does
9 talk about expanding our existing programs, but it
10 does create some new opportunities.

11 On silos, we have currently, for example,
12 the AmeriCorps state and national direct competitive
13 pots. They're actually separate, and the law will
14 merge them in the coming year.

15 Also, our technical assistance currently is
16 funded out of a lot of different pots of money. And
17 what that means is it's harder to do training events
18 where we bring in all our programs together. And so
19 with one funding stream for technical assistance, it's
20 going to be a lot easier to work together as national
21 and community service programs.

22 On unnecessary burdens, we're going to have
23 authority to try to fix the amount of grants, and that
24 involves simplified financial reporting -- I'm going
25 to talk a little bit about that later under

1 AmeriCorps -- as well as to consolidate applications
2 and reporting requirements. I think the notion is
3 that as we expand, we really need to be doing so in a
4 manner that doesn't create extra burdens on programs.

5 Outcomes are a very important part of the
6 Serve America Act. There's a clear emphasis on the
7 need to be able to show what programs are
8 accomplishing, and more than that, be able to show
9 that at a national level. And that's going to involve
10 some changes, I think, in how we report on outcomes.

11 And we're really wanting to work with all
12 of you to get your ideas about how we can come up with
13 performance indicators that will reflect what you do
14 but also be useful to show what all the programs
15 across the country are doing.

16 Finally, innovation is a major theme.
17 We'll talk about the Social Innovation Fund, which is
18 a presidential priority, which will give a boost to
19 identify the next programs.

20 There are a couple of caveats. The law
21 that passed, the Serve America Act, is an authorizing

22 statute. And at the end of each section of the
23 programs, it talks about how much money is authorized
24 for that particular program. And that's an important
25 expression of the authorizing committee's support for

1 a particular program, but it's not binding on the
2 Congress.

3 So each year we go through a process,
4 beginning with the President's budget, and we go
5 through the committees in Congress, and ultimately,
6 Congress decides for a given fiscal year how much
7 money to appropriate for a particular program.

8 So that process has started last week with
9 the President's budget and will continue until the
10 Congress appropriates funds for 2010, and then each
11 year will follow that. So the amounts that are in the
12 Act are not, by themselves, definitive.

13 Secondly, the effective date of October 1st
14 Nicki mentioned. Obviously, there are a lot of
15 changes in the Serve America Act. We're going to talk
16 about some of them in this presentation. Many of them
17 will require some changes in our regulations, and that
18 itself has a time period that will have its own public
19 comment period. And this is intended to sort of start
20 to get ideas from you all about what would go into
21 those rules.

22 Just finally, on the FY 2010 President's
23 budget, that budget has almost a 30 percent increase
24 for the Corporation as a whole. It doesn't include
25 everything in the Serve America Act, but we think that

1 the President's budget does lay the foundation for
2 growth in the future as contemplated by the
3 initiatives in the Serve America Act.

4 Let's start with Learn and Serve America.

5 The main change in Learn and Serve America is how the
6 funding is allocated. Under current law we've got
7 three bodies: school-based, which has a formula and a
8 competitive component, and then community-based and a
9 higher ed, which are both competitive.

10 Under the Serve America Act, school-based
11 is limited to formula only. And it's -- the community
12 based is moved into Part 3. Yeah, Part 3. So Part 3
13 now includes community-based and will move down here.
14 And Part 3 got lumped in with a few other initiatives
15 which we'll go over.

16 So within Learn and Serve school-based,
17 it's limited to formula, and the amount allocated goes
18 down a little bit from 33 and three-quarters to -- I'm
19 sorry, 63 and three-quarters to 60 percent. But
20 again, some of those programs that were funded under
21 school based are moved out, so actually, I think it's

- 22 a win for the school-based programs state by state.
- 23 And if the appropriation for the entire Learn and
- 24 Serve program is at least 50 million, then there's a
- 25 small state minimum for school-based allocations of

1 75,000.

2 There's some changes in the match. It's a
3 higher match for school-based, and you need a waiver
4 to use certain federal funds as match. It's not
5 impossible. You need a specific waiver.

6 And there's some flexibility built into
7 this school-based authority around capacity building.
8 Currently, there's a cap in the statute about how much
9 you can use Learn and Serve for curriculum or teacher
10 training. That's eliminated. There's no statutory
11 cap. The administrative fund cap has also been
12 reduced.

13 Within higher education, to be eligible for
14 higher education funds, you must be meeting the work-
15 study minimum for community service. And that right
16 now is 7 percent of funds under work-study must be
17 used for community service activities unless you get a
18 waiver from the Department of Education.

19 Secondly within higher education, there's
20 authority to give grants to up to 25 institutions of
21 higher education that are identified by the

22 Corporation in consultation with the Department of

23 Education.

24 Then this Part 3 -- the new Part 3 in Learn

25 and Serve has a number of new programs. Community-

1 based is currently funded, and then we've got -- these
2 are all new: Summer of Service, Semester of Service,
3 Youth Engagement Zones and a longitudinal study.

4 The Summer of Service is a new program
5 which is for rising 6th to 12th graders who have
6 performed 100 hours of service and receive a \$500
7 education award. So it's 100 hours of service during
8 the summer and an education award of \$500.

9 The Semester of Service is where high
10 school students engage in Service-Learning and
11 community service of 70 hours in a semester reaching
12 out to economically disadvantaged students. There's
13 no education award for the Semester of Service. It's
14 just a grant program.

15 And then finally, there's the Youth
16 Engagement Zones, which are for school-based and
17 community-based programs, again with high school
18 students, to address community challenges.

19 Finally, there's a longitudinal study,
20 which AmeriCorps has had a longitudinal study where we
21 track AmeriCorps members over time to see what the

22 effect of being in AmeriCorps has on an individual.
23 And this will do the same for the Learn and Serve
24 program and, we think, will help to tell the story
25 about how Service-Learning is making a difference. In

1 the 2010 President's budget, there's money set aside,
2 a million dollars, to start that ten-year study.

3 Within AmeriCorps, it sets AmeriCorps on a
4 path to reach 250,000 members by 2017. Right now
5 we're about 75,000. There's language in the bill that
6 says that those numbers are based on the availability
7 of appropriations as well as the availability of
8 quality service positions. So the idea is that it
9 will be a responsible schedule of increase that we
10 would be able to manage that on a path of 250,000.

11 The other thing is that number, 250,000, it
12 includes any position that has an education award
13 attached to it. So it would be the AmeriCorps, state,
14 national, VISTA, NCCC, as well as the new authorities
15 like Summer of Service where you have an education
16 award attached to it.

17 And then finally, there's a goal of
18 reaching 50 percent full-time. Right now we're in the
19 high 40s. And we have to report to Congress each year
20 on how we're doing on that. Again, that's preparatory
21 language. It's just a goal. We're now required to

22 report. It could show that Congress thinks that
23 full-time service is an important thing.
24 The funding allocation for state and
25 national will change under the Serve America Act.

1 Like I said at the beginning, currently we have a
2 division between state competitive dollars and
3 national direct dollars, and this merges those two
4 funding allocations into one.

5 Now, national directs are required to get
6 input from their state commission on what their plans
7 are, so there's got to be coordination, but it is one
8 funding pot. And the formula of allocation was
9 increased slightly, about 2 percent. And this change
10 really was left over from the last Congress where
11 there was a compromise reached between the national
12 directs and state commissions as to what that funding
13 should be.

14 We think that this will mean that there
15 will no longer be a cap on national directs. There
16 had been a cap each year put in the appropriations
17 language. I think that there will be no need for that
18 under the Serve America Act.

19 Within AmeriCorps's formula, there's an
20 increase in the small state minimum, which is 500,000
21 currently. It would increase to 600,000.

22 Now, there's also a provision that says the
23 cost per member in any grant is limited to \$18,000,
24 with some waiver authority. That's grant by grant.
25 Right now we manage at the national level with

1 Congress, and a commission manages at a commission
2 level. This will be actually at the program level.
3 So if you run a program that has disadvantaged youth
4 or other, perhaps, high-end-cost program model, you
5 need to be aware of this provision.

6 Within AmeriCorps there's an expansion
7 contemplated, obviously, and that expansion is focused
8 on five areas: education, healthy future, clean
9 energy, veterans and opportunity corps.

10 Now, at one time when Senator Hatch and
11 Senator Kennedy introduced the Serve America Act,
12 these five service corps were outside of Subtitle C
13 funding, but in the end they're all brought into
14 Subtitle C funding so it's one state-national funding
15 stream, and the service corps are in there.

16 There's some direction in the Act that each
17 year we look at at least two service corps areas for
18 special consideration. I also want to note that
19 within the state and national program models, like
20 professional corps or intermediary models, they are
21 specifically referenced as eligible for funding.

22 There's no intent to exclude any program model, but

23 there is an emphasis in those five areas.

24 Also, there's an emphasis on performance

25 indicators within each of those five areas. Let me

1 give a couple of examples. Within healthy futures,
2 one of the Congressionally approved performance
3 indicators is access to health services for uninsured
4 individuals. So this shows that Congress is trying to
5 get programs to measure themselves against an
6 indicator that can be used nationwide so at the end of
7 a year, we can say AmeriCorps had so-many members
8 working on this particular goal, and this is what we
9 accomplished.

10 In the area of education, a sample that's
11 in the statute is high school graduation rate. So
12 that would be something that we'll be looking for from
13 programs that are addressing that need.

14 There's a convocation on grants to federal
15 agencies. It's a long-standing prohibition. But at
16 the same time, there's authority for us to work with
17 other federal agencies, potentially using their funds
18 to support program operations, with educational awards
19 being approved for certain positions.

20 Also, we now have authority to do
21 cost-share arrangements. For those of you in VISTA,

22 you may be familiar, we can use our authority in VISTA
23 to get money from other agencies, including federal
24 agencies, to expand VISTA. We'll have the same
25 authority for AmeriCorps State and National under the

1 Serve America Act.

2 Then finally on this slide, fixed-amount
3 grants. You may have heard about this. Currently, we
4 have cost reimbursement grants. That's your average,
5 normal federal grant. There you have a line-by-line
6 budget. Each budget item has to be meeting OMB cost
7 principles, has to be an approved type of cost.

8 And you have to keep your receipts so that
9 if you're ever audited, you'll be able to show that
10 you spent the money on a allowable cost. And your
11 match also has to be documented. If you're getting
12 office space, you've got to be able to show your
13 receipts for that.

14 A fixed amount would actually relieve you
15 of the requirement to keep your documents for all
16 those costs on the line-by-line. It would be set at
17 an amount that if you run your program, it would be --
18 we would have a high degree of confidence that you
19 would be spending the money on an authorized use.

20 Next slide, AmeriCorps tutoring, there's a
21 change here in running a tutoring program. Right now

22 we require either a high school diploma or a
23 proficiency test. The Serve America Act would
24 actually limit it only to a high school diploma.
25 And we're looking at the definition of

1 tutors there. The current definition focuses on
2 increasing academic achievement in core subjects
3 through 101 or a small group. So we think that many
4 programs are calling themselves tutoring programs but
5 aren't actually within that definition. So we need to
6 work with programs on that. Then there's an emphasis
7 on recruiting people 55 and older into AmeriCorps.

8 State commissions have an increase in their
9 administrative grants. All state commissions must
10 receive at least \$250,000, and the amount could go up
11 to \$1 million, although that will be dependant on
12 funding. And there's a provision for waiving match
13 flows for commissions who are experiencing hardship.

14 Disability funds will only go out mostly
15 through state commissions and are limited to
16 AmeriCorps under current law. The Serve America Act
17 would make all national service grant programs
18 eligible for those funds.

19 Couple of big changes in the education
20 award. The amount goes up to fifty-three fifty.
21 Again, that's with 2010 dollars. So we get a lot of

22 questions: "I'm serving now. Is my education award

23 going to go up?" No. It would only go up to

24 positions that are funded with next year's dollars.

25 We realize that's going to be a messaging

1 and a management challenge to make sure that everybody
2 has that right information, but the bottom line here
3 is, it hasn't changed yet. We're going to work with
4 everyone to understand when it will change and have
5 everybody be clear what amount of education award
6 they're getting.

7 I'm going to skip over a couple of those.
8 Standard use of education. Under the GI bill, we're
9 allowed now to -- the education award can be used just
10 like the GI bill can be used, and some other loan
11 programs are now permitted. And then anyone who is 55
12 and older who receives an education award may transfer
13 it to a child or a grandchild.

14 (Applause)

15 N triple C, it's currently a demonstration
16 program. This Congress is now saying it's a permanent
17 program with an emphasis on disaster relief. Speaking
18 of disaster relief, this allows national Serve
19 AmeriCorps programs to extend AmeriCorps members 90
20 days in the event of a major catastrophe, like
21 Katrina, where we actually had AmeriCorps members that

22 were finishing up right around the time Katrina hit.

23 And this will allow them to keep going for 90 days.

24 Also some more flexibility in working with

25 FEMA to reach out to nonprofit organizations to get

1 FEMA money in the event of a disaster. Authority to
2 start a National Service Reserve Corps that will have
3 AmeriCorps alums and veterans selected and trained to
4 be ready to be deployed in the event of either a
5 national disaster or even a local disaster. We're
6 excited about that. Finally, under disaster relief,
7 there's authority to give priority in any grant
8 competition for programs that are addressing disaster
9 needs.

10 Subtitle H is our demonstration authority.
11 There's a new authority for the Social Innovation
12 Fund; again, a Presidential priority in the 2010
13 budget. It's slated to be \$50 million. This would
14 provide funding for new programs that have promise as
15 well as scaling up a proven program.

16 And there will be a leverage component
17 where there will be a significant match requirement.
18 These will be big grants, a million dollars and up, up
19 to \$10 million. The focus there is on evidence-based
20 programs, bringing in the philanthropic and business
21 communities.

22 The Volunteer Generation Fund would be
23 grants to states and nonprofits to recruit, manage and
24 support volunteers. And the President's budget has
25 \$10 million for that competition.

1 9-11 Day of Service would be a remembrance
2 and service in connection with September 11th, and
3 that would be part of this national Call to Service
4 campaign that's in the statute now. Fellowship
5 programs would be a flexible way of getting people to
6 serve not through our regular grant process. And the
7 Nonprofit Capacity Building grants are technical
8 assistance to an intermediary who would help small and
9 medium-sized nonprofits with their organizational
10 development.

11 In the VISTA program, we're going to be
12 able to speed up approval of projects, because
13 governors won't have a 45-day period to screen these
14 projects. We didn't find that really was -- we were
15 getting any governors that were objecting, so we
16 proposed that.

17 And the cash stipend that's provided to
18 VISTAs at the end of their service is increased.
19 Within Senior Corps it expands eligibility, both in
20 terms of age and income. You can see what those are.
21 The definition of poverty is increased to 200 percent

22 of poverty.

23 And the stipend has increased to \$3. That
24 is appropriations dependent. So if we don't have
25 enough appropriations in a given year, we won't be

1 able to get to that \$3 yet. So we have to look at how
2 many volunteer service years we need to support in a
3 given year.

4 Also, the Foster Grandparent children
5 eligibility is now limited to special and exceptional
6 needs children. It will be expanded to children of a
7 greater variety of needs, particularly those with
8 academic, social or emotional needs.

9 For RSVP, it institutes competition
10 beginning in fiscal year 2013. In Senior Corps,
11 there's something called Programs of National
12 Significance where a portion of funds above last
13 year's funding are set aside for existing programs in
14 particular areas. What this will do is it will keep
15 that the same, but it would say within those funds,
16 some of those funds, 25 percent, would be for actually
17 new programs and new organizations.

18 I'm going to have to speed up here. Okay.
19 So let's move on to administrative provisions.
20 There's authority to increase funding for evaluation,
21 to fund something called Civic Health Assessment,

22 which will look at voting, giving and volunteering
23 patterns in communities, as well as, I mentioned, the
24 emphasis on performance measures that really goes
25 throughout the Serve America Act.

1 Children-serving programs must involve
2 parents in setting up the programs. Technical
3 assistance we covered. There's now a statutory
4 Strategic Advisor for Native American Affairs, and Ron
5 Lessard is that person. We're actually developing a
6 consultation process with Indian tribes that we'll be
7 speaking more about in months to come.

8 We talked about consolidating applications.
9 Criminal checks. We went to rule-making recently.
10 This actually tweaks the rule-making with a lot of
11 exceptions and will be going out separately with the
12 changes that this would contemplate.

13 There's no match requirement if you're in
14 an economically -- severely economically distressed
15 community. We obviously want to hear about your
16 situation in your local communities to see what those
17 criteria should be.

18 Grant selection throughout the Corporation
19 must look at how volunteers are being generated.
20 There's language promoting citizenship among National
21 Service participants in AmeriCorps positions. There's

22 language that the CO determines that would improve
23 efficiency. CO may assign programmatic functions to
24 state commissions. And we've gotten a lot of
25 questions about that. I just want to take 20 seconds

1 on that.

2 So the idea there is as we look at
3 expansion, there may be efficiencies that we can
4 identify. We're not there yet. We haven't identified
5 any. We don't have any plans. But the statute will
6 allow us in the future to do that.

7 There's the requirement to report to
8 Congress in two years on what, if anything, we've
9 done. That is not a requirement to do anything. It
10 just means we have to tell Congress where we are. And
11 obviously, we have a plan to be transparent and open,
12 and we're required to do that under the statute.

13 There's authority to pursue electronic
14 verification by the Corporation of citizens of
15 eligibility for AmeriCorps. The requirement to keep
16 birth certificates would go away if we get to that
17 point.

18 There's a prohibition on providing
19 assistance for the sole purpose of helping somebody
20 apply for a federal assistance program. If you have a
21 program that helps people do that plus other things,

22 you're not covered.

23 Points of Light Foundation is in our

24 statute, but as of October 1st, there won't be. There

25 had been authority to make a noncompetitive grant in

1 the Points of Light Foundation. That will not be the
2 case when the law takes effect.

3 I don't think I need to go over governance.
4 That's -- more of that. Our board will be invigorated
5 by the statute.

6 And I just wanted to close by saying there
7 are a couple of things that are not in the statute.
8 One is the combined match for AmeriCorps. It didn't
9 make it in. So that's something we'll have to pursue
10 in the appropriations process, like we have in the
11 past few years.

12 And taxability of education award, it is
13 not in. There was a bill introduced to exclude the
14 educational award from taxable income, but it didn't
15 make it through the process, because it would have
16 required different community jurisdiction, and there
17 wasn't time. So we think that will be on the
18 Congress's agenda in years ahead.

19 Finally, our Website. If you go on our
20 homepage, nationalservice.org, click on the top right
21 box for the legislation, it will take you to a large

22 number of resources, including a 13-page summary. And
23 like I said, we're working on a side-by-side of
24 frequently asked questions and other documents to help
25 you.

1 Now I'm going to turn it over to Kristin

2 McSwain.

3 (Applause)

4 MS. McSWAIN: All right. So as you can

5 see, we have a lot of work to do. And we're all glad

6 that you're here to help begin that process. So let

7 me tell you how we're going to make this work. I have

8 a list of names of people who want to come up and give

9 comments. You're going to have three minutes to do

10 so.

11 My colleague, Paul Davis, who is the

12 Director of VISTA, has two beautifully colored

13 folders. One is yellow, and one is red. We're high

14 tech here. The yellow one will be flashed when you

15 have 30 seconds left. The red one will be flashed

16 when you are done. I was a middle school teacher.

17 When the red one's up, you're done, and we're going to

18 move on to the next person. (Laughter) Does that

19 sound like it will work?

20 Also if we get to the end and we have more

21 time and, in listening, there are comments that you

22 would like to share, we'll open these lists up again,

23 and you all can come and form a line here, and we'll

24 just go through as long as we have time. Okay?

25 There are many things about implementing

1 this Act that we will not have answers for you. If
2 someone comes up and makes a comment that ends up
3 being more of a question that's something we can
4 answer, we will do that. We may also follow up and
5 say, you know, I don't know, what do you think about
6 that? Because there are many different perspectives
7 on implementing some of what is a huge opportunity for
8 us in this Act. There's many different parts.

9 So with that, we're going to begin. My
10 apologies if I butcher your name. Some of these are a
11 little bit difficult to read, but I'm going to do my
12 best. So if the first three people can come and stand
13 in a line behind the podium, and that's Dan Dunbar,
14 Connie Stewart and Julie Bonamarte. I have a feeling
15 I didn't get that right. And my timekeeper -- is the
16 mike on? Okay. My timekeeper is -- you actually have
17 a stopwatch. Okay, Dan, please. Thank you.

18 SPEAKER: My name is Dan Dunbar. I'm here representing Schools
and Families Engaged. I have with me our inspirational officer, Scott Hughes. We're a
school-based family involvement program that focuses on personal responsibility,
education and safety. We're here today because of an individual school start-up
program to increase and organize family volunteers. We're currently on track. We
track approximately 150 thousand to 200 new volunteers every school year, so we are
growing very quickly. We basically are trying to touch base -- we've actually been in

contact with a couple -- or many RSVP units throughout America who are trying to work with us to get the literacy programs into those schools, and we're an avenue for them. Scott and I have literally talked -- we've read the Act. We had a couple of questions. Mainly, we are a for-profit company, but we definitely focus on service. How do we plug into the organization as a representative avenue in with schools and other areas of that nature? The second part is, we did read some text regarding the consortium, and we would like to see if we can include some form of clarification or some kind of frequently asked questions or something of that that would allow, basically, a small section of how could for-profit companies be involved and help assist your organizations. So I guess the last question is, is there room for us, as well, to possibly receive financial organization to help other schools as well? Thank you very much.

31

1 MS. McSWAIN: Okay. Thank you. Connie?

2 SPEAKER: If he didn't use all his time, do I get it? (Laughter)
I'm Connie Stewart. I'm director of the Foster Grandparents Program for northeast Kansas, but I've been involved with National Service since before there was National Service. I was a VISTA volunteer in 1966, 1967, and have been instrumental in setting up and helping to get some new Senior Companion programs started and, for the last three years, have been really, really excited to be commissioner for our Kansas State Commission. So this is the most exciting time, to me, in all of these years, way before you all were even born, to know that National Service has this recognition that it's gotten through this Act. It's amazing the bipartisan kind of support, I think, that it's gotten in the way it's growing. It's just completely exciting and to know that people are really seeing that it takes inner structure or that volunteers are not free. You know, we know volunteers are not free. So I'm glad to see this kind of thing happening. At the same time, I want -- in all this new stuff going on, I do want to make sure that old is not necessarily bad. Just because we're old -- we still have some good stuff. Successful demonstration programs do not necessarily demonstrate -- they may demonstrate that what they've done was successful but not that what is already there is not successful also. So I do want to remind us that meeting community needs is supposed to be what we're all about, number one, from the Corporation, and that I think we do need to ask community more and more and more, "What is it you need? What is it you want? If we're undoing something old, how will that affect you?" For instance, the board members from the Corporation announced in Georgia last summer that they were doing away with income guidelines for the stipended programs. I asked directors in programs to ask their sponsors, their advisory councils, whatever, in nine states that I have connection with, "Were you ever asked for input on this?" And the answer was no. Even the 3 percent that wanted income guidelines eliminated out of that many still had not been asked their opinion or how it would affect. So those are the kind of things that I think -- it's great to say we're having a listening session here -- oh, no! I've not even

started! Okay. One of my main concerns is about the authority given to the commissions. And as a commissioner, I see that we have need for both. We need to keep state offices, and we need to keep commissions. And I would like to know where the study was that determined that additional authority would be given to commissions rather than to state offices. I'm not saying that I think one would be better than the other, I'm just saying, how is that determined? Because I didn't ever see a study, I never saw anything through the years about this, and I've seen that there's not been the support that's been equal at all. And as I'm walking off, I'm going to tell you, one of the examples I have to say about that is that at the same time my state office is told that they don't have monies to travel, I don't have money in my program to attend the national conference in San Francisco, but as a commissioner, my commission can pay for all commissioners to go. That's something that's not fair.

3 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you, Connie. I think

24 the one thing for everyone to understand is actually

25 that state office staff are employees of the

1 Corporation. So they are the Corporation. I think
2 it's very easy when you're sort of out in a state to
3 forget that they belong to us, they're our employees.
4 And so when it talks about looking at
5 efficiencies and things that might be considered down
6 the line to go to state commissions, it's within the
7 context of the fact that the state offices are
8 actually part of our structure. And as we move to
9 expand National Service, there may be ways to do the
10 work that we do differently.

11 But as Frank said in his presentation,
12 that's a flexibility for the future. We actually
13 don't have any intentions at the moment, as we're
14 beginning to explore this. And if we do get to the
15 point where we've discovered a couple of things that
16 might make more sense for state commissions to do,
17 there will be an open process, probably like this one,
18 to find out what the plan is to get there. Thank you.
19 Julie?

20 SPEAKER: Hi. I'm Julie Bonamarte, and I'm executive director of the
Mid Iowa Foster Grandparent Program in Boone, Iowa. And I'm a little nervous,
because I drove eight hours and I have three minutes to talk. And my question is kind of

a follow-up with Connie's with regards to Section 1708 of the Serve America Act and what does programmatic functioning mean. When Connie said something about was there a study done, the most recent National Academy of Public Administration -- the NAPA -- study recommended that the CNS state offices be retained and, in fact, their role be expanded, because they're the most efficient, cost effective and apolitical method to assure quality compliance and effectiveness of all the National Service programs. My question is, do you intend or the new CEO to move the management of FGP, SPT, RSVP or all of them together to the state commission? Then there's also a comment that I had. Senator Mikulski from Maryland said on March 25th -- she talked about how the committee had said that the chief executive officer would use this authority judiciously to improve the operations of the corporation's programs by using a consultant process that includes all the stakeholders in the affected programs but that the committee expects the Corporation to continue to staff from the state offices from that operational level that is at least present now. Two more questions, but these should be easy, because I think Mr. Trinity addressed them. When you were talking about the PNS process, one third of the new monies, then you said 25 percent of that would then go to starting new programs? Am I correct in that? [TRINITY: 25 percent of the PNS money, yeah. SPEAKER: Is that a minimum or -- TRINITY: Let me get back to you on that.] And then there was one point on there where Silver Scholars were up there, and that was skipped. Will Foster Grandparents be eligible for Silver Scholarships? [McSWAIN: I think one of the things that we're interested in hearing from you is, what does that look like. Obviously, you couldn't get two benefits for being in one program. What we're looking for, what your suggestions are in terms of if that is proposed, what might be some regulations around that. And we'd love to hear that from you here.] Okay. What we were kind of looking at is, you know, according to -- this came from the CNCS conference calls and executive committee members of the national board. If Foster Grandparents are receiving a stipend, it may be considered double dipping or payment. How then can you explain that AmeriCorps receives an education award along with their living allowance? [McSWAIN: It's one program. So how would you run the program?] Well, you're saying they can't receive the stipend along with the Silver Scholarship, so I'm saying how can you have an ed award along with the cost of living? Because this is the same thing.

16 MS. GOREN: Good input.

17 (Applause)

18 MR. TRINITY: At least 25 percent for new

19 organizations. At least 25 percent.

20 SPEAKER: I didn't pay these people either,

21 by the way. (Laughter) Okay. And the question on

22 Silver Scholarships, you'll get back to me?

23 MS. GOREN: I think that's the kind of
24 input we're looking for as we think about how to
25 implement, but I don't think we give you a definitive

1 answer today.

2 SPEAKER: So I get two more minutes? Okay.

3 MS. GOREN: We appreciate the input.

4 SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

5 MS. McSWAIN: I want to go back to one of
6 the things that Julie asked about. And to be very
7 clear, when we talk about business of the Corporation,
8 we're not only talking about business that's run by
9 our state offices, we're also talking about some of
10 the business that's done at our corporation
11 headquarters. So it's not sort of looking at one
12 piece of the structure. It's looking at our entire
13 operation.

14 The next three people, Sharon Hamilton and
15 then Carla Boswell. I couldn't tell if you intended
16 to scratch your name off. Are you still wanting to
17 speak? Great. Then DD Gass.

18 MS. GOREN: The other thing is, I know it
19 seems very, very short, but we will take any written
20 comments that you have and consider them as part of
21 this process as well.

SPEAKER: My name is Sharon Hamilton. I'm director of the Senior Corps programs at Southwestern Illinois College in Belleville, Illinois. We serve Madison and St. Clair Counties. I'm also a member of the Corporation Sounding Board and president of the Illinois Association of RSVP Directors. So I stand before you as an humble servant of the Corporation and your actions since 1976. Been around. First of all, I'd like to tell you that the Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions have more than children and grandchildren, so when you're considering the Silver Scholarships, you might also consider that they've raised nephews and nieces and other relatives that they might want to consider giving those Silver Scholarships to. So please don't limit it to children and grandchildren. Some of them are very, very tied to other relatives. We also have a lot who have been Foster Grandparents, and you might consider them allowing them to pass them on to their foster children. In terms of the stipend appropriation, we were so excited, and then we're deflated by the fact there was no money to follow. We haven't had an increase since 2002, so it's almost eight fiscal periods. Our Senior Companions have seen a rise in rent, housing, utilities. Medicine has just gone through the roof. And they're at the point where they really need an increase. It's just not fair for us to take low-income seniors and put them to work and not even give them any cost-of-living increases over that many years and yet watch inflation just go out of control. I really hope that -- I know that you serve at the pleasure of the President, but I sure hope that you will make sure that he understands that our seniors really need this. I'd like to see a national study, for example, of just how much money the Senior Companion program saves the Medicare and Medicaid budgets each year by keeping people independent and in their homes versus being in nursing homes. Just in Illinois alone, I know it's \$200 a day that we're saving for each client we're keeping in their home. I'm sure a national study would state that we're saving billions of dollars on Medicare and Medicaid issues. Finally, as president of the Illinois Association of RSVP Directors, I would be remiss if I didn't mention that we are strongly opposed to the recompetete clause for RSVP grants. Our college, Southwestern Illinois College, has been a respected grantee and served our communities for 35 years. Who else could establish an identity so quickly and do such a good job? Obviously, no one. You know, we've been around the block. We've paid our dues. We've done a good job. We've always met or exceeded our goals. We have 1377 volunteers registered as of yesterday. And we're very proud of our program. Why should we have to compete for that grant? It doesn't make any sense. It almost says that -- to me that it seems unjust, unfair. It seems petty to me. You know, just please consider that it becomes a political issue within communities, and if the Democratic Party is really strong in the community or the Republican Party is really strong in a community, they could come in and scoop up an outstanding program just because they have the politics behind them, which is also my problem in putting the state offices in the commission. Our commissions are governor-appointed, so I don't know from year to year if I'm going to have a Republican or a Democrat in there. I don't care. I get along with all of them. But the point is, depending on their lean on things, I've got to deal with how they want to see the programs operate rather than how we think they should be operated. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good afternoon, I'm Carla Boswell from the Southwestern Illinois College Senior Companion program, and I'm the assistant director there. Sharon

Hamilton is my boss. And I am here today to represent not only Senior Companions but the Foster Grandparents and let you know that the volunteers there, being that they are so low-income, really do need that increase in their stipend. \$2.65 since the last -- for the last eight years has not had an increase and is just not enough. Their utilities bills continue to go up. Medications. So many things continue to go up. Yet that stipend still sits at \$2.65. Raising it to \$3 is a step in the right direction, but our grants need the funding so we can move on and give that full \$3 a stipend hour to them. They do such good work for our community both in the schools, Head Start programs, and for those companions that are visiting in the homes, keeping those homebound and isolated seniors is saving the state hundreds, thousands, of dollars each year. So please, please, find the appropriations, the funding, that we can raise that stipend. Lowering the age to 55 and so increasing the income eligibility will help to draw in the volunteers. We really appreciate that. But we definitely need the money to raise the stipend to \$3 to help them to continue on volunteering. Thank you very much. [Follow-up McSWAIN: Carla, before you go, can I ask you a follow-up question? And then I'm going to ask people to raise their hands and see if they agree. With limited appropriation this year, there's an increase -- small admin increase for Senior Corps and Foster Grandparents. Would that be better spent, instead of funding the admin cost of the program, on raising cost of the stipend. AUDIENCE MEMBER: It's not enough money to compare. McSWAIN: I'm just saying if you had one or the other, what would your input be? SPEAKER: It's such a small amount. It really wouldn't touch the amount of increase in the stipend that we need. McSWAIN: If it was more and you could do one, which would you propose? SPEAKER: Well, we just had a recision just the year before last, a recision in the grant, which has also hurt us terribly. McSWAIN: I understand. SPEAKER: So that is just barely scraping the surface of bringing us back to where that recision was taken, bringing us back. And yet it really isn't a comparison that we can make. It's such a small amount in comparison to bringing the stipends up to \$3 an hour. AUDIENCE MEMBER: We actually had to reduce our DSYs is what prompted my telling you. So even the 1.5 percent will not give us an increase. McSWAIN: I understand. I just thought I would ask to follow up. SPEAKER: Thank you.]

9 SPEAKER: I'm DD Gass, program director at Campfire USA, with national headquarters in Kansas City. Campfire USA has been a proud partner of the Corporation for National and Community Service for many years, including AmeriCorps Promise Fellows and Learn and Serve America programs in our councils throughout the United States. Currently, Campfire USA is managing a national Learn and Serve America grant which supports over 2,000 teens in community preparedness service-learning. We have 27 councils or affiliates across the country doing community service - - doing service-learning in community preparedness. This includes communities such as Maryland, Ohio, Texas, Kansas, Oregon, Washington and even up to Alaska. The impact that the Campfire USA organizational-based community service-learning, the impact is generally conducted during out-of-school- time hours, providing meaningful service-learning programs in the after-school programs, on weekends and during summer programs and in many of our summer camps. We have just a brief example of the -- we had teens from Lake Charles, Louisiana, who went into elementary schools in their after-school program to teach the children what to do in case of a chemical spill. They did a

shelter-in-place demonstration. The children practiced and took home information to their families. That very next weekend, which was totally coincidental, there was a chemical spill in the community just north of Lake Charles, and all in that area were told to shelter in place. Parents contacted Campfire staff to say that their children were confident, knew what to do and directed the whole family to shelter in place. These kinds of experiences are happening throughout the United States, and our teens in the last three years have served almost 125,000 beneficiaries, so -- taught information to primarily low-income children and family members. As appropriations go forward, I would just urge that the Corporation continue to provide opportunities for community-based service-learning and funding. Thank you.

4 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

5 (Applause)

6 MS. McSWAIN: The next three speakers are

7 Janis VanMeter, Kathy Perry and Jennifer Greenfield.

8 SPEAKER: Hi. I'm Janis VanMeter. I'm Foster Grandparent director in very rural northeast Missouri. We're talking north of Hannibal. I live in a county of about 10,000 people. So we're talking about a different area than the metropolitan areas. With the Foster Grandparent program, our type-line is "Share today. Shape Tomorrow." And the Foster Grandparents in our area have been doing that since the late '70s, and some of them are still there from that time. The commitment that the Foster Grandparents make is different -- and Senior Companions make the same one -- 15 to 40 hours a week. That's not your average volunteer in any other organization anywhere. 22 That's a huge commitment. I'm concerned about the standard measurement, because one size doesn't fit all. We have a situation where, last year at our recognition event, a young man took off work, and he was, I don't know, late twenties. He wasn't with our group at all but wandered up during the picnic to one of the Foster Grandparents, put his arms around her and said, "Thank you, Grandma." He was her first assignment, and he had read in the paper that we were having a recognition. He wanted to come there and thank her publicly. He took off time from his work to do that. That didn't happen overnight. Twenty years. But she's making a difference, and she finally saw that she is making a difference in the world. I will address the issue of would we accept an increase in the stipend versus admin costs. Stipend any day of the week. I know it's not comparable. There's no way to do it with the money --it's just not equal, but we would take the stipend increase. The Foster Grandparents really need it, and they really deserve it. I would be very remiss if I didn't tell you that our admin can be contained somewhat because of that our state office does. Because since we have a shift in administration in our state office, they've been using technology. It levels the playing field. I had to drive 250 miles to get here today. I know some of you drove much farther than that. My car knows the way, because my kids all went to college here in Springfield. But the use of technology levels the playing field and makes it so much easier. Our state office, I give them kudos, because they really, really work hard at doing that. We need the state offices. We need

the commissions too. [Follow-up: McSWAIN: Could you tell me what kinds of technology have been helpful? SPEAKER: E-mail. I personally have been using my fax to be able to collect time sheets. It saves me mileage. It saves me postage. Because when somebody sends their time sheet in, it appears on my computer. I can file it. I can do whatever from that computer screen. It's a minimum of 84 cents right now for me to send it out and get it back. And if I go pick them up, it costs a tremendous amount, because I have ten counties in my service area. McSWAIN: Thank you.]

19 SPEAKER: Hi. I'm Kathy Perry. I am the
20 director of the Foster Grandparents program in Kansas
21 City, Kansas. And I'm going to address three
22 different things that were kind of on your list.
23 The first thing that you asked is, how do
24 you attract people of all ages? Something very
25 simple, but also very important. The strategic plan

1 for the Corporation needs to talk about seniors,
2 specifically. Not read between the lines, "We're sort
3 of maybe in there." It means a lot to our Foster
4 Grandparents to know that our federal agency cares
5 enough to say that they are important, as well as all
6 of the other groups.

7 In terms of standardized performance
8 measures, I'm going to disagree a little bit with my
9 colleague, Janis VanMeter. I think it can be done,
10 and I think it's important that we all work toward
11 that within the Foster Grandparent program.

12 Across programs, I'm not sure how you do
13 that. I think that's also a goal. But within the
14 Foster Grandparent programs, I think you will find
15 that there will be resistance. There will people who
16 will really not understand how we can do that, because
17 we do have very different kinds of performance
18 measures across the country now.

19 But I also know that the Corporation has a
20 very good history in pulling together work groups and
21 putting directors from around the country onto those

22 work groups and listening to our input. And I think
23 that that kind of a process would get us where we want
24 to be in being able to tell the national story of what
25 Foster Grandparent programs are doing.

1 One of the other questions that is raised
2 is how can the Corporation make it more attractive for
3 nonprofits to work with the Corporation. Very simple.
4 Listen. Dialogue with us. I have been in nonprofit
5 organizations most of my career, since 1981. I had
6 six years of a stint in state government employment.
7 But I can tell you that all of us, from small to large
8 nonprofits, do have a lot to tell you about what it's
9 like at our level.

10 Today's economy -- in my years in
11 nonprofit, I have never seen a contraction that has
12 been so rapid and so great as we have experienced in
13 the last six years. I'm a part of a nonprofit that
14 has about a \$17 million budget, and -- it's Catholic
15 Charities of Northeast Kansas -- and yet this economy
16 is very, very tough on us, and it's happened very
17 quickly. We are really suffering through this.
18 Listen to us. We'd like to tell you what that means
19 and how difficult that is.

20 And then the final thing is, the question
21 that you asked, not a choice I would like to make, you

22 know. None of us are getting any COLAs in our staff
23 or merit increases. We are reducing our budgets very
24 drastically right now. But it would go to stipends,
25 in my mind. Our grandparents need it more.

1 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

2 (Applause)

3 SPEAKER: Hi there. I'm Jennifer
4 Greenfield, and I'm a doctoral student at the George
5 Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington
6 University in St. Louis. I'm here today to talk from
7 the perspective of a researcher.

8 I specialize in research on older-adult
9 civic engagement, and so I'm so excited about this
10 legislation and especially the provisions for the
11 Senior Scholars and the Encore Fellows. I wanted to
12 share some things that we've learned in our research
13 regarding older adults who are engaged in civic
14 engagement activities, one of which is that we find
15 that older adults tend to have motivations that are
16 different from younger adults.

17 So as you consider implementing these
18 programs, we really want to encourage you to tailor
19 your language when you're messaging to make sure that
20 you're speaking directly to the motivations of older
21 adults. They tend to be thinking more about leaving a

22 meaningful legacy and giving back to the communities

23 and that sort of thing. So we just want to caution

24 you about that, tailoring your messaging.

25 The second is that we really want to

1 encourage that you focus on inclusion. Especially
2 with the Encore Fellows program, the legislation seems
3 to be written specifically to target those who have
4 been very successful in the corporate world, who have
5 high levels of education and perhaps even income, but
6 I want to make sure that we're also targeting those
7 who have risen to leadership roles in blue-collar or
8 service sectors, those communities that have been
9 historically underrepresented in corporate America.
10 So I would like to suggest that you set benchmarks for
11 states when they're recruiting these fellows to make
12 sure that we're truly being inclusive.

13 Another part of that is that the language
14 that we use when we're talking about volunteer service
15 happens to be different in communities of color, among
16 Asian communities, African-American communities.
17 Sometimes we don't -- they don't talk about
18 volunteering in that formal sense, but rather talking
19 about doing what you do or giving back. And so we
20 really need to target our messages to those
21 communities so that we're not excluding people by the

22 way we talk about these really wonderful

23 opportunities.

24 The last point I'm going to make is a plug

25 for research, in that I really hope that you will open

1 up the research opportunities to competitive grant
2 processes. There are doctoral students like my
3 colleague Ernest and I who are eager to get at this
4 data, but we want to make sure that it is
5 implemented -- the evaluation is implemented in a way
6 that makes sense, including starting with longitudinal
7 data with participants as they begin their service and
8 then moving on and tracking how it works through the
9 course of their tenure.

10 Also, we would love to find out who is
11 using the education credit transfers, whether it is
12 children, foster children, if you expand it to nieces
13 and nephews, that sort of thing, and also if it's
14 helping to stimulate students who might not otherwise
15 engage in higher education.

16 So really making sure that you have
17 specific measures looking at those issues would be
18 very, very helpful to us as researchers. I have some
19 written comments and some evidence that might be
20 helpful.

21 MR. TRINITY: I can take that. Thank you

22 very much.

23 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you very much.

24 (Applause)

25 MS. McSWAIN: Okay. Our next three, Ernest

1 Gonzales, Corrine Cooper, and I'm afraid I can't
2 really read this. It's someone from the Arkansas
3 Public Policy Panel.

4 SPEAKER: Good afternoon, and thank you so
5 much for having us. I think it's a wonderful idea,
6 and it's great to see a range of ages and ethnicities
7 of people here.

8 I'm going to elaborate on a different spin
9 than Jennifer is, who is my colleague. She really
10 focused on what -- or how to measure, and I'm going to
11 focus on what to measure. How do we go about
12 measuring the impact of service? Then secondly, I
13 want to talk about how to expand the opportunities of
14 service.

15 At Wash U., we've been really focusing on
16 generating evidence to demonstrate the impact of
17 volunteering, and specifically as it relates to older
18 adults and intergenerational programs. And we've come
19 to the conclusion that there are really four areas of
20 benefits.

21 One, there are benefits to the older adult,

22 which I'll talk about shortly. There are benefits to
23 the recipients of the service, such as a child in a
24 tutoring program. Third, there are benefits to family
25 and friends, and finally, there are benefits to

1 greater society. I'll elaborate on that.

2 When it comes to older adults, I'm drawing
3 the evidence not just from what we gathered, but also
4 from the literature. And it suggests that areas to
5 measure are essentially the psychological, the social
6 and the cognitive -- the psychological, the social and
7 the physical aspects of older adults.

8 There's evidence to suggest that older
9 adults have better health and fewer depressive
10 symptoms. There's lower risk of mortality. There's
11 better cognitive functioning. There's a reinforcement
12 of social skills, and there's a reduction in social
13 isolation, especially among the more vulnerable
14 populations.

15 And of particular note, people of lower
16 socioeconomic status actually benefit more than the
17 traditional volunteer. So if we included them into
18 our programs, we'll actually maximize the benefits
19 that we're seeing.

20 Secondly, there are benefits to the
21 recipient. When it comes to student reading, for

22 example, it is increased. Students have better school
23 attendance. They have better attitudes toward school.
24 There's a reduction in substance use, and there's
25 actually reduction in use of ageism among children

1 receiving service from older adults.

2 We're generating a scale called the BFF
3 scale. It's not the "best friends forever" scale.
4 It's the Benefits to Family and Friends. And what we
5 are hearing from a national evaluation on experience
6 corps is that the older adults' family and friends
7 actually benefit as well.

8 They're less concerned about the older
9 adults. The older adult brings more resources home.
10 They serve as a model, and even their family and
11 friends get involved in the service act. So when
12 we're looking at civic health of the community, this
13 is another way to spin it.

14 When we look at the greater society, there
15 are two areas. One is -- and everything that I'm
16 saying has a citation, and I'll give it to you. But
17 in 2002 the United States actually saved \$63 billion
18 through the volunteer efforts of older adults in
19 formal and informal volunteering and \$100 billion in
20 health care for family members. So it's a huge cost
21 benefit when we look at this.

22 And secondly, there's Bob Putnam over there
23 at Harvard who has a whole assessment on how you go
24 about tapping the resources of the community. There
25 has been an ongoing discussion of whether we use

1 standardized instruments or not. And I ran out of
2 time, but I'll submit the rest of this to you.

3 MR. TRINITY: Thank you.

4 (Applause)

5 SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Corinne Cooper,
6 and I'm the program director for Harvesters in Kansas
7 City, Missouri. We're part of Feeding America, a
8 national program. And I wanted to speak on the --
9 following up on the education or the living allowance,
10 first to applaud the first steps that are being made
11 to increase those amounts, as that is critical, I
12 think, to the success of all our programs in being
13 able to make this an attractive program that's going
14 to offer tangible benefits to people interested in
15 engaging in National Service.

16 And just as a comment, just the importance
17 of that, I think as programs we can only make
18 AmeriCorps as good as what you all can make it for us
19 in terms of benefits. And that is going to be an
20 essential part of attracting qualified members that
21 are -- you know, they have the passion, they want to

- 22 make the difference, but can they afford to make it?
- 23 And I would love for that not to have to be a question
- 24 for those who are truly interested in pursuing this
- 25 type of thing for a year or more of their life.

1 But as it sits, a lot of members have to be
2 in a very unique set of circumstances to serve as
3 full-time members. If they're recent grads and if
4 their family doesn't live close by or if they don't
5 have a spouse that can support them, there are very
6 few things left that allow them to actually be able to
7 pursue this type of opportunity, and I hate to see
8 those benefits be a setback because they're not enough
9 to cover their basic essentials, as food and other
10 things run tight as the year goes on. So I would just
11 stress that point of the importance of increasing that
12 in the continued years to come.

13 And as I know you're going to be
14 increasing, obviously, from 75,000 members to 250,000
15 members, a lot of those expectations are going to fall
16 on the programs ourselves. And so I just hope that we
17 are working in conjunction with each other to help
18 make that possible.

19 Then my separate set of questions, I've
20 been a part of our AmeriCorps state and AmeriCorps
21 VISTA program, both of which were in the first

22 three-year grant cycle. I just had a question about
23 VISTA and the reasoning behind it being that members
24 are not allowed to have outside employment or be
25 enrolled in school. They're supposed to be available

1 for 24/seven service.

2 As a food bank, we are not asking people to
3 come in at 3 o'clock in the morning because we need
4 them to recruit volunteers to sort and repackage food.
5 So what are the reasons behind that? And have we
6 reevaluated? Is that still prevalent to what the
7 current needs are, I guess I should say. So I'd be
8 curious to hear your response.

9 MS. McSWAIN: Actually I would love to hear
10 what you think we should do. If we revisit this
11 issue, knowing that VISTA is an antipoverty program
12 and that the idea of 24/seven is being available to
13 the community, but also knowing we're in a new world
14 now, a technology world, what would that look like?

15 SPEAKER: You know, I see our main reasons
16 for maybe possibly needing the 24/seven need would be
17 for a disaster relief situation, which is a separate
18 entity in and of itself, so I don't see -- I don't see
19 the relevance. I don't understand why that would be
20 necessary. I don't think that it's beneficial
21 anymore.

22 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

23 (Applause)

24 SPEAKER: Hello. I'm Fay Knox,

25 representing the Arkansas Public Policy Panel. Our

1 VISTA members are supporting community groups in low-
2 income, predominantly African-American communities by
3 providing assistance with community development plans,
4 training, community outreach, public education and
5 membership development.

6 More established groups have made progress
7 on closing the achievement gap and economic
8 opportunities, while less-evolved groups do local
9 projects that build their organizational capacity.
10 The community groups and leaders build their
11 leadership skills within a network of other local,
12 regional and statewide organizations and institutions
13 who support their goals.

14 We are very happy to see the addition of
15 the emphasis in the VISTA program purpose statement on
16 long-term sustainability of projects and strengthening
17 local agencies and community organizations. This
18 recognizes that establishing a more engaged
19 constituency with a knowledge of good governance,
20 strong issue analysis and valuable partnerships is not
21 a short-term process.

22 Also important in improving the lives of
23 low-income communities are the additional programming
24 models of financial skills, micro enterprises, before-
25 and after-school programming and health issues.

1 Increasing the AmeriCorps to 250 positions, having the
2 education award tied to the Pell Grant maximum levels,
3 increasing the post-service cash award, providing for
4 the Family Medical Leave Act and also having the
5 educational stipend for those 55 or older go to other
6 family members -- and I would also like to say extend
7 that to foster children or people who are an
8 importance in their lives -- we feel are very
9 important in recruitment.

10 The creation of a Social Innovation Fund,
11 Nonprofit Capacity Building Grants and the Volunteer
12 Generation Fund are very welcome additions in this
13 time of decreased foundation funding. And we feel
14 like this will really strengthen the whole nonprofit
15 infrastructure.

16 And we're happy about the Civic Health
17 Assessment, because it will really assist us in our
18 specific engagement in community philanthropy works in
19 comparing the civic health of the communities that we
20 work with with other communities. Thank you.

21 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

22 (Applause)

23 MR. TRINITY: I just wanted to say a word

24 about the transferability of the education award.

25 There have been several comments. I just want to say

1 that the statute talks about giving it to a child or a
2 grandchild of the person serving and not anything
3 beyond the child or the grandchild. So we hear you on
4 the desire to expand beyond child or grandchild, but
5 the statute doesn't permit that. It would need to be
6 different language in the statute.

7 MS. McSWAIN: Did you all hear him back in
8 the corner? Okay. Next up is Debi Meeds, Bruce
9 Bailey and Patty Mefford.

10 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'd like to ask a
11 question while we're waiting. So what you're saying,
12 Frank, that's not something that's negotiable?

13 MR. TRINITY: It's not a policy choice that
14 the Corporation can override. It's already been
15 decided by Congress, at least for now in the statute.

16 (Inaudible comments)

17 MR. TRINITY: The question was, would the
18 Silver Scholarship have any flexibility? The Silver
19 Scholars receive an education award. It's called a
20 Silver Scholarship, but they receive an education
21 award. And it's also limited to child and grandchild.

22 AUDIENCE MEMBER: So we don't know if the

23 Silver Scholarship is available to Foster

24 Grandparents?

25 MS. McSWAIN: Right. That's what I thought

1 we were answering. Yes. Okay. You and I same page,
2 not -- (laughter)

3 SPEAKER: I'm Debi Meeds. I'm the
4 executive director of the American Red Cross of
5 Greater Ozarks, which is 23 counties in southwest
6 Missouri. And we are very happy to hear about the
7 disaster -- I guess I should first say we don't have
8 an AmeriCorps team, but we've been trying to get one.
9 So now that there's more places, maybe we will. Yay!

10 We're 97 percent volunteer, and it
11 would really help us -- we have five offices
12 throughout that area, so it would really help us.
13 Right now actually we have 139 volunteers in the field
14 providing response to last Friday's storms and
15 preparing for tonight's storms. So we've been feeding
16 over 2,000 people a day. So we hope the storm doesn't
17 hit us again.

18 I do want to say that in applying to have
19 an AmeriCorps team, I would hope that maybe it could
20 be easier. And although we really wanted a team, we
21 were really worried about the reporting afterwards in

22 case we did get one, because we have all these
23 national guidelines that we have to meet for our
24 audit, and trying to work our financial system so that
25 we could also report that -- maybe that's why they

1 didn't give us one. I don't know. But if that's it,
2 we could do it. We could do it. We have a great
3 accountant.

4 But I just want to say -- oh, I was going
5 to say too -- I made a note here -- I don't know if
6 you've ever heard of the Missouri Foundation For
7 Health, but they have a great process for applying.
8 It took me less than an hour, and they funded us as
9 over a hundred thousand dollars. So they have a
10 really good process, just FYI. And also they chose
11 us, so I like them.

12 I really do -- really, I just wanted to
13 speak to say that I think we have in the past, in the
14 Red Cross and others I've worked in, had AmeriCorps
15 teams, and they're mazing. Actually, there's an
16 AmeriCorps member here who is down from St. Louis who
17 has come down to assist our chapter. So I think the
18 whole program is wonderful, and I hope we get one.
19 Thanks.

20 MS. McSWAIN: What are the things
21 specifically that you would like to see the

22 Corporation make easier for someone like you to be

23 able to apply and feel comfortable?

24 SPEAKER: Well, we went for two-day

25 training on how to do that application that I think is

1 30 pages long. Is that right? And I just think the
2 way we think and the way the application is, we don't
3 think the same way. We're really outcome based, but
4 not that outcome, apparently.

5 So I'd really have to have the application
6 in front of me to see, but it was really hard to
7 articulate, I think, the things that we were doing and
8 what the application needed to hear.

9 MS. McSWAIN: So if you have time, and I
10 know you're busy because there are disasters, but if
11 you have time, it would be helpful if you had time to
12 go back and look at that application and think of the
13 top three things that would make this easier to do,
14 and you could go to our e-mail site and kick them to
15 us. That would be very helpful to us, because
16 sometimes when you're in the process of writing stuff,
17 you don't actually see what it is that you're creating
18 that's difficult for people.

19 SPEAKER: That would be great, because I
20 actually kept notes on it. "I wish they didn't make
21 us do this and -- " so I'll go back to my file and I

22 will e-mail you. Thanks. And I don't mean to be

23 disrespectful, but we have a disaster phone call so

24 we're leaving now.

25 (Applause)

1 SPEAKER: Hi. Good afternoon. My name is
2 Bruce Bailey, and I'm the executive director of
3 AmeriCorps St. Louis. I'd like to just begin by again
4 causing just a moment of celebration here about what a
5 remarkable achievement this is for people at the
6 Corporation who have struggled to make this happen and
7 everybody in this room over all these years who have
8 worked so hard on this. I think it's a remarkable
9 achievement.

10 In the middle of Clinton years, it wasn't
11 certainly obvious to me that we were going to have an
12 afternoon like today and that this program was going
13 to have a future. I think we can all be proud that
14 this is -- that we've been able to bridge the partisan
15 divide.

16 And I think absolutely what has been more
17 important than anything else is that every day in the
18 life of America, we've delivered demonstrable results
19 in a way that matters to communities all over the
20 country. And we've proven that we're not just a
21 program that's based on grand ideas.

22 Quickly, on background, AmeriCorps
23 St. Louis has operated continuously since the Summer
24 of Safety in 1994. We've had 1200 members engaged in
25 full-time service. We're about to celebrate two

1 million hours of direct service to both our state and
2 we've responded during urgent times of need to 30
3 other states over all these years. And now we've
4 achieved a level of contribution where we're
5 contributing a dollar of local money for every dollar
6 we receive federally. So I can testify about how
7 extraordinarily difficult it is to develop and operate
8 a sustainable program that consistently produces
9 decisive results.

10 And I think one thing that impresses me
11 about the new administration is it's obvious that the
12 administration likes to move very quickly. Speed is
13 something that we see a lot about. And I can envision
14 that there's a temptation and perhaps pressure to ramp
15 up the National Service program up exponentially, but
16 I want to encourage all of us to be deliberate and
17 that we not sacrifice quality in the name of quantity.

18 One of the things I'm proudest about as a
19 director is over the last several years I've had 100
20 percent retention of members in a program that really
21 challenges people where the rubber meets the road.

22 And that's because we provide very high-quality
23 service experience for our members. We treat them as
24 adults. We give them opportunities to develop their
25 leadership capacity in a way that really matters so

1 they feel connected to the future of this country.
2 We need to honor their commitments and
3 their sacrifice and the members of predecessor
4 programs like the CCC by continuing to insist and be
5 sure we're offering these types of growth
6 opportunities. And we need to test and see evidence
7 among sponsoring organizations that they can make it
8 for the long haul.

9 One of the things that we saw in the early
10 days of AmeriCorps was a lot of initial host agencies
11 dropping by the wayside because they realized this
12 took a lot of money, a lot of energy, a lot of staff
13 commitment. And they didn't make it.

14 Lastly, I think there's obviously a lot of
15 concern about, you know, what happens with state
16 offices and about commissions. One of the cliches --
17 maybe it's become a cliché -- is we talk about being a
18 program that is dedicated to strengthening the cords
19 that bind us together. We need to work among all of
20 us in the National Service community. We need to
21 erode those silos that we've been talking about that

22 have prevented people from working together.

23 I hope that some of the new money that's

24 available can be invested in Corporation staff so they

25 can get out of Washington and out in the field so that

1 spiritually, they can be enriched by what goes on
2 every day in our programs. And we need to give our
3 state commissions the resources that are necessary to
4 ramp up to support this type of expansion. Thank you
5 very much.

6 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

7 (Applause)

8 MS. McSWAIN: Patty.

9 SPEAKER: Hi. Thank you for the
10 opportunity to talk. I'm Patty Mefford, director of
11 RSVP of Livingston County, Missouri. I've been with
12 the program since 1986.

13 I can't pretend to know a lot about the
14 Serve America Act. I've read everything I could, but
15 it's all kind of -- one of the things I notice that it
16 says is dramatically expand opportunities to serve and
17 expand existing programs. So I'm here to ask,
18 hopefully, for funds for RSVP, because I don't see a
19 lot of that in there. If you don't ask, you don't get
20 it, so that's why I'm here.

21 As you know, RSVP volunteers serve without

22 pay, and this means our communities get a lot of
23 impact for their federal dollars. In fact, in
24 Livingston County, I'll tell you our grant is \$48,000,
25 and we have 429 volunteers. And last year they did

1 87,153 hours. The federal dollar cost is 55 cents per
2 hour. And I notice the independent sector's estimated
3 dollar value is \$20.25. So I made a little chart. I
4 know you can't see it. There's what it's costing for
5 Livingston County, and there's the independent sector.

6 (Applause)

7 So I want to ask for an increase for all of
8 the RSVPs. I don't know if it's in there, but maybe
9 we can get it in there eventually if it isn't, because
10 I think we could do a lot of expanding if we had just
11 a little more money to help staff expand. I mean, we
12 don't even have enough to have a full-time assistant.
13 So I'm out here juggling this whole program with just
14 a little help, and if I had an extra person, I could
15 probably expand.

16 And one thing I'd really like to do is our
17 prison. We just tripled the size of our prison, and
18 the program for the Missouri Reentry Process is really
19 starting up. And I really want to get in there and
20 help those prisoners figure out what they're going to
21 do when they get out, do the skills so they'll be

22 ready to get out and get a new life out there. But I
23 don't really have enough time for that. And I want
24 that. So I'm here to ask for more money not only for
25 myself but all the RSVPs. Thank you.

1 MR. TRINITY: Thank you, Patty.

2 (Applause)

3 MS. McSWAIN: Okay. Our next three
4 speakers are David Battey, Ashley French and I believe
5 this says Norma McLain.

6 SPEAKER: I'm David Battey with the Youth
7 Volunteer Corps of America in Kansas City and also a
8 proud member of the Kansas Volunteer Commission for
9 the last nine years.

10 First I want to say, I kind of want to echo
11 Bruce's comments, and Connie a little bit, too,
12 because I got my start in National Service in writing
13 a thesis in 1985 and had to go to Washington, D.C.,
14 and talk to policymakers who were interested in the
15 issue of National Service. And the professor at my
16 college said, "I'm not sure there's enough for you to
17 write a thesis about with National Service." And
18 that's not all that long ago.

19 Anyway, it's terribly exciting, and it was
20 exciting to actually be invited to the bill signing
21 ceremony a couple of weeks ago. I sat next to the

22 person who is president of the Ad Council, so I was
23 thinking, I don't know what extent the Corporation
24 uses the Ad Council for different purposes of
25 recruiting senior volunteers, youth volunteers,

1 AmeriCorps members or what have you, but she seemed
2 very excited, and she was obviously excited to be
3 there that day.

4 I think that's something we should be
5 trying to tap into, and I'd be more than happy to work
6 with you to ask her to support our interests in
7 getting more and more people to do service. We going
8 to have a huge increase in the number of AmeriCorps
9 members. It never hurts, obviously, to make it aware
10 to people in whatever way we can.

11 The second thing, I wanted to talk a little
12 bit -- in the legislation itself a couple of things
13 that are terribly exciting to me are, one, the
14 longitudinal study, because those things are very
15 expensive to do.

16 We've wanted to do one in Youth Volunteer
17 Corps of America to track the middle school and high
18 school volunteers. We've wanted to do that. We've
19 done four different independent evaluations. When it
20 comes down to actually spending the money on a
21 longitudinal study, it starts getting so expensive

22 we've had to back out of that. So I'm glad to see
23 efforts, and I'd be more than happy to help with that
24 too.

25 Second thing, I'm also excited about the

1 Social Innovation Fund. Youth Volunteer Corps got its
2 start due to an Action Grant back in the fall of 1986
3 from the Kansas City office of John McDonald, who some
4 of you may know. And I love to see those kind of
5 innovation funds.

6 I'm a little bit concerned about the
7 diversity element in the Semester of Service or the
8 Summer of Service program. I'm a big believer in
9 service should be not only voluntary, a volunteer
10 service, but also, it should be open and eligible to
11 people from very different backgrounds.

12 So whenever you start making the call to
13 service one that is income dependent, I think you can
14 lose -- especially in the volunteer program you can
15 lose some elements that are very important. So I'm
16 concerned about that.

17 I had a quick question for Frank. When you
18 talk about the 100 hours of service in the Summer of
19 Service program, is that over one summer, or could
20 that be over a couple of different -- over one summer.
21 Then you can do it two different times for two

22 different education awards?

23 MR. TRINITY: Correct.

24 SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you. Let's see. I

25 had one other comment. Pardon? Oh, yellow? Not red

1 though. Okay. Thank you very much.

2 (Applause)

3 MS. McSWAIN: Ashley?

4 SPEAKER: My name is Ashley French. I'm
5 with the Ozarks Regional YMCA here in Springfield,
6 Missouri. And I'm gonna be real honest with you. My
7 CEO asked me yesterday to attend this today, said we
8 absolutely need to be a presence at this event.

9 I knew very little about the Act, and I'm
10 shocked and I'm excited about what I've learned and
11 the passion in this room from everyone who came today
12 and that drove a long way, because I came in about ten
13 minutes. So you are commended. It's really neat to
14 hear that.

15 What's interesting is the small piece the
16 YMCA would be a part of is -- what I got from it is
17 that what the YMCA -- it's kind of -- it's been a
18 volunteer-driven organization for over 150 years, but
19 folks tend to forget that. So I urge you to remember
20 the YMCAs and how many kids we do serve a day.

21 In Springfield alone it's over 2,000 kids a

22 day that we serve in our after-school programs, our
23 teen at-risk programs that we have in our buildings
24 every day. And I think that tends to be forgotten
25 just because of the fact we're health and fitness.

1 But that's not all we do by no means. So I just
2 encourage you to remember the YMCA and the
3 opportunities.

4 And also, part of your discussion point you
5 had mentioned was marketing to other not-for-profits
6 to encourage them to be partners, sounds like. And I
7 would also encourage you that you're going to have
8 folks come out, and if you -- however you market that,
9 which I don't know how you'll do that, when you put it
10 out there, folks will come out, absolutely. And when
11 that happens, I just caution you, look for that
12 duplication of programs. There's so much out there.

13 In Missouri alone, the not-for-profits that
14 open up every year is astounding. So other
15 not-for-profits that have been around 10, 15, 150-plus
16 years get diluted a little bit through the mission and
17 work and funding, because a lot of not-for-profits
18 will start and not stay around due to their lack of
19 sustainability for what ever reason. So I encourage
20 you when you do that to be cautious of duplication.

21 Look for sustainability, because I think

22 you mentioned, too, you're going to look for new
23 programs to possibly fund, and folks will come up with
24 new programs that are fantastic and look fantastic.
25 But the YMCA and a lot of other quality programs, Camp

1 Fire and a lot of the not-for-profits that have been
2 around for a long time have been doing that for years
3 and are still doing it. And we may change the look of
4 our program but not change the name, because we adapt
5 to our kids' changing needs. They're absolutely
6 changing and adapting.

7 And the economy absolutely has touched the
8 Y, like it has any other not-for-profit organization,
9 but our kids' needs have not changed. In fact, those
10 families' needs and kids' needs have gotten worse,
11 whether it's with foster care, family or what not.
12 Memberships we try to offer to those families for
13 free. And we respond to those community needs as
14 well.

15 So just really a reminder for the YMCA that
16 we're out there. We're the largest provider of child
17 care in the nation and that we are trying to do more
18 Service-Learning for our youth and our teens who
19 absolutely need to be in the YMCA today more than
20 ever. So I just encourage you to remember that. And
21 also, when you're looking for new ones, look for that

22 duplication and look for the sustainability and make

23 sure it's there before you invest in them. That's all

24 I've got.

25 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

1 (Applause)

2 SPEAKER: Norma McLain. Hot Springs,
3 Arkansas, over at RSVP. I've been a director for 20
4 years. I started under Action, so I've seen a lot of
5 changes. I'm also on the National RSVP directors
6 board for nine years.

7 And I have a few concerns. And main thing
8 is, RSVP is not like AmeriCorps volunteers. Our
9 volunteers stay around for 10 to 15 years. I have one
10 lady that's 98 years old volunteering. And so, you
11 know, they find a home, and it gives their life
12 meaning.

13 Also, too, with the grant reviews that we
14 had this year with directors out of different areas of
15 the country, that was sort of hard because of the
16 cultural differences. When you're in the south, some
17 of the programs look lots different than something in
18 the midwest or north.

19 Also, too, we need some extended time
20 lines. RSVPs rely on data information that comes from
21 other sectors of the community, and some of our time

22 lines are so short that we can not really be effective

23 and show you the full picture.

24 Also, with impact, we need some more

25 guidelines on how you show impact improving quality of

1 life. You cannot put data to that. And a lot of our
2 volunteers help in that area, improving quality of
3 life. How do you show how a docent in a science
4 museum helps those children understand physics? So we
5 need a little more clarification there.

6 Recompetition is one of our big main
7 concerns. It's going to be very expensive for the
8 corporation and for the community. It's going to put
9 extra work on our state directors. It's going to
10 displace volunteers. It's going to hurt our
11 nonprofits, because all of a sudden, they can lose
12 their volunteer base and not be able to provide the
13 services that are needed.

14 It costs a lot to start up a program. It
15 also takes three to four years to get a good quality
16 program to increase and develop that volunteer base.
17 I've been director now -- we started out with 200
18 volunteers, and now we're at 800. So it takes a
19 while.

20 Also, too, we will lose some of that
21 community match. We will lose millions. It's going

22 to be expensive for sponsors. Right now, with match
23 being hard to come by, a lot of sponsors are not going
24 to be willing to change. They will not take on a new
25 program.

1 I think that's about all the -- e-grants.

2 Please make it more user friendly. Please.

3 (Applause)

4 SPEAKER: I know we've lost some very good
5 directors because of e-grants. And I thank you very
6 much for your all having this.

7 MS. McSWAIN: Don't go away. So other than
8 the amen on the e-grants, which we'll work on, you
9 talked about two things I'd like to ask you a little
10 bit more about. One is reporting time lines. What
11 specifically?

12 SPEAKER: Like the end -- at the end of our
13 grant period, that year-end report, if we had 45 days,
14 because RSVPs are looking to their stations and
15 volunteers to turn in hours or the data for impact.
16 And I have maybe three or four days to put this
17 together, because they're closing out their year.

18 And we are relying -- we're not like Foster
19 Grandparents and Senior Companions. Those time sheets
20 are there, and they know how much. I turned in over
21 130,000 hours last year. It takes a while to get

22 those in.

23 MS. McSWAIN: Someone earlier referenced a

24 technology solution. Would something like that be

25 helpful?

1 SPEAKER: That helps. You know, I put that
2 in place. We fax. We e-mail. We do a lot. But it's
3 us getting it, because it's sitting in that other
4 person's desk.

5 MS. McSWAIN: Okay. Second follow-up. You
6 talked at the very beginning about how long you've
7 been doing this work, and then you said outcomes.
8 What kind of outcomes would you propose?

9 SPEAKER: I would like to -- like I said,
10 some way to kind of measure that quality of life. You
11 know, how do you show this docent at a science museum
12 that's hands-on, and children come through as field
13 projects for the school, and they work with them. We
14 have a tessler coil that demonstrates that, the caged
15 lightning. We're the only one in the United States
16 that has one, or the second one in the United States.
17 How do you show that for that work station?

18 How do you show that volunteer that's
19 sitting at the hospital in that waiting room that's
20 helping that family of a patient? It could be a life-
21 or-death situation in that surgery. She's there

22 comforting. She might get the chaplain. That's very,
23 very important for our community. Our hospitals
24 couldn't function without those volunteers. How do
25 you show that?

1 MS. McSWAIN: So you would like for us to
2 be thinking of ways we can quantify that.

3 SPEAKER: Yeah. Every time I've had
4 instructions on how to do that, it's tutoring
5 children, which I can do pre- and post-test. And I've
6 been waiting 15 years for an answer on one of those.

7 MS. McSWAIN: If we gave you a set of
8 measures, would you be comfortable with a set of
9 standardized measures that we required you to use if
10 it was capturing those activities?

11 SPEAKER: Yeah, especially if you took into
12 consideration there's hardly two RSVP projects alike
13 in the country. We're so -- alike but yet so
14 different. If you would take and give us, like, areas
15 of the country that might be -- because we're rural.

16 MS. McSWAIN: Right.

17 SPEAKER: So that would help, yes.

18 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

19 (Applause)

20 MS. McSWAIN: Melissa Mace, Steve Johnson
21 and Daphney Partridge.

22 SPEAKER: Good afternoon. My name is
23 Melissa Mace. I'm the executive director of Missouri
24 Campus Compact, and I'm going to skip every bit of
25 introduction and just get straight to it.

1 I want to talk primarily about the VISTA
2 program today. You'll hear from other colleagues at
3 other listening sessions on the other six areas of the
4 law that we feel that we have some sort of expertise
5 on.

6 VISTA is the most effective National
7 Service program to build the capacity of the nonprofit
8 sector. Given its successes, the Compact is delighted
9 to see an increase in the President's budget. Campus
10 Compact sponsors nearly 400 VISTA members in 26 states
11 who serve with community organizations and connect
12 them to college students and faculty.

13 Nineteen of those states were polled --
14 because they responded to the e-mail -- on volunteer
15 hours and community agencies' impact in the previous
16 12 months. So we had 368 VISTA members and 15 VISTA
17 leaders in those 19 states generate 942,000 service
18 hours and impact over 3,169 community agencies in the
19 last 12 months.

20 Missouri -- here in Missouri we have nine
21 VISTA members and one VISTA leader, and our VISTA

22 members are throughout the state. So we're at Truman.

23 We're at Washington University. We're at the

24 community colleges all over the state. Many of the

25 Campus Compact VISTA projects are directly related to

1 Service-Learning where we not only are generating
2 large numbers of short-term service opportunities but
3 building a lifetime commitment to community service.

4 The long-term impacts on graduation rates
5 and future civic engagement behavior are largely
6 unknown, but I understand that \$1 million has been
7 allocated in the President's budget to begin the
8 longitudinal study of Service-Learning. Campus
9 Compact is prepared to assist in the development of
10 the study and looks forward to working with CNCS if
11 called upon.

12 To the punch line now. I would like to
13 urge CNCS to adopt and/or enforce some regulations
14 around VISTA that require some consistency throughout
15 the country. This will simplify the grant process,
16 allow for more uniform collection of data, and
17 contribute to a measure effective way to measure
18 impact nationally.

19 An example on consistency here would be the
20 cost-share requirement across the country. Currently,
21 some states require a cost share, while others do not.

22 They all work for you, so the big question would be

23 why.

24 In addition, VISTA stipes should be

25 encouraged to offer incentives to increase the

1 retention of our members, such as providing room and
2 board and being allowed to benefit from residence hall
3 dining facilities. However, these incentives should
4 be recognized as cost share.

5 So if we have an institution that's willing
6 to give room and board to a VISTA member, why can't
7 that count toward cost share? I understand maybe why
8 you wouldn't want it to be an equal "Yeah, we charge a
9 student \$9,000 to live here. We're not going to give
10 you a \$9,000 credit for that," but there should be
11 some sort of formula that could come into play there.

12 Also, I want to very quickly -- I don't
13 have a yellow card yet -- address three things that I
14 heard in the audience. The schoolwork. Should VISTAs
15 be allowed to work or attend school? Absolutely. I
16 think so. But those VISTAs are going to have to
17 understand that if they are called to a national
18 disaster, they have to go. Sorry. If you're working
19 or if you're going to school you're going to miss that
20 class. Oh, man. All right. Thanks so much.

21 SPEAKER: Hello, I'm Steve Johnson. I'm

22 executive director the Missouri River Communities
23 Network in Columbia, Missouri. Our mission is to
24 enhance stewardship of the Missouri River and its
25 tributaries. There are quite a few, all the way to

1 Montana.

2 We have a ten-member Stream Team AmeriCorps
3 program. AmeriCorps members are working with the
4 50,000 citizen volunteers in Missouri working on
5 taking care of their local watersheds. And we're also
6 a sponsoring nonprofit for the Missouri River Heritage
7 Tourism Initiative, and we currently have eight VISTAs
8 working in seven Missouri River communities, working
9 on economic development in the Missouri River Valley.

10 So thank you for the opportunity to provide
11 you with feedback. As a director of an organization
12 that has both AmeriCorps and VISTA, and sometimes
13 those people are working across the same desk from
14 each other, I would recommend that the AmeriCorps and
15 AmeriCorps VISTA programs be structured in such a way
16 that membership in the two programs are essentially
17 equal with regard to the compensation, the hours
18 worked, living allowance, the rules regarding
19 additional job and the ability to attend classes.

20 At this point it makes a lot of sense with
21 AmeriCorps members, the required 1700 hours of

22 full-time service. VISTA members -- a VISTA member
23 working across from an AmeriCorps member is
24 essentially asked to work 350 hours longer, or nine
25 40-hour weeks. And of course, they're doing that for

1 less in living allowance.

2 I also think the AmeriCorps rule allowing
3 sponsoring organizations to provide additional living
4 allowance up to the \$22,800 is an excellent program.
5 It doesn't happen that much, but it does allow
6 sponsoring organizations to, in essence, retain young
7 people that are performing above average and have
8 demonstrated their skills and value to the nonprofit
9 and the goals of the nonprofit.

10 And it would -- it does, in our case. In
11 the five years we've been doing this, we've only had
12 two AmeriCorps members that we have provided
13 additional, but it's -- both of those members are now
14 working for that sponsoring nonprofit. So it gives an
15 avenue for young people to understand that they can be
16 rewarded for service.

17 I don't really need to talk -- I will
18 reiterate the additional job and ability to attend
19 classes. I think that's something that would -- that
20 also would allow flexibility with regard to the VISTA
21 program. The education award, I'm happy to see that

22 it's increased. I personally think that the
23 AmeriCorps and VISTA earn those funds, and they should
24 be able to give it to whoever they want or even to a
25 scholarship fund. And taxing the education award I

1 think is absurd. It's disheartening to AmeriCorps and
2 VISTA members.

3 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you, Steve. I have one
4 follow-up question. I want to make sure I understood
5 you correctly. Right now AmeriCorps state and
6 national policies on education and work hours and
7 outside employment are set by the organization. You
8 would advocate the same for VISTA?

9 SPEAKER: The same rules, you mean?

10 MS. McSWAIN: That the organization that
11 they're hosted by would set the parameters instead of
12 the Corporation.

13 SPEAKER: Yes.

14 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you. Daphney?

15 SPEAKER: How wonderful it is to be in this
16 room with like-minded people. I don't know about you,
17 but the organization that I manage my programs in is
18 an educational one, and while they respect and
19 appreciate the contributions of volunteers, they don't
20 always value them in the way that I feel they should
21 be for the contributions that we make.

22 My name is Daphney Partridge. I'm the
23 director for PAVE AmeriCorps - Eldon R-1 School
24 District. It's a rural district in the middle of
25 Missouri, and we have a high number of at-risk

1 students in our district. We're pleased and thankful
2 for the funding that we've received for the last three
3 years to operate an AmeriCorps program.

4 I will say this. For some of my colleagues
5 here, this is just going to be resounding your cries.
6 Several years before our district applied to be an
7 AmeriCorps site, we sent people to some workshops to
8 see about how we might participate in this wonderful
9 program, and they promptly came back and said, "No way
10 can we do that with our existing staff" because of the
11 quite lengthy application, the reporting requirements.

12 Along those lines, what I would say is that
13 we've made that investment. I think that it is a
14 challenge for organizations to wrap their mind around
15 how they can do that given that the -- there's a match
16 for the grants and that you have to do that usually
17 with existing staff, because there's certainly not
18 enough money that comes in to hire additional staff to
19 oversee the programs.

20 I understand the challenges that you face
21 in standardizing the measurement of our impact. We're

22 just in the process and I'm very excited about
23 expanding and doing VISTA, another National Service
24 program that I hope is going to serve to build the
25 capacity of our organization.

1 In NE grants I have performance
2 measurements, and now I have performance milestones.
3 It's very confusing. And I can understand why it
4 would be hard for you to recruit new organizations to
5 say yes, we can participate in National Service and
6 support those members.

7 As Corrine was talking, and Steve, having
8 VISTA members serving alongside AmeriCorps members, I
9 know that VISTA recruitment is often a challenge,
10 because we're expecting them to perform at a very high
11 skill level, and I'm going to bring those people into
12 my organization making less money than they did as
13 AmeriCorps members, and I'm going to expect a higher
14 functioning level.

15 Direct service, tutoring kids, very
16 specific. They come in, they know exactly what
17 they're going to do all day long every day. When I
18 bring Nishell in as a VISTA next year -- I'm very
19 excited that she's willing to make that commitment --
20 I'm going to say to her, "You go, girl. You develop
21 those programs. And while you're at it, you're going

22 to do that for less money, and you cannot have another
23 job, nor can you continue or start your education
24 while you're doing that." I just think that that's an
25 unreasonable expectation for VISTA, and I think it's

1 probably hindering you in your recruitment.

2 I'm very happy that you're doing this. I
3 think this is exciting. I know I spoke with Michael
4 Lafferty last week, and I'm certain that he spent a
5 lot of time and energy putting this on. But I hope
6 that you, as we do, feel it was well worth your time.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. TRINITY: Thank you. Yes.

9 (Applause)

10 MS. McSWAIN: Okay. We have four more
11 people and a whole hour. So be thinking about your
12 comments. Mandy Ellis, Kim Hawk, Beth Nickle. And
13 Rebecca Winters, why don't you come on up too.

14 SPEAKER: My name is Mandy Ellis, and I'm
15 the director of Service-Learning and Projects for
16 Interfaith Partnership in Faith Beyond Walls in
17 St. Louis. Our organization is important to the
18 St. Louis community because it gives a chance for our
19 volunteers to find their niche, to really work with
20 volunteers of different ethnic backgrounds, cultural
21 backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and really improve

22 the communities.

23 But what we do, we have a three-pronged

24 approach to what we do. First, we work with community

25 partners. We focus on the long-term relationships and

1 with improving their communities for underserved
2 populations. And sustainability is our focus. We
3 don't just go in for one project and say, okay, good
4 luck, see you later. We keep coming back year after
5 year, project after project.

6 We understand what the issues are of the
7 communities, because we meet with them on a regular
8 basis. We talk with the community members, survey
9 what their needs are. Because a lot of times they
10 have the needs, but they don't have the manpower to
11 get to their goals. That's where we bring our
12 volunteers in to do that work.

13 We have episodic projects throughout the
14 year to help anybody in the community, whether it's
15 getting community gardens up and running so the
16 community can use that, because there's no grocery
17 stores in walking distance to a lot of these families,
18 so helping them with that.

19 Recycling a mountain of tires that have
20 just been dumped into a community because nobody's
21 paying attention. We help with low-income families

22 with rehabbing their homes and getting them up to code

23 so that they can continue to live in them instead of

24 being forced to move out.

25 We work with different social service

1 agencies. We bring in volunteers to help them be more
2 impactful in the community, be more efficient, and
3 concentrate their resources and services to their
4 clients.

5 We maximize the ability to get all ages
6 involved, whether it's middle school, high school,
7 college students, older adults. We try to focus our
8 projects to meet the needs of all of our volunteers
9 within our underserved communities.

10 We recognize that each one of us is
11 responsible for fixing whatever is broken and
12 improving our communities. And we know we need to do
13 this together. We have dialogue groups of interfaith
14 people that meet, and they focus on problems either in
15 the communities or what's going on in the world and
16 see how they can keep it peaceful and get that
17 information out to the community.

18 So we feel that our organization is a great
19 resource for the St. Louis area, but, you know, how --
20 we're having problems in, like, how do you guys plan
21 on working with existing nonprofits to continue the

22 innovation and to keep it going on a regular basis

23 versus, you know, these new programs that might be

24 coming in to get the money to just start from scratch

25 when we've already kind of been doing the work, and

1 other nonprofits like ours?

2 So I don't know if you guys are planning on
3 doing that kind of work or if you're looking for new
4 agencies or newer, innovative projects, or do you plan
5 on looking at what programs are already up and
6 running?

7 MS. GOREN: I'll just answer that. I mean,
8 I think the answer is "both." The Social Innovation
9 Fund, just looking at that specifically, specifically
10 contemplates taking existing proven models to scale in
11 addition to identifying new. In fact, I don't think
12 it was ever a question of replacing the old with the
13 new. I think it's identifying programs that work and
14 growing them and continuing to fund what works and not
15 funding what doesn't work. I think that's really the
16 focus.

17 SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

18 (Applause)

19 SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Kim Hawk. I'm
20 the community resource coordinator for the Waynesville
21 School District. I've had the blessing in my years as

- 22 an elementary principal and now as a community
- 23 resource coordinator to direct Foster Grandparents at
- 24 the building level. I'm currently director of our
- 25 AmeriCorps and VISTA programs and also am coordinating

1 Service and Learning activities throughout our school.
2 So I feel like I've had a great opportunity to work
3 with several of your programs.

4 The first thing I would say is I think that
5 the comments of trying to break down the silos so the
6 different organizations can work together is
7 commendable. In our state of Missouri, we're very
8 fortunate in that all three of our state offices that
9 I have had the chance to work with work very closely
10 together and help one another, but there are systems
11 in place that sometimes do not allow them to do
12 probably some of the things that they would like to do
13 because of budgetary constraints. I think that's a
14 great idea.

15 Secondly, as I said, having both an
16 AmeriCorps and VISTA program, the VISTAs -- I hear the
17 VISTAs moan, groan and complain on a regular basis. I
18 don't hear it from the AmeriCorps members. Because
19 the VISTAs can't get a job. They can't go to school.
20 Their life is on hold. And it's reasonable for them
21 to be able to do that and provide a high level of

22 service without any problem. I think it would really
23 help make recruitment much better and much more fair
24 and equal.
25 Also secondly, the application process. If

1 there's anything that you can do to improve that
2 application process. I currently have 58 people in my
3 in-box, but there are many others who think they've
4 applied to the program, but I can't find them.

5 MS. McSWAIN: You mean the recruitment
6 system?

7 SPEAKER: Yes, the recruitment system. The
8 poor people. I have spent countless hours trying to
9 help them negotiate the recruitment system.

10 Next, I just finished my dissertation on
11 "The Qualitative Analysis of AmeriCorps Tutoring
12 Programs in a Midwestern State." And as a result of
13 that, it was very interesting to find out that -- I
14 think between all of our AmeriCorps tutoring programs,
15 there is a real desire to have some standard measures,
16 but as an educator looking at the performance measures
17 that are currently being developed, I'm somewhat
18 concerned that for the effort and time that's going to
19 be put in, I don't think you're really going to get
20 much bang for your buck.

21 I think there's really a lot out there

22 already that has been developed commercially that
23 could be adopted and utilized that would allow
24 AmeriCorps tutors to immediately have results that
25 they could use to guide and direct the tutoring work

1 that they're doing so that they're not just collecting
2 random facts. Trying to talk fast.

3 Then, a chance to learn from one another so
4 that we could have more time to talk together and
5 share best practices.

6 And expansion of Foster Grandparent
7 programs. For five years I've been trying to get it
8 expanded to our county, and we still don't have Foster
9 Grandparents available in our county, and we need
10 them.

11 Utilizing professional development funding
12 so it's not so laborious to get VISTAs their
13 professional development taken care of. It's an
14 almost impossible task to find professional
15 development and have 45 days to wait for someone to
16 approve the test, get it back. And how VISTAs have no
17 money to pay for things up front. It's a crazy
18 system. Thank you very much.

19 MS. McSWAIN: Wait, wait, don't go away. I
20 had two comments. The President's budget and the
21 Serve America Act creates one training fund that is

22 cross-streamed, so getting training for your VISTAs
23 you now can do in collaboration with your state
24 commission. You just need to make sure that you're
25 part of the planning process.

1 We're turning to a time when those funds
2 can be used across all of our programs: Senior Corps,
3 Learn and Serve, and all of the AmeriCorps programs,
4 be it VISTA or state and national. So that's
5 something to know.

6 SPEAKER: Will you still be able to have --
7 I think there's a real value in the VISTAs being able
8 to go for very specific training.

9 MS. McSWAIN: Yes. Yes. I just want to
10 make it clear that that has now opened up again. One
11 of the things of this process is going to be creating
12 new administrative guidelines for our commission so
13 that they understand the ways that we're intending for
14 them to be interacting with all of our National
15 Service programs in a particular state. That's one
16 thing for everyone to know about what the Act creates.

17 The second thing is, in terms of
18 recruitment systems, we know that there are problems,
19 and we also are going to be working on fixing them,
20 not in this next release, but in some really short,
21 tiny releases following that. So it's probably not

22 going to come as fast as you need it, but it's coming.

23 The question. You said that there were

24 commercial curriculum that you think we should think

25 about using. Suggestion?

1 SPEAKER: Examples might be some of the
2 materials through DIBELS that Reading First folks are
3 using or DRA word analysis where you can do specific
4 assessments to determine weaknesses that individual
5 children have so you can have pre- and post-test data
6 that would be meaningful.

7 Not just a checklist. I mean, that really
8 doesn't mean anything. But something where you're
9 going to find out where is a kid. You've worked with
10 a child over a period of time, where are they now.
11 And our tutors are being trained to be able to
12 administer that, so I know it's something they can do.
13 And I think it would provide a way to find best
14 practices and be able to go and steal from other
15 organizations.

16 I felt like with my dissertation work,
17 being able to go and visit each of the programs and
18 really dig into what they were doing, it was so
19 valuable. And I was sold on so many good ideas that I
20 have now put into play in my own program.

21 And in my own family, Foster Grandparents

22 has kept my grandmother very young, and I really

23 appreciate that.

24 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

25 (Applause)

1 SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Beth Nickle. I
2 teach at Bailey Alternative High School here in
3 Springfield, Missouri. I'm here to talk about
4 Service-Learning. I've been teaching for 21 years,
5 and for the past 17 years, I've been involved with
6 Service-Learning with my alternative high school
7 students.

8 I can't tell you a better program to keep
9 students in school than Service-Learning. I do have
10 to be honest. For the last -- I've been using
11 Service-Learning for about 17 years. I started with
12 the Serve America program, and it became Learn and
13 Serve. So when I heard about this Act, I did think
14 all the money was going to Service-Learning. So I was
15 kind of excited about that.

16 (Laughter)

17 I'm sorry. I want the rest of you to get
18 money, but -- anyway, I just want to talk a little
19 about Service-Learning and how this Act affects
20 Service-Learning. You know, Service-Learning has over
21 a million participants. In my school every student,

22 and we're 90 kids, but every student has a chance to
23 do a Service-Learning project and be involved in their
24 community and to give them a chance to turn from
25 passive members who think maybe the community owes

1 them something to being active producers of community
2 solutions. We also are a very small part of the
3 budget, so lots of people --

4 Breaking down silos. Very glad to see
5 this. Would love to work with other programs. Again,
6 I know there's lot of things in the way that keep us
7 from doing that, but I'm very hopeful about this. I
8 would love to work with AmeriCorps and Senior Corps
9 and to help people in my school, helping my kids with
10 Service-Learning. And what a better way to work with
11 the community than to have all those voices
12 representing so many different ages and perspectives.

13 I also, in terms of partner, hope that the
14 Corporation will reach out to the Department of
15 Education. Since we are meaningful service combined
16 with academic learning, it only makes sense that we're
17 working in conjunction with each other. And I know
18 that Secretary Duncan is interested in
19 Service-Learning. I do realize he has a few other
20 things on his plate, but I think it would be a very
21 valuable partnership.

22 In terms of standardized performance
23 measures, they're great, and we need them, but we are
24 also different. Service-Learning is very different
25 than AmeriCorps and Senior Corps, as they're all

1 different. Plus, we're different in terms of our
2 community. And since Service-Learning really looks at
3 how to meet community needs, it's sometimes difficult.
4 One shoe doesn't fit all -- or one size, excuse me,
5 doesn't fit all.

6 So I think it's really important to look at
7 how you can create performance measures that can be
8 flexible enough that can give you what you need but
9 yet are flexible enough to reflect different school
10 and community needs.

11 Some of those might be, is Service-Learning
12 positively affecting the participants. I'm excited
13 about the study. I think the research is exciting. I
14 think we have a lot of anecdotal research in terms of
15 Service-Learning. Getting more of that information
16 will be great. And I also think, is Service-Learning
17 an integral part of the school? Sometimes it's just
18 one teacher doing it, but has it become a culture -- a
19 part of the culture of that school?

20 In terms of social innovation, I think one
21 way to develop that is to simply call upon the young

22 people, ask them to come up with solutions to
23 community problems through Service-Learning and then
24 provide them with the resources to do that.
25 Looking at the dropout issue, we know that

1 it's a huge issue in our country right now, and I
2 think Service-Learning is poised to help with the
3 dropout issue. Just recently in our state we had a
4 dropout summit, and two of my students spoke about
5 Service-Learning and what it meant to them.

6 To hear their stories and the impact it's
7 had on them was so important for me to know what I was
8 doing to help them in their classroom, but in more
9 particular, what Service-Learning had meant to them
10 and how it had kept them in school. And so I think
11 Service-Learning is a great opportunity for students
12 to stay in school, to work and to really help with the
13 community.

14 As a teacher, I don't get many chances to
15 just let my students take the lead, and
16 Service-Learning lets me do that, and it has been a
17 great opportunity. I'm so excited to be a part of it,
18 and I want to thank you for the funding that you've
19 given us.

20 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

21 (Applause)

22 SPEAKER: Good afternoon. I'm Rebecca
23 Winters. I'm the program director of AmeriCorps and
24 VISTA, Poplar Bluff's Promise over in southeast
25 Missouri, virtually in Arkansas. I'm also very proud

1 to say that I am a former member of the AmeriCorps
2 program. And I, too, am very pleased to have the
3 opportunity to speak to you today.

4 I'm going to be -- try to be very concise
5 with my comments. I have several things I'd like to
6 address. First of all, please do increase the living
7 allowance for VISTAs, and please do allow them to go
8 to college. I think that would give them the
9 opportunity to set a wonderful example to those
10 service recipients to see them not only working --
11 serving, I'm sorry -- full-time but also, in the
12 evening hours, going back to school.

13 Many of them have the opportunity to do
14 that and go ahead and pursue that education so that
15 when they do complete their service terms they are
16 ready to enter the nonprofit or private sector in some
17 sort of capacity professionally.

18 I would also like to see and pleased to see
19 some changes to the term caps. I noticed in the Serve
20 America and had not realized until today that the cap
21 on terms will now equal two full-time education

22 awards. I would be thrilled to see an increase in
23 that, even. We have members that I know would serve
24 and would be very beneficial to our community for up
25 to four years. They go to college for four years.

1 You know, that's something to think about.

2 I would also like to see increased support
3 and promotion within local communities, but also
4 nationwide, of what AmeriCorps members can do for
5 folks in the private sector, in the public sector,
6 post-AmeriCorps. I think we need to provide them a
7 greater support in educating people about what it is
8 that they do, how they're prepared and equipped to go
9 out and be really, really effective in their
10 communities post-AmeriCorps service.

11 I'm all for standardized PMs. I love your
12 PM regarding education, because that's exactly what my
13 PM says right now. So pick that one, please. I'm a
14 little concerned about graduation rates, and let me
15 tell you why. I'm all for graduation rates as a long-
16 term goal, "long-term" being the key word.

17 Please keep in mind my program's been in
18 business for six years, and the oldest students I
19 served in that first year back in 2004 were in the
20 fourth grade. So I can't take credit for, nor be
21 blamed for, graduation rates until 2012.

22 So that's just something that I want you to
23 please keep in mind. Please don't put us on the hook
24 for impacting graduation rates after a three-year
25 grant cycle. That's just not going to be possible.

1 The other thing that I would like to
2 mention, my colleague said commercially -- you know,
3 products, the Search Institute, 40 Developmental
4 Assets. However, I do want to qualify that by saying
5 that while I think that's a great idea, I do wonder
6 who's going to pay for those products, because I'll
7 tell you that they are quite expensive. And I know
8 that at least in my program and in our community, that
9 would be a major factor and consideration.

10 So I would suggest that if you do pursue
11 the development of that type of solution to our
12 problem that you try to partner with some of those
13 agencies to provide those at a reduced cost to us. I
14 know it won't be for free.

15 Finally about grants, about writing grants.
16 I've lived through it six or seven times now, so of
17 course, I think you need to just maintain your high
18 standards. I think those are great. Seriously,
19 though, AmeriCorps is a very -- it's a special
20 program, and I think it takes a special organization
21 to earn the right to have a program. And I think that

22 you need to be able to jump through all those hoops.

23 Now, the application, there are some things in that

24 that are repetitive.

25 My recommendation is that you reinstitute

1 planning grants. These folks that call me up on the
2 phone and they want to write an AmeriCorps -- they
3 want to design and develop an AmeriCorps program
4 agreement in three months, they're crazy. They're out
5 of their minds. You can't do it hardly in a year.

6 You've got to plan and prepare to be able
7 to understand what are the community needs, what
8 components can you develop that will address those
9 needs, and how can AmeriCorps play a role in that. So
10 planning grants, I think, are an important role in
11 that.

12 And finally, because I am an AmeriCorps and
13 VISTA, and Senior Corps lives down the hall from me, I
14 would suggest to you that our programs -- if you have
15 organizations that are interested and want to lend
16 those service experiences and work off of one another
17 and support one another, you know, I think those
18 agencies and those organizations should really be
19 given a high priority, because they are certainly
20 going to increase the retention and the effectiveness
21 across the board of all of the streams of service.

22 Thank you.

23 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

24 (Applause)

25 MS. McSWAIN: Okay. I want to try and

1 figure out the easiest way to do this. Show of hands
2 if you have not spoken and you would like to speak.
3 There's one right there. You want to come on up?

4 SPEAKER: My name is Gary Morris. I'm
5 director of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program
6 in northwest Arkansas, specifically in Springville,
7 Arkansas, in Washington County. Three real quick
8 things, and I'll try to keep it under a two-minute
9 drill.

10 First of all is going to be just a general
11 comment and then two things of somewhat specificity.
12 Number one is a general comment in the area of
13 communications. I'm an old-time communications
14 person. I have only been in the Senior Corps program.
15 I'm on the National Board of RSVP Directors, but for
16 three years I have been a director.

17 In three -- in five months I have seen more
18 communication come out of your-all's office than in
19 the last three years. And I really do appreciate
20 that. Reviews and updates and what's going to happen
21 on the Hill today. And I appreciate that, your time

22 here today, to touch and feel the people that are
23 actually running these organizations and work with
24 them and with their passion each and every day.
25 Secondly, and this is into the specificity,

1 the specific objective that you all mention in the
2 outline and that we will be living with and
3 implementing is how should the Volunteer Generation
4 Fund operate to ensure that we are maximizing its
5 potential to support the recruitment and the
6 management of volunteers.

7 I submit to you this possible formula for
8 the attainment of that objective, and that is the
9 utilization of the largest volunteer organization
10 already in existence in the United States of America,
11 and that's the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program,
12 with 425,000 members, with stations, with operations
13 such as myself in almost every area of the United
14 States.

15 I mention this because you mentioned
16 recruiting the 55 and plus. We have the relationship
17 with the 55 and plus. We have the contacts with the
18 55 and plus. We have the credibility already
19 established in the communities. We have the mechanics
20 of a volunteer reporter software that can turn data
21 back to you almost instantaneously. And if you were

22 to try this, even in a lab sense, in a couple of

23 different places, I think you would get very

24 measurable results and be very satisfied.

25 I would mention also, and this goes back to

1 President Obama and the stimulus package, and everyone
2 talks about the infrastructure and all the projects
3 related to that. They want to find projects that are
4 shovel-ready. In the volunteer sense, RSVP would be
5 shovel-ready for the recruitment of volunteers. It is
6 the most effective volunteer engine in the United
7 States.

8 And I have -- I've been to Washington and
9 talked to several Congressmen. And when you sit down
10 and explain the program, they say, "Boy, that's one of
11 the best-kept secrets I've ever heard of. But man,
12 what an engine that is in the community." And I say
13 if you give that engine a little more gas, like Patty
14 would say, you might really be surprised at the
15 results.

16 I would submit one more thing, and that's
17 in closing. And this is to the attainment of that.
18 FG -- or rather VGF is your Volunteer Generation Fund.
19 VGF equals RSVP. And I would say that it's a very
20 good foundation for really special, valuable people.

21 (Applause)

22 MS. McSWAIN: So we haven't talked much

23 about Volunteer Generation Fund.

24 SPEAKER: No, you have not.

25 MS. McSWAIN: It's a blank slate.

1 SPEAKER: That's why I wanted to pull that
2 out today.

3 MS. McSWAIN: It's been one minute --

4 SPEAKER: And I thank for the add-on, for
5 the chance to --

6 MS. McSWAIN: In one minute, what do you
7 think the criteria should be, knowing that the goals
8 are to recruit, train and retain volunteers, building
9 the infrastructure across the nation? That's the goal
10 of the fund.

11 SPEAKER: Sure. Sure. I think that just
12 like any membership organization, the recruiting is on
13 the front end, the retaining is in the middle, the
14 reporting and the measurement is down here at the end,
15 whether it's the Chamber of Commerce organization or
16 Retired Senior Volunteer Program.

17 The recruiting, in our instance anyway, we
18 have started a program to help recruit senior
19 volunteers in the northwest Arkansas area in
20 collaboration with the University of Arkansas, using
21 their alumni association and using their

22 communications tools, because we don't have the money

23 to do it ourselves, to mail out to those alumni

24 volunteer opportunities in the northwest Arkansas

25 area. Most of those people are at least 50 plus and

1 in business for themselves.

2 But there are all types of opportunities
3 for recruiting volunteers, and those of us who have
4 done some of it are aware of them. Volunteer fairs.
5 Very economically done and strategically implemented.
6 There's more convention spaces that are willing to
7 give you room on a Sunday afternoon to do a volunteer
8 fair and tie it in with a job fair, especially now,
9 than you can just imagine.

10 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

11 SPEAKER: Thank you for your time.

12 MS. McSWAIN: When you introduce yourself,
13 if you could speak slowly and clearly, so we can get
14 it for the record.

15 SPEAKER: I speak slowly anyway.

16 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

17 SPEAKER: My name is Ed Coleman. I'm from
18 North Little Rock, Arkansas. And I guess maybe -- I
19 just feel so good. I have not thought about all of
20 you working for me. Since I've been around a while,
21 it just makes me feel good that these things are

22 happening, you know, for me. Thank y'all. All right?

23 I'm going to go at it a little bit

24 differently in that my friend, the Reverend Kerry

25 Woolfolk, and I are part of VISTAs, and we are part of

1 a leadership program there in Little Rock. I've been
2 honored to be -- well, rather than giving me money,
3 they named a program after me. So the program is the
4 Edward Coleman Leadership Institute. No money.
5 Hopefully, it will come when I ask them for royalties.

6 But seriously, what we've attempted to do
7 is to go at it a different way. We want to teach
8 young people -- I'm going to say young people. Let's
9 call them young adults -- the art of leadership. I
10 know all of you have heard about leadership programs
11 all over the country. Some will go as high as two or
12 three thousand dollars, and then there are some that
13 actually are not really leadership programs, more or
14 less counseling programs.

15 But what we're attempting to do is reach an
16 age group between 18 up. When we say "up," we didn't
17 put a cap on it, because we didn't know what we were
18 going to run into. As it turned out, we have an
19 average age of about 35. The intent was to teach
20 young adults leadership skills.

21 Leadership skills, we develop a curriculum,

22 personal development, career development and what we
23 call pure leadership skills. It's a year-long
24 program, and it is funded basically from corporate
25 contributions and some philanthropic organizations.

1 But the whole idea was to introduce and
2 waken or sharpen the leadership skills in young people
3 that have been recruited for the class. The idea was
4 to teach them about what leadership is all about.

5 And I'll skip forward to the third part of
6 our program, and that is pure leadership skills. The
7 things you're talking about in terms of developing
8 green jobs -- we call them green jobs -- and also
9 teaching them what leadership is in terms of
10 recruiting volunteers and giving back to the
11 community.

12 Now, it's a bit more tool than that, but I
13 know I'm limited. But I want to emphasize that one of
14 the main things that we require of each one of the
15 people in our program is to come up with a community
16 services plan. It is a requirement. Let me emphasize
17 that, because we want to make sure they understand
18 what that is all about. All right.

19 Our idea is to couch the leadership skills
20 into the repertoire of experiences, but at the same
21 time, we want them to understand how that leadership

22 can help with giving back. It was so good for us to
23 hear this administration talk about giving back to the
24 community. That's right in line with what we do.
25 So we've asked each -- we've required each

1 one of our participants -- by the way, we started out
2 with a hundred or so young adults in three cities in
3 the state of Arkansas, and it looks like -- and we're
4 going to hold our graduation on the 20th of June this
5 year -- we may have 80 people graduating, which is a
6 pretty nice percent of folks. Again, it's a year-long
7 program.

8 But I want to emphasize the fact that we
9 want them to understand what leadership is in many
10 aspects, but we really want to push them on community
11 service and giving back. Giving back means coming up
12 with ways to solve local problems. There are
13 community problems that they may have in the community
14 services arena. Is the red thing up?

15 MS. McSWAIN: It is. Those three minutes
16 go really quickly.

17 SPEAKER: Okay. My background is that I've
18 been around as long as, well, most of you in here have
19 been born. But my point for mentioning is that I came
20 into public service with the Jimmy Carter
21 administration. And it's been in my blood all the

22 time. And I just think that I'm retired, and I am

23 about to go broke, because it's costing me to go and

24 volunteer.

25 MS. McSWAIN: There's some people in here

1 that want to talk to you.

2 SPEAKER: I know. I know. Anyway, thank
3 you for the opportunity, and I am just too excited
4 about being here.

5 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

6 (Applause)

7 SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Scott
8 McFarland. I'm with the Serve Illinois Commission.
9 I'm the resource and information manager.

10 First off, it's great to have this many
11 people close to home -- well, kind of close to home --
12 and also good to have this information going on. I
13 hope all this information comes back to the states and
14 we get that. It would be great to have. And also, on
15 behalf of myself, the State and my car tires, I hope
16 that we see you in Illinois soon.

17 I'm just going to bat clean-up a little
18 bit. Most of what I've said has been already said.
19 To echo a few points, when it comes to VISTA, the
20 24/seven rule is not adequate for what we're doing
21 nowadays. We run a VISTA program out of the

22 commission, and I'm very proud of my VISTAs that I
23 have, but I have turned away several good candidates,
24 because they're part-time students or full-time
25 students, who could have done the job that the program

1 needs, but we had to turn them away right off the bat.

2 Along with that, I've talked to a lot of
3 our partners across the state, and they've asked to
4 point out again that we need to streamline how
5 AmeriCorps applications are run and how we choose our
6 programs. A lot of smaller programs have good ideas
7 and need those VISTA members, but they can't spend the
8 time or the money to get the grant going. So any way
9 we can work to streamline that would be excellent.

10 With the Volunteer Generation Fund, we'll
11 share a little bit with the RSVP friends over here.
12 We are the second state to partner with Network For
13 Good, which is a program on line that aggregates
14 databases together for volunteer opportunities. I
15 like to joke with my New York colleagues that we beat
16 them by a week and a half, so we're No. 2. And we're
17 hoping we can use the Volunteer Generation Fund to
18 bring people to that.

19 And we're also hoping the Corporation will
20 expand their partnership with Network For Good and
21 other organizations like that to ensure that we can

22 help recruit volunteers on a statewide and national
23 basis. With serve.gov coming on board soon and all of
24 that, it will be very helpful.

25 And the final thing is, the one concern we

1 have with the Act is the admin increase. We like the
2 admin increase, but we're worried that as a middle
3 state, we may not see that. When you have the small
4 states move up and the large states move up, we middle
5 states may have to take a decrease in order to account
6 for that.

7 I haven't crunched the numbers with the
8 President's budget. That may not be the case. But
9 it's a concern that we have and a lot of other states
10 across the country have, especially in the midwest,
11 Wisconsin and Illinois and such.

12 MS. McSWAIN: We've crunched them for you.
13 It's on page 44.

14 SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

15 (Applause)

16 SPEAKER: I'm back.

17 MS. McSWAIN: All right.

18 SPEAKER: I'm changing hats though. I'm
19 actually Dan Dunbar. I'm also a military veteran who
20 served regularly. So I definitely also have interest
21 in the veterans, especially the disaster recovery. I

22 do have experience in that. Living in Kansas City, we

23 tend to see a tornado or two, so --

24 MS. McSWAIN: Maybe today.

25 SPEAKER: Probably. Give it a half hour.

1 It will change.

2 The first point I wanted to make, though,
3 was I agree with the 24/seven VISTA needs to change.
4 This gentleman right here posted a job that I was not
5 eligible for because I didn't meet the criteria. So
6 there was a time that I was unemployed and needed
7 work, went to look at the VISTA program, but because I
8 even had a part-time job in Wal-Mart, I was
9 immediately ineligible. So don't hog tie me and take
10 me back there.

11 But the big thing I want to touch base with
12 is on your veterans disaster recovery. Make sure that
13 plenty of budget is allocated for the communications
14 infrastructure. I've been on a lot of disaster scenes
15 where there is no longer a central office that Bell
16 can provide services. And I've literally been in the
17 case where I've had volunteers with a phone in each
18 hand, up to each ear, and they're talking with one
19 person here.

20 So from that standpoint, please make sure
21 that there's plenty of infrastructure. And you want

22 to make sure it works with FEMA and the other

23 organizations that are handling those areas.

24 The key point I'd also make, make sure

25 there's a database of skill sets. Many of us do have

1 not just a single arena that we have expertise in. So
2 being able to certify multiple areas where we might be
3 able to work a particular job in this disaster area
4 but might fulfill a different job in another area.
5 That would be the keys that I would bring up for that.
6 Thank you for your time.

7 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

8 (Applause)

9 SPEAKER: My name is Scott Huse. I'm with
10 Schools and Families Engaged, known as the SAFE team
11 on campus. Website, thesafeteam.com, just so you
12 know.

13 Ten years ago there was a school shooting
14 that got me involved in volunteering. And from that I
15 helped launch a program where we had 38,000 men across
16 the country go back to school and volunteer, be a part
17 of their families' lives. It was a tragedy that
18 caused that to happen. It was a tragedy that got me
19 back in school.

20 I always tell people, I was one of those
21 who hated school, wasn't planning on coming back to

22 school, because I was never modeled to come back in

23 school and volunteer. My dad didn't come to school.

24 But from a tragedy, I got involved.

25 Ten years later, here's what we learned and

1 why we focus on purely men is that there are some
2 markets, folks, where there are no men left in their
3 families. 65 to 80 percent of the kids in Kansas
4 City, Missouri, and Memphis and Oklahoma City and
5 Dallas don't have their fathers in their lives. So we
6 figured out that it became bigger than just men. It
7 became about family.

8 And that's when RSVP popped up in our lives
9 here recently, as we launched Schools and Families
10 Engaged, because we realized we have kids being raised
11 by grandparents and aunts and uncles, mom alone, dad
12 alone. It was bigger than what we thought.

13 But the reality is, we still had
14 communities where we just didn't have enough people to
15 come in and volunteer and be a part of their life,
16 because it was bigger -- these kids -- I mean, we all
17 hear it. It's about parenting right now. Why are
18 kids dropouts? Because their parents are dropping of
19 their lives. They're not parenting their kids
20 anymore.

21 Give them the goals. Give them the goals

22 to set, because they were never modeled how to do it
23 themselves. Generationally, it's just happened. But
24 yet, we've got great people. And RSVP was -- I mean,
25 he said it. Gary and I talked just a couple of weeks

1 ago. That's how I found out about this.

2 All of a sudden, the best-kept secret in
3 America -- I don't know why I've never -- ten years
4 involved in schools, I never heard about this program
5 where there are people waiting to come in and help.
6 And I have all the structure. We had everything lined
7 out, and we never knew it even existed.

8 That, to me, is just one of those things,
9 going, gee, we need to learn how to market what we do.
10 That would help. And if we're going to spend all this
11 money, let's do it and do it very, very well, and
12 let's get the work out.

13 That kind of impact that I know seniors can
14 bring to communities, especially where there aren't
15 enough families that the kids are connected to to get
16 into their lives again and support them in education,
17 then that's it. Thank you.

18 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

19 (Applause)

20 SPEAKER: Good afternoon. I'm Andres
21 Dominguez, present commissioner with the Missouri

22 State Community Service Commission and past chair as
23 well. I am excited to be here. I didn't expect to
24 see this kind of audience invigorated with the whole
25 passion of service. So thank you for being here.

1 Thank you all for choosing Missouri as your place to
2 visit today.

3 Just a few points that I want to cover as a
4 commissioner. I agree with your concerns. I have to
5 read those requests that you submit to us.

6 MS. McSWAIN: So do we.

7 (Laughter)

8 SPEAKER: I have been in the foundation
9 sector for 18 years in the Kansas City area, and it is
10 a daunting RFP that you have. At the Kauffman
11 Foundation, one of the largest grants I ever
12 administered was a one-page request. And at the
13 healthcare foundation where I'm currently a senior
14 program officer, we limit all proposals to five pages.

15 As you take a look at that, it's the
16 capacity issue within the nonprofit sector within
17 Missouri and within other states, as well, of being
18 able to address the kind of RFP that you have right
19 now. It's one that I hope you seriously consider
20 because of the level of professionalism that exists
21 within this group and knowing that they want to

22 perform to the utmost in designing an appropriate

23 application for the commissioners to review.

24 The issue of performance measurements and

25 outcomes, it's one that, as an individual who has

1 worked in philanthropy, has always struggled with it.
2 I've struggled with it because we're dealing with
3 people. We're dealing with communities that are in
4 poverty, generational poverty, school systems where
5 parents may not have graduated from school.

6 We're dealing with an issue of
7 self-sufficiency and how do we create a new generation
8 that is self-sufficient. And sometimes that's not
9 easy to measure. It's not easy to track, because
10 oftentimes we're looking at that individual that we're
11 working with. I'd argue that let's think about, what
12 kind of impact is that individual going to have on his
13 grandkids?

14 So it gets into becoming very expensive,
15 like David mentioned. It gets very expensive when you
16 do longitudinal studies, and the nonprofits don't have
17 the capacity to do those kinds of measurements at
18 times.

19 So when we think about performance
20 measurements, and I think it's a goal that I think all
21 of us have, it's about how do we eliminate poverty.

22 It's about how do we create self-sufficient people and
23 healthy communities. And sometimes it's just about
24 bringing a smile to a person's face that otherwise is
25 dealing with issues of violence, dealing with issues

1 of societal impact that, oftentimes, we read about it
2 in the newspaper. And unfortunately, we don't hear
3 about all the great things that our programs are
4 doing.

5 So I'd ask you to take a look at your
6 marketing plans. It's amazing how many people aren't
7 aware in this state that AmeriCorps is no longer in
8 existence or is still in existence. Some people think
9 it kind of faded away. So I ask you -- fortunately,
10 we work with the Missouri Broadcasters Association.
11 They provide pro bono work with us.

12 I ask you to consider your marketing
13 strategies. I ask you again the issue of cultural
14 competency that someone mentioned earlier. Oftentimes
15 volunteerism is a thing that is oftentimes only done
16 by the middle class, and that should not be the case.
17 It should be an opportunity offered to everyone across
18 our sectors. Rich, poor, it shouldn't matter. Your
19 ethnicity shouldn't matter, what part of the region
20 you're from. It shouldn't matter whether you're from
21 the rural communities or if you're from the urban

22 communities.

23 I can't say enough about the issues that

24 people in rural communities face in Missouri, issues

25 regarding the match support that they're required to

1 have. Oftentimes, trying to raise those resources is
2 not easily done. I would like for you to consider
3 issues of commissions being able to do the mini
4 grants. We used to do our own fundraising in Missouri
5 to do smaller grants of \$5,000 to support service and
6 create a culture of service in communities throughout
7 Missouri.

8 And finally, since I live in Missouri, and
9 I know we have people from Kansas and people from
10 Illinois and Arkansas, a lot has been written recently
11 about the service academy. And I hope that you all
12 look at our region -- specifically, Missouri -- as a
13 place that could very much promote service, promote a
14 culture of service, one that we would all be proud of
15 in this country, and ask that you influence that
16 decision as that service academy gets designed and
17 that Missouri be considered in that designation.
18 Thank you very much.

19 MR. TRINITY: Thank you.

20 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

21 (Applause)

22 SPEAKER: Just an idea and a thought
23 regarding the disaster response piece. With it coming
24 close to the end of our program year, I had members
25 who are ready to go and respond to the tornados that

1 hit last week. I'm out of money to pay for gas. I'm
2 out of money to pay for anything, because my program
3 year is coming to an end.

4 And it would be really great when you
5 signed on a program as the director you had -- there
6 was there a state pool of funding or a national pool
7 of funding that could be tapped into for the disaster
8 response when we need to mobilize folks and that there
9 were systems in place when that mobilization needed to
10 take place so that I'm not e-mailing my state
11 directors saying, "Hey, how do I help? How do I
12 help?" so that that was taken care of so that we can
13 assist. We had people ready to go, but the systems
14 weren't there to get them where they needed to be.

15 MS. McSWAIN: Are you part of a cooperative
16 agreement with the Corporation's Office of Emergency
17 Management for applying under a FEMA emergency?

18 SPEAKER: I guess I'm not, since I don't
19 know what you're talking about.

20 MS. McSWAIN: You would know. We should
21 talk about that later.

22 SPEAKER: Hi. Jennifer Greenfield again.
23 Just two really quick things about the performance
24 measures. As a researcher, it's music to my ears to
25 hear national standardized measures being talked

1 about. It makes our job simpler.

2 But I wanted to point out that many of the
3 standardized measures that are out there have been not
4 normed for communities of color, for rural
5 communities, other kind of underrepresented groups.
6 So I think that care needs to be taken when
7 implementing those kinds of measures and perhaps, you
8 know, developing measures that are tested and normed
9 in a variety of communities.

10 The second is, I just want to mention that
11 we find that outcomes are different for younger adults
12 versus older adults, so the expectations should be
13 modified to be appropriate for the population. So
14 again, while it's nice to have, you know, standardized
15 measure across the board, make sure that you're aware
16 of the population you're serving, especially with,
17 like, the Serve America Fellows or AmeriCorps that are
18 intergenerational.

19 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

20 (Applause)

21 SPEAKER: Hi. Ernest Gonzales again. I

22 hope to be quick. To the issue of standardized
23 performance measures, Jennifer just spoke about the
24 difference, but I'm going to talk about methods. We
25 have evaluated a few national programs, both federally

1 funded and from the private sector, and what we
2 employed was a mixed-methods approach.

3 And so we do both. We do standardized
4 instruments and nonstandardized instruments, and we
5 partner with the people who are actually on the field
6 and ask "What are you saying?" and "What do you want
7 to measure?" And we do it both quantitatively, but we
8 also have focus groups.

9 I interview program directors. We collect
10 homework from students. And what we see, if done
11 well, is a triangulation. So the message overall,
12 we're going to see it from the quantitative methods
13 and through the qualitative methods. So there has to
14 be an ongoing relationship with partners.

15 Then secondly what we do is we employ
16 evaluation seed personnel. They're burdened with
17 running the program. So we offer a small stipend to
18 an older adult to run the evaluation, and we have a
19 couple of different methods. So if you want to know
20 about those, we can share those.

21 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

22 MR. TRINITY: Thank you, Ernest.

23 (Applause)

24 SPEAKER: Thanks for one other opportunity.

25 Just a couple of general observations. As it relates

1 to eligibility, I know that currently, you can serve
2 two years in VISTA and one year in the state and
3 national program or two years in NCCC and a year in
4 the state and national programs. We'd like to see it
5 so it would be possible to serve three years across
6 the board in any stream of service and have that
7 restriction lifted without penalty.

8 The second thing is, we'd like to try to
9 see an equalling of preferential hiring authority at
10 the federal level that transcends all streams of
11 service so that it's not just limited to the Peace
12 Corps and VISTA, but also applies to domestic service.

13 As it relates to the National Reserve
14 Board -- and obviously, we focused on this a lot
15 because of the tremendous potential it has -- we feel
16 very strongly that that initiative should be anchored
17 at the state level, to emergency management agencies
18 and to state commissions.

19 Many of us are working very, very hard and
20 have been in developing extensive collaborative
21 relationships with VOAD agencies, with FEMA, with our

22 state agencies. And rather than having this be
23 another -- on the end of the wheel as a tangent, you
24 know, we'd like to see it active locally.
25 There's an experience with FEMA where the

1 Citizen Corps during Hurricane Ivan was actually
2 deployed. Individual reservists were called up around
3 their state Citizens Corps, deployed to the Gulf kind
4 of unilaterally directly at the national level, and it
5 was -- you know, the evidence that you would be able
6 to look at will speak for itself about the lack of
7 success with that approach.

8 We'd like to see there be some sort of
9 incentives around collaborative regional initiatives.
10 For instance, during this last year, we've been
11 contacted by Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Kansas,
12 who all have a tremendous interest in this emergency
13 services area.

14 And we really don't have a template out
15 there right now that exists for states to really
16 collaborate with one another and have access to a
17 funding stream to enter into joint operational
18 agreements with one another.

19 I think an extension of that would be the
20 possibility of developing some regional training
21 institutes so that states could collectively go after

22 training dollars and operate multi-state institutes to

23 help further develop the capabilities and skills of

24 their members.

25 And then the last thing, I'd like to just

1 speak to what Kim was talking about. We have to do a
2 better job as it relates to dealing with how we
3 support our members financially who get called up to
4 provide disaster services.

5 In my program, I had to take out a line of
6 credit against my building. It's a reimbursement
7 process. I've gone in some cases almost a year
8 without being reimbursed for money that was authorized
9 to provide support to our members in the field. And
10 that's just not acceptable.

11 And then beyond that, we need to have a way
12 to provide, I think, some sort of money, as Kim was
13 talking about, so the programs can have the right type
14 of personal protective equipment, communications
15 equipment and the right type of skill development and
16 skill sets for their members so they can actually
17 serve and meet their full potential on these disaster
18 assignments. Thank you.

19 MS. McSWAIN: Thank you.

20 (Applause)

21 SPEAKER: Hi. Connie Stewart again. I'll

22 talk fast. I am really, really excited about the
23 national measurement kind of system, because what
24 we've found out is that although we've been keeping
25 performance measures for ten years, no one knows about

1 them, because no one knows how to roll those all up
2 and to speak about them.

3 So I really think we need to keep for our
4 own programs, for our own -- the kind of things that
5 we've been doing that are very specific to our own
6 programs and our own community needs. But volunteers
7 at schools, it doesn't matter whether we're AmeriCorps
8 or whether we're Foster Grandparents or VISTA or
9 whoever, we're tools that someone is asking for.

10 And I think to measure our success, all we
11 have to do is to find out from those people who are
12 using our tools, did we meet their expectations? Were
13 we a good tool for them? If we can do that kind of a
14 thing and say that nationally -- you could list 300
15 things that all the volunteers do, but say 98 percent
16 of all people using these volunteers said that we were
17 successful and that we met their needs.

18 That's the only kind of thing I think that
19 we're going to be able to do that we can talk about
20 nationally. If you start giving me some kind of a
21 thing that says did kids graduate or when, that's not

22 even what most of my folks are wanting my volunteers
23 for. So if you're really going to meet community
24 needs, we shouldn't be given national kinds of things
25 that come down to say, this is what you have to meet.

1 And then the -- I need more clarification
2 on the PNS. I have no idea how my program's going to
3 grow. I'll ask that later. Okay.

4 One of the things that you asked in your
5 thing was identity of these new programs and should
6 you keep them with their separate identity, and I'm
7 saying yes, please.

8 One of the things that I think we disliked
9 the most when the Corporation was formed was that we
10 all tried to look alike. And we are -- we're happy to
11 be Foster Grandparents. I think RSVP people want
12 to -- and it's really confusing for VISTAs when there
13 are AmeriCorps VISTAs, and then you're in a commission
14 meeting, well, why aren't doing -- well, no, the state
15 office does that.

16 They're not. They're VISTAs, and those are
17 AmeriCorps. I think it gets very confusing if you
18 don't keep those separate identities, and I think it's
19 also a good marketing tool to have those separate
20 identities.

21 MS. McSWAIN: The identities that that

22 question is specifically about are the new corps
23 within AmeriCorps. So given that experience, and we
24 have these new education, health, veterans, would
25 those be AmeriCorps, or would that be Environmental

1 AmeriCorps or would it be Environmental Corps? What
2 would you say to us?

3 SPEAKER: I would say that however you do
4 it that you really give them a name that says what it
5 is that they're doing. I think that it's like our
6 armed service, you know. We know how everybody joins
7 the military. They're in the military. They're in
8 the armed service.

9 But they're Army, they're Navy, they're
10 Marines, and that's where they take their pride.
11 That's where they take their identity. And I think
12 that that's the same kind of thing we need with all of
13 our corps and programs is not try to make them look so
14 much alike. We are different, and we're meeting our
15 community needs. That's what makes us really special.

16 And then the -- one of the questions I
17 have, too, is who does represent Senior Corps on the
18 national board? Is there any people on the national
19 board who really understand Senior Corps?

20 MS. McSWAIN: Alan Solomont, our chair.

21 SPEAKER: Who?

22 MS. GOREN: Alan Solomont, the chair.

23 SPEAKER: Okay. Is there anyone on the

24 national board who really understands Senior Corps?

25 And then --

1 (Laughter)

2 MS. McSWAIN: There you go.

3 SPEAKER: There you go.

4 MS. GOREN: If you have names, you should
5 put them forth to the white house.

6 SPEAKER: I also want to say that the --
7 what was it? Okay. Diversity. I know that we don't
8 want -- we do not want to exclude anyone in our
9 programs. And that's what -- those programs are few
10 programs who have -- who say to get this tax-free
11 stipend, you must meet an income guideline.

12 We are including those people where no one
13 else is by the nature of most of our programs. As the
14 gentleman said, they're geared towards the middle
15 class. So we do exclude those other people. We're
16 the only program out there saying please, low-income,
17 come and join, and we give you this tax-free stipend
18 in order to enable you to do the volunteer work. Then
19 go they out with all the other people.

20 He didn't hold it up. Okay.

21 (Laughter)

22 SPEAKER: I do recognize the time, and I

23 really appreciate that you've given up the rest of

24 your time to speak.

25 MS. GOREN: I haven't. You're staying

1 late.

2 (Laughter)

3 SPEAKER: I am here. If I could just have
4 one minute afterwards, I would yield my time to the
5 acting CEO.

6 MS. McSWAIN: Go ahead. Go ahead.

7 SPEAKER: Okay. The question is about the
8 FBI checks. Frank, you had had up there that that is
9 now a requirement of the stipended programs?

10 MR. TRINITY: Yes. However, there are lots
11 of exceptions in the Act. Lots of exceptions. And
12 the time frame for when that would take effect is
13 actually two years into the future.

14 SPEAKER: So I have plenty of time to buddy
15 in on that one.

16 MR. TRINITY: And the Attorney General, who
17 has been tasked with writing a report to Congress in
18 six months on this issue.

19 SPEAKER: Okay. I was just concerned,
20 because it did say it was required for stipended
21 programs.

22 MR. TRINITY: No change on the fingerprints

23 as of October 1st. More to come, though.

24 MS. McSWAIN: The question was when the

25 background checks, the FBI fingerprint, goes into

1 effect. The requirement is that it goes into effect
2 two years from the Act's implementation, so two years
3 from October 1st. So before -- and that there are
4 lots of exceptions. But before that, the Attorney
5 General must do a report on the feasibility -- is that
6 the word they use, Frank? -- in the next six months.
7 So that will be about access, about cost and things
8 that go along with the FBI check.

9 MS. GOREN: It's a work in progress.

10 MR. TRINITY: We will be doing outreach on
11 criminal checks on all programs. We know it's a
12 matter of concern, and we'll be doing more outreach.

13 SPEAKER: My concern is not that you want
14 to do it. We think that's great. It's just where's
15 the money.

16 MS. McSWAIN: Exactly. We appreciate that.

17 SPEAKER: I'm going to poke the bear just
18 one more time. Why does the Corporation think that
19 moving FGP, SDP, RSVP and VISTA to state commission
20 control and management would improve these programs?

21 MS. McSWAIN: I don't think we've ever

22 stated that's our position.

23 MS. GOREN: We have not taken any position

24 on any of our programs.

25 SPEAKER: Is that the intent?

1 MS. GOREN: Of that provision?

2 SPEAKER: Is that the intent is to move
3 them to the state commissions?

4 MS. GOREN: There's no current intent on
5 anything.

6 SPEAKER: Okay. I'm sorry. I just feel
7 like we're kind of going in a big circle on this one.

8 MS. GOREN: I think this is one of the
9 things that there's been a lot of swirl on. And the
10 reality is, as the new administration was coming in
11 and looking at this huge expansion of national service
12 over the next several years, they were thinking kind
13 of perspectively, how do we maintain the maximum
14 flexibility as we're implementing these new
15 initiatives, that we really don't know what these look
16 like yet, as we expand our current initiatives. Just
17 have the maximum flexibility to have the Corporation
18 and the states be able to do what they need to do to
19 get it done.

20 There was no specific thing in mind when
21 that was put in. When was the last time we were

22 reauthorized? 1993 we got some language, right? So

23 this was the opportunity to get any flexibility in

24 language for the future. There was not a specific

25 thing in mind around it.

1 SPEAKER: Okay.

2 MS. GOREN: And whatever happens, if
3 anything happens, it would be with outreach like this,
4 internal, external, to discuss what are the best ways
5 to implement whatever it is. But there's nothing on
6 the table right now.

7 SPEAKER: Pinkie swear?

8 MS. GOREN: Yeah. That is for sure.

9 MS. McSWAIN: Before I turn it over to
10 Nicki, I want to thank you all not only for coming
11 today, for your comments and being engaged in the
12 process, but just also for the work that you do on
13 behalf of your communities every day.

14 We don't often get the opportunity to stand
15 in front of you and actually give you our thanks. You
16 all give it to your volunteers, but I don't think you
17 get it enough. You do the bureaucratic,
18 not-so-exciting part of the volunteering movement.
19 And we want to thank you very much for what you do
20 every day.

21 MS. GOREN: Kristin, you did a fantastic

22 job moderating this. I really want to thank everyone
23 for coming here today. I want to thank all of you who
24 drove from a very, very long way away. We tried to
25 kind of space these across the country, and realizing

1 we couldn't go to every state, we tried to hit rural
2 and urban. And so I really appreciate you making the
3 effort to be here today from wherever you came from.

4 This is really just -- this is the first
5 day. This is the beginning of our process. And in a
6 moment, I'm going to ask for a little bit more input
7 from you before we close out on what you thought went
8 well and what we could improve on, since we're doing
9 several of these and we want to continue to improve.

10 But this is the first day. It's the first
11 stop. There's going to be many more opportunities for
12 you to give input through these other sessions. We're
13 going to have three conference calls that you can join
14 in June. They're June 2nd, 3rd and 5th from 12 to
15 1:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. The call-in
16 information is on our Website. Again, they're just
17 open-to-the-public conference calls to continue to get
18 input.

19 We've also launched a new web feedback
20 tool. It's nationalservice.gov/serveact. And it's
21 basically a bulletin board where you can continue to

22 post your comments and see what other people are

23 saying as well. So please continue to give us

24 feedback there.

25 We will also be posting transcripts, which

1 we are recording, of every one of these sessions on
2 our Website, so nice bedtime reading as we look
3 forward.

4 (Laughter)

5 Really, they're for you, but they're also
6 for us. We're really going to go back and look over
7 this input and figure out how to put it into our
8 implementation planning.

9 And before we get to the close, I do want
10 to thank our state office staff, Mike Lafferty,
11 Christina Snider and Patty Stengel, who really did a
12 phenomenal job pulling this together.

13 (Applause)

14 Thank you. I also want to thank Peachy
15 Myers from my office in Washington. She's at the back
16 there. She's actually from Missouri. She's our most
17 recent addition to our office and most recently came
18 from being the field director for the Obama campaign
19 in Missouri. So she knows how to actually get people
20 together here. She was instrumental in getting this
21 off the ground. So thank you.

22 And I do want to just take a moment.

23 Peachy's going to help us, I think, just very quickly

24 get your feedback on what you thought worked and what

25 you thought didn't work and what we could improve on

1 as we continue to do these sessions across the
2 country.

3 So Peachy, I'm going to turn it to you.

4 MS. MYERS: (Inaudible opening comments).

5 We just want to hear from you how -- what
6 did we do well in organizing and facilitating this
7 session, and how can we get better? Because we still
8 have five more of these, and we want to improve. Yes?

9 SPEAKER: I just want to say it's great we
10 had the two and a half hours to give our feedback. As
11 a listening session I really thought that we might
12 have a chance for one or two people to speak. On
13 the -- I guess it's not a negative side. It's a
14 triangle side. Don't be afraid of the north central
15 cluster. There's no listening sessions at all in that
16 ten-state region.

17 MS. GOREN: As Nicki said, this is part of
18 a process. We'll do this again when we actually have
19 rules, and at that time you'll see us go to different
20 places.

21 SPEAKER: The three minutes, holding the

22 comments to three minutes I know is very short, but

23 very effective, because that way more people get a

24 chance to say something.

25 MS. GOREN: And you actually can say a lot

1 in three minutes.

2 SPEAKER: I also want to know, would you
3 like a copy -- I didn't have a formal copy of what I
4 was going to say in my comments. Would you like that
5 faxed to you, like after we get back?

6 MS. GOREN: If you feel like there's more
7 in there that you didn't share, feel free to send it
8 to us. If you felt like you covered it, you don't
9 need to, but we're happy to take it.

10 SPEAKER: What's the method for e-mailing
11 you?

12 MS. McSWAIN: The docket manager is
13 aborgstrom, b-o-r-g-s-t-r-o-m, @cns.gov. It's in the
14 Federal Register notice if you got a copy of that.
15 It's also on our Website with one person who is
16 managing all that. She'll love to hear from you.

17 SPEAKER: I was kind of surprised there
18 wasn't any kind of local media coverage of a national-
19 level event happening in our area. And I don't know
20 if there could be planning for that in future
21 activities to get it into the news that, hey, the

22 federal government was here for input about our

23 program. I think it's good marketing.

24 SPEAKER: There was local coverage on the

25 public radio station KSMU.

1 SPEAKER: (inaudible) post the three

2 minutes each on the Website?

3 MS. GOREN: (Inaudible response)

4 SPEAKER: I would also add it would be a

5 great idea to send out a PowerPoint for everyone or

6 maybe some kind of summary to help prepare people for

7 the event before they come, and you wouldn't have to

8 spend quite so much time for that.

9 MS. GOREN: We'll put it on the Website.

10 Yes.

11 SPEAKER: I think this place lends itself

12 for this kind of conversation. Thank you for coming

13 to a public library rather than something stuffy, like

14 a state office building.

15 MS. GOREN: We already have them all

16 planned, and some of them are in government buildings,

17 so -- but thank you.

18 SPEAKER: I would like to speak to

19 encourage you guys to bring members into this process,

20 because I think it's afforded me -- and I've stayed

21 silent through this -- a lot of chance to view how all

22 of you view our service and how all of you view our

23 progress.

24 MS. GOREN: Thank you. Yes?

25 SPEAKER: Building on that, the Corporation

1 should be building an alumni network. I was with
2 VISTA in Puerto Rico for three and a half years. We
3 have a huge network. No university worth its salt
4 doesn't stay in touch with its alums.

5 MS. GOREN: Thank you.

6 SPEAKER: I like the -- I thought 20
7 minutes was about right for the legislation overview.
8 I thought it would be boring and I'd know it all, but
9 not at all. In fact --

10 MS. GOREN: You haven't heard from
11 Professor Trinity before.

12 (Laughter)

13 SPEAKER: It was very informative. I think
14 20 minutes seemed about the right length of time. I
15 think that would be the right length of time to do it
16 on your road show.

17 SPEAKER: On a plus, seriously, Kristin did
18 a great job on the moderation, and then the follow-up
19 questions were pertinent.

20 MS. GOREN: And she was so polite when she
21 was cutting people off. I was really impressed.

22 Anything else? Yes.

23 SPEAKER: The technology here was great.

24 MS. GOREN: Yes, it was.

25 SPEAKER: I couldn't believe how we could

1 hear people far away from the mike, and it was
2 catching everything.

3 MS. GOREN: I agree. I hope it's the same
4 in the rest of the places.

5 SPEAKER: Nothing will compare.

6 SPEAKER: Just a general point. Maybe some
7 of the highlights from here, include that in your
8 registration follow-up. Like I got an e-mail
9 basically confirming my registration. You may want to
10 include highlights from this as well as give them a
11 big heads-up, limit of three minutes.

12 MS. GOREN: Yeah. Yeah. Thank you. Yes?

13 SPEAKER: How come you couldn't get the
14 message out that it was black suit day?

15 MS. GOREN: This is called travel attire.

16 (Laughter)

17 MS. GOREN: Yes?

18 SPEAKER: I'm a firm believer in
19 relationship building. If there was some kind of a
20 way to promote, I guess, some kind of relationship,
21 you know. What I'm trying to say here is, I want to

22 know what you do, and I want to tell you what I do. I

23 guess it's -- how are you going to use our Internet

24 addresses?

25 MS. GOREN: Your Internet addresses for

1 this?

2 SPEAKER: We put them out here.

3 MS. GOREN: That's a good question.

4 SPEAKER: We don't have a plan. We thought
5 probably there would be a continued forum, but --

6 MS. GOREN: Yeah. When we did this in the
7 past, there was occasionally -- we went, we read the
8 transcripts, and we thought, oh, we actually have a
9 follow-up question for the person that made that
10 comment. And it was an easy way to connect.

11 SPEAKER: It may also be a comment that we
12 really don't need to collect that, because we do it at
13 reg on line, unless there are registrants that didn't
14 make it to reg on line.

15 SPEAKER: I'm okay with this. I'm not
16 complaining about it.

17 MS. GOREN: You want to try to build a
18 community out of it.

19 SPEAKER: Right.

20 MS. MYERS: Would it be helpful if, in the
21 upcoming sessions, there was an opportunity, since

22 people are coming from far and wide, to build in like
23 a networking kind of -- stay a half-hour later with
24 each other, or an hour. Like a meet-up so you have
25 the opportunity --

1 SPEAKER: Yeah. We really want you guys
2 over a beer.

3 MS. McSWAIN: Well, our plane's not until
4 tomorrow.

5 MS. GOREN: Any other -- yes?

6 SPEAKER: I think also I was really
7 impressed at the civil discourse that nothing went on.
8 Nothing was really outstretched or there was no, like,
9 bashings or any sort of process that could go on. It
10 was very constructive.

11 MS. GOREN: Thank you. Last comments?

12 SPEAKER: Hold up the red card.

13 MS. GOREN: He's not -- I do want to thank
14 Paul for coming. Each of our program directors --
15 obviously, all of our staff is very interested in
16 this. Each of our program directors is going to one
17 of these, and Paul came from VISTA today. Tomorrow
18 we're having -- we're going to South Carolina. So
19 thank you for coming and doing -- all right.

20 Well, thank you so much again for coming.
21 Please continue to give us your input. And we can't

22 make this work without you, because it's the beginning
23 of the process. And we look forward to continuing the
24 dialogue. Thanks.

25 (4:14 p.m.)

