

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 15, 2022

Michael Smith
Chief Executive Officer
AmeriCorps (The Corporation for National and Community Service)
250 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20525

Dear Mr. Smith:

Throughout the challenges of the past two years, AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers have played a critical role in providing essential public health, education, housing, food security, and other services to millions of Americans, as they have now done for nearly 30 years. We are grateful for this impressive work to meet the needs of the moment, and we write to encourage you to take further, innovative steps to support those who serve by creating an Office of Alumni Engagement within AmeriCorps.

For many participants, a term of service provides a crucial pathway into the workforce or higher education. AmeriCorps today partners with more than 600 organizations through its Employers of National Service initiative to facilitate recruitment opportunities and extend special hiring consideration to more than one million AmeriCorps alumni and 241,000 returned Peace Corps volunteers. More than 300 colleges and universities offer application fee waivers, scholarships, and other benefits to alumni through the Schools of National Service program. In addition to developing similar private-sector and academic partnerships, many corps programs also enable members to discern their professional paths in a given field. Over the past 10 years, for example, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has hired 23 percent of FEMA Corps alumni, while City Year reports that 47 percent of its alumni continue to work in and around schools following their terms of service.

As AmeriCorps goes through a period of unprecedented growth and adapts to meet ongoing needs, the agency should devote special attention to supporting and engaging alumni as they conclude their service. This would help AmeriCorps continue to recruit high-quality volunteers, reinforce the terms of service as an integral step in one's career development, and strengthen AmeriCorps' contribution to our nation's unique culture of service. It would also provide opportunities to hear directly from participants about ways the corps experience can be improved and how it has impacted their life trajectories.

We encourage you to seize this opportunity by creating a dedicated Office of Alumni Engagement within AmeriCorps. This office should:

1. Facilitate alumni's identification and interaction with AmeriCorps and the broader service community beyond their terms of service in order to promote a broader culture of service and strengthen member recruitment and support;

2. Expand, strengthen, and promote the Schools of National Service and Employers of National Service initiatives, including in partnership with existing grantees and others in the field, in order to reinforce pathways between national service, education, and workforce opportunities;
3. Solicit feedback from alumni about opportunities to improve the AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors experience, including how to ensure corps programs reflect the diversity of the country and the communities with which they work, promote career growth, and facilitate high-impact services;
4. Collaborate with other appropriate agencies, including the Peace Corps, Office of Personnel Management, and the Department of Defense, to reinforce the relationship between national, public, and military service, as recognized by the creation of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017; and
5. Work with grantees, state service commissions, agency partners, the Office of Research and Evaluation, and other outside organizations—including through the sharing of directory and other data where appropriate—to support research on the long-term impacts of service on members' life trajectories and to continue engaging AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors alumni beyond their term of service.

These activities would develop an even stronger ecosystem of support for participants and would encourage alumni to sustain their commitment to service over time. We believe your existing authorities under the National and Community Service Act of 1990 and the Domestic and Volunteer Service Act of 1973 empower you to begin this work today, without further congressional action.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this priority and to hear from you how we might be helpful. As always, we are grateful for your attention to this outreach and for your commitment to getting things done for America.

Sincerely,



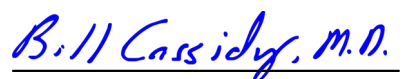
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Roger Wicker
United States Senator



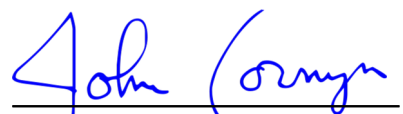
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator