

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1444

To establish the Congressional Commission on Civic Service to study methods of improving and promoting volunteerism and national service, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 11, 2009

Mr. McDERMOTT (for himself, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To establish the Congressional Commission on Civic Service to study methods of improving and promoting volunteerism and national service, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Congressional Commis-
5 sion on Civic Service Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The social fabric of the United States is
9 stronger if individuals in the United States are com-

1 mitted to protecting and serving our Nation by uti-
2 lizing national service and volunteerism to overcome
3 our civic challenges.

4 (2) A more engaged civic society will strengthen
5 the Nation by bringing together people from diverse
6 backgrounds and experiences to work on solutions to
7 some of our Nation’s major challenges.

8 (3) Despite declines in civic health in the past
9 30 years, national service and volunteerism among
10 the Nation’s youth are increasing, and existing na-
11 tional service and volunteer programs greatly en-
12 hance opportunities for youth to engage in civic ac-
13 tivity.

14 (4) In addition to the benefits received by non-
15 profit organizations and society as a whole, volun-
16 teering and national service provide a variety of per-
17 sonal benefits and satisfaction and can lead to new
18 paths of civic engagement, responsibility, and up-
19 ward mobility.

20 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT.**

21 There is established in the legislative branch a com-
22 mission to be known as the “Congressional Commission
23 on Civic Service” (in this Act referred to as the “Commis-
24 sion”).

1 **SEC. 4. DUTIES.**

2 (a) **GENERAL PURPOSE.**—The purpose of the Com-
3 mission is to gather and analyze information in order to
4 make recommendations to Congress to—

5 (1) improve the ability of individuals in the
6 United States to serve others and, by doing so, to
7 enhance our Nation and the global community;

8 (2) train leaders in public service organizations
9 to better utilize individuals committed to national
10 service and volunteerism as they manage human and
11 fiscal resources;

12 (3) identify and offer solutions to the barriers
13 that make it difficult for some individuals in the
14 United States to volunteer or perform national serv-
15 ice; and

16 (4) build on the foundation of service and vol-
17 unteer opportunities that are currently available.

18 (b) **SPECIFIC TOPICS.**—In carrying out its general
19 purpose under subsection (a), the Commission shall ad-
20 dress and analyze the following specific topics:

21 (1) The level of understanding about the cur-
22 rent Federal, State, and local volunteer programs
23 and opportunities for service among individuals in
24 the United States.

1 (2) The issues that deter volunteerism and na-
2 tional service, particularly among young people, and
3 how the identified issues can be overcome.

4 (3) Whether there is an appropriate role for
5 Federal, State, and local governments in overcoming
6 the issues that deter volunteerism and national serv-
7 ice and, if appropriate, how to expand the relation-
8 ships and partnerships between different levels of
9 government in promoting volunteerism and national
10 service.

11 (4) Whether existing databases are effective in
12 matching community needs to would-be volunteers
13 and service providers.

14 (5) The effect on the Nation, on those who
15 serve, and on the families of those who serve, if all
16 individuals in the United States were expected to
17 perform national service or were required to perform
18 a certain amount of national service.

19 (6) Whether a workable, fair, and reasonable
20 mandatory service requirement for all able young
21 people could be developed, and how such a require-
22 ment could be implemented in a manner that would
23 strengthen the social fabric of the Nation and over-
24 come civic challenges by bringing together people

1 from diverse economic, ethnic, and educational back-
2 grounds.

3 (7) The need for a public service academy, a 4-
4 year institution that offers a federally funded under-
5 graduate education with a focus on training future
6 public sector leaders.

7 (8) The means to develop awareness of national
8 service and volunteer opportunities at a young age
9 by creating, expanding, and promoting service op-
10 tions for primary and secondary school students and
11 by raising awareness of existing incentives.

12 (9) The effectiveness of establishing a training
13 program on college campuses to recruit and educate
14 college students for national service.

15 (10) The effect on United States diplomacy and
16 foreign policy interests of expanding service opportu-
17 nities abroad, such as the Peace Corps, and the de-
18 gree of need and capacity abroad for an expansion.

19 (11) The constraints that service providers,
20 nonprofit organizations, and State and local agencies
21 face in utilizing federally funded volunteer programs,
22 and how these constraints can be overcome.

23 (12) Whether current Federal volunteer pro-
24 grams are suited to address the special skills and
25 needs of senior volunteers, and if not, how these pro-

1 grams can be improved such that the Federal gov-
2 ernment can effectively promote service among the
3 “baby boomer” generation.

4 (c) **METHODOLOGY.**—

5 (1) **PUBLIC HEARINGS.**—The Commission shall
6 conduct public hearings in various locations around
7 the United States.

8 (2) **REGULAR AND FREQUENT CONSULTA-**
9 **TION.**—The Commission shall regularly and fre-
10 quently consult with an advisory panel of members
11 of Congress appointed for such purpose by the
12 Speaker of the House of Representatives and the
13 majority leader of the Senate.

14 **SEC. 5. MEMBERSHIP.**

15 (a) **NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.**—

16 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Commission shall be
17 composed of 8 members appointed as follows:

18 (A) 2 members appointed by the Speaker
19 of the House of Representatives.

20 (B) 2 members appointed by the minority
21 leader of the House of Representatives.

22 (C) 2 members appointed by the majority
23 leader of the Senate.

24 (D) 2 members appointed by the minority
25 leader of the Senate.

1 (2) QUALIFICATIONS.—The members of the
2 Commission shall consist of individuals who are of
3 recognized standing and distinction in the areas of
4 international public service, national public service,
5 service-learning, local service, business, or academia.

6 (3) DEADLINE FOR APPOINTMENT.—The mem-
7 bers of the Commission shall be appointed not later
8 than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this
9 Act.

10 (4) CHAIRPERSON.—The Chairperson of the
11 Commission shall be designated by the Speaker of
12 the House of Representatives at the time of the ap-
13 pointment.

14 (b) TERMS.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The members of the Com-
16 mission shall serve for the life of the Commission.

17 (2) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Commission
18 shall not affect the power of the remaining members
19 to execute the duties of the Commission but any
20 such vacancy shall be filled in the same manner in
21 which the original appointment was made.

22 (c) COMPENSATION.—

23 (1) RATES OF PAY; TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each
24 member shall serve without pay, except that each
25 member shall receive travel expenses, including per

1 diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with appli-
2 cable provisions under subchapter I of chapter 57 of
3 title 5, United States Code.

4 (2) PROHIBITION OF COMPENSATION OF FED-
5 ERAL EMPLOYEES.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1),
6 any member of the Commission who is a full-time of-
7 ficer or employee of the United States may not re-
8 ceive additional pay, allowances, or benefits because
9 of service on the Commission.

10 (d) MEETING REQUIREMENTS.—

11 (1) FREQUENCY.—

12 (A) QUARTERLY MEETINGS.—The Com-
13 mission shall meet at least quarterly.

14 (B) ADDITIONAL MEETINGS.—In addition
15 to quarterly meetings, the Commission shall
16 meet at the call of the Chairperson or a major-
17 ity of its members.

18 (2) QUORUM.—5 members of the Commission
19 shall constitute a quorum but a lesser number may
20 hold hearings.

21 (3) MEETING BY TELEPHONE OR OTHER AP-
22 PROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY.—Members of the Com-
23 mission are permitted to meet using telephones or
24 other suitable telecommunications technologies pro-

1 vided that all members of the Commission can fully
2 communicate with all other members simultaneously.

3 **SEC. 6. DIRECTOR AND STAFF OF COMMISSION; EXPERTS**
4 **AND CONSULTANTS.**

5 (a) DIRECTOR.—

6 (1) APPOINTMENT.—The Commission shall
7 have a Director who shall be appointed by the Chair-
8 person with the approval of the Commission.

9 (2) CREDENTIALS.—The Director shall have
10 credentials related to international public service,
11 national public service, service-learning, or local
12 service.

13 (3) SALARY.—The Director shall be paid at a
14 rate determined by the Chairperson with the ap-
15 proval of the Commission, except that the rate may
16 not exceed the rate of basic pay for GS–15 of the
17 General Schedule.

18 (b) STAFF.—With the approval of the Chairperson,
19 the Director may appoint and fix the pay of additional
20 qualified personnel as the Director considers appropriate.

21 (c) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—With the ap-
22 proval of the Commission, the Director may procure tem-
23 porary and intermittent services under section 3109(b) of
24 title 5, United States Code, but at rates for individuals

1 not to exceed the daily equivalent of the maximum annual
2 rate of basic pay for GS-15 of the General Schedule.

3 (d) STAFF OF FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Upon request
4 of the Commission, Chairperson, or Director, the head of
5 any Federal department or agency may detail, on a reim-
6 bursable basis, any of the personnel of that department
7 or agency to the Commission to assist it in carrying out
8 its duties under this Act.

9 **SEC. 7. POWERS OF COMMISSION.**

10 (a) HEARINGS AND SESSIONS.—The Commission
11 may, for the purpose of carrying out this Act, hold public
12 hearings, sit and act at times and places, take testimony,
13 and receive evidence as the Commission considers appro-
14 priate.

15 (b) POWERS OF MEMBERS AND AGENTS.—Any mem-
16 ber or agent of the Commission may, if authorized by the
17 Commission, take any action which the Commission is au-
18 thorized to take by this section.

19 (c) OBTAINING OFFICIAL DATA.—Upon request of
20 the Chairperson, the head of any department or agency
21 shall furnish information to the Commission that the Com-
22 mission deems necessary to enable it to carry out this Act.

23 (d) PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT.—The
24 Architect of the Capitol, in consultation with the appro-
25 priate entities in the legislative branch, shall locate and

1 provide suitable facilities and equipment for the operation
2 of the Commission on a nonreimbursable basis.

3 (e) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.—Upon
4 the request of the Commission, the Architect of the Cap-
5 itol and the Administrator of General Services shall pro-
6 vide to the Commission on a nonreimbursable basis such
7 administrative support services as the Commission may re-
8 quest in order for the Commission to carry out its respon-
9 sibilities under this Act.

10 **SEC. 8. REPORTS.**

11 (a) INTERIM REPORT.—The Commission shall sub-
12 mit an interim report on its activities to Congress not later
13 than 20 months after the date of the enactment of this
14 Act.

15 (b) FINAL REPORT.—

16 (1) DEADLINE.—The Commission shall submit
17 a final report on its activities to Congress not later
18 than 120 days after the submission of the interim
19 report under subsection (a).

20 (2) CONTENTS.—The final report shall contain
21 a detailed statement of the findings and conclusions
22 of the Commission, together with its recommenda-
23 tions for proposed legislation.

1 **SEC. 9. TERMINATION.**

2 The Commission shall terminate not later than 30
3 days after submitting its final report under section
4 8(b)(1).

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