

July 21, 2003

The Honorable Bill Frist
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thomas A. Daschle
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Frist, Minority Leader Daschle, Speaker Hastert,
and Minority Leader Pelosi,

As strong supporters of America's national service programs, we are writing to urge you to help solve the crisis confronting AmeriCorps. This crisis is felt most directly by states and localities facing the imminent closure of hundreds of AmeriCorps programs. We hope you will do everything possible to ensure that these programs are not closed or drastically cut, that needed services continue to be provided by AmeriCorps members, and that we can continue to tap the idealism and patriotism of so many of our citizens who want to serve.

President Bush's leadership on national service has helped to boost our nation's civic spirit and we appreciate that, in his 2004 budget request, he proposed that the number of AmeriCorps volunteers increase from 50,000 to 75,000. Since the President's 2002 State of the Union Address, when he called upon Americans to dedicate two years – or 4,000 hours – of their lives to serving their country, tens of thousands of Americans have responded by seeking new opportunities to serve their communities and their nation. Through AmeriCorps, among many other initiatives, these citizens have worked to meet critical needs in education, public safety, health, and homeland security.

Unfortunately, on June 16th the Corporation for National and Community Service announced dramatic and unprecedented cuts of approximately 50 to 90 percent to our states' AmeriCorps programs and corps member slots. We are very pleased that, following this announcement and under the leadership of Senators Bond and Mikulski, Congress acted quickly to pass the Strengthen AmeriCorps Act, which will alleviate some of this devastation and correct the Corporation's management of the National Service Trust. This legislation is an important first step towards assuring fiscal accountability, increasing the enrollment of AmeriCorps members, and ensuring the program's long-term health.

Gov. Frank Murkowski
Alaska
Gov. Janet Napolitano
Arizona
Gov. Mike Huckabee
Arkansas
Gov. Gray Davis
California
Gov. John Rowland
Connecticut
Gov. Ruth Ann Minner
Delaware
Gov. Jeb Bush
Florida
Gov. Sonny Perdue
Georgia
Gov. Dirk Kempthorne
Idaho
Gov. Rod Blagojevich
Illinois
Gov. Frank O'Bannon
Indiana
Gov. Thomas Vilsack
Iowa
Gov. Kathleen Sebelius
Kansas
Gov. Paul Patton
Kentucky
Gov. Mike Foster
Louisiana
Gov. John Baldacci
Maine
Gov. Robert Ehrlich
Maryland
Gov. Mitt Romney
Massachusetts
Gov. Jennifer Granholm
Michigan
Gov. Tim Pawlenty
Minnesota
Gov. Ronnie Musgrove
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Gov. Bob Holden
Missouri
Gov. Judy Martz
Montana
Gov. Mike Johanns
Nebraska
Gov. Kenny Guinn
Nevada
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New Jersey
Gov. Bill Richardson
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Gov. Don Carcieri
Rhode Island
Gov. Phil Bedesen
Tennessee
Gov. Michael Leavitt
Utah
Gov. James Douglas
Vermont
Gov. Mark Warner
Virginia
Gov. Gary Locke
Washington
Gov. Bob Wise
West Virginia
Gov. Jim Doyle
Wisconsin
Gov. Dave Freudenthal
Wyoming


Majority Leader Frist, Minority Leader Daschle,
Speaker Hastert, Minority Leader Pelosi
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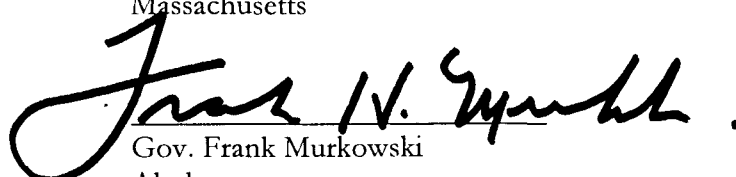
We recognize that prior "fixes" to the Trust have helped put full AmeriCorps staffing for this year in jeopardy. It is truly a shame that mismanagement might prevent willing individuals from serving their communities through AmeriCorps. To avoid such a situation, we hope that you will consider an appropriation of up to \$200M for AmeriCorps as part of the FY03 supplemental spending bill recently sent to Congress by the President. Without an emergency appropriation, the dramatic decrease in AmeriCorps positions now being proposed could seriously affect communities and individuals who rely on AmeriCorps members for help. It is also likely to damage, if not destroy, the infrastructure of strong programs, which do not have the resources to sustain a significant budget cut, even if only for one year. Organizations that have been built over a decade cannot be eliminated this year and rebuilt the next.

Finally, we look forward to working with you to see the goal of 75,000 AmeriCorps volunteers realized in the near future and salute your overall commitment to bringing Americans together around the ethic of service. Over the past ten years, AmeriCorps has become an essential resource for states and their communities to meet pressing needs, train future leaders through service, and provide access to life-changing educational awards for thousands of our citizens. AmeriCorps also greatly leverages private sector dollars for civic initiatives. With your leadership, we can work to assure that it remains a vital force for good across the country for years to come.


Sincerely,


Gov. Mitt Romney
Massachusetts

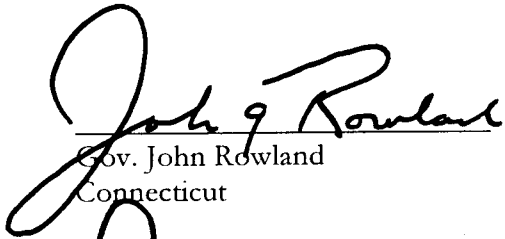

Gov. Edward Rendell
Pennsylvania


Gov. Frank Murkowski
Alaska

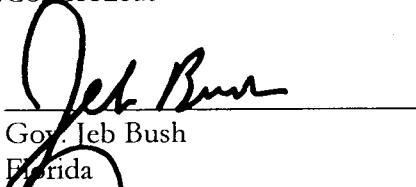

Gov. Janet Napolitano
Arizona

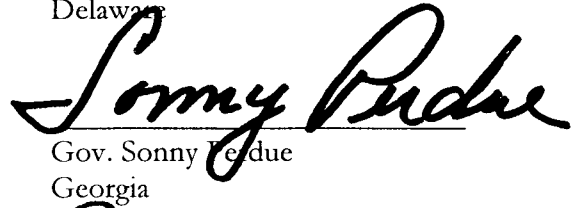

Gov. Mike Huckabee
Arkansas

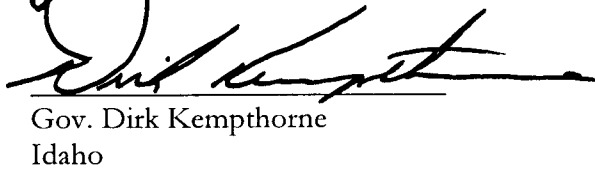

Gov. Gray Davis
California


Gov. John Rowland
Connecticut

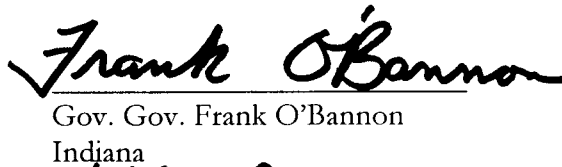

Gov. Ruth Ann Minner
Delaware

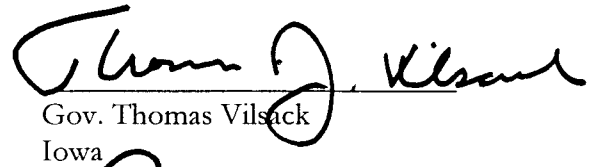

Gov. Jeb Bush
Florida

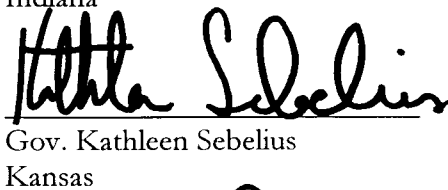

Gov. Sonny Perdue
Georgia

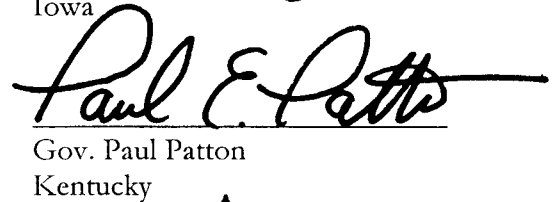

Gov. Dirk Kempthorne
Idaho

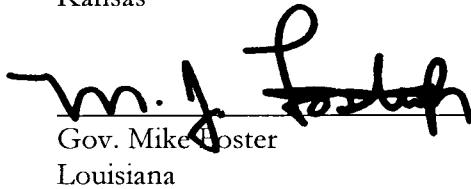

Gov. Rod Blagojevich
Illinois


Gov. Gov. Frank O'Bannon
Indiana

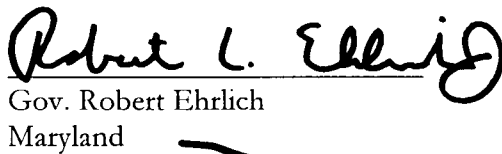

Gov. Thomas Vilsack
Iowa

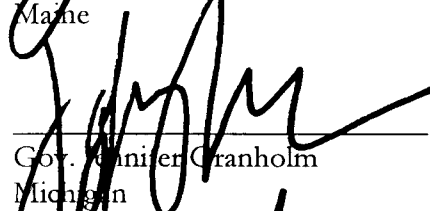

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius
Kansas

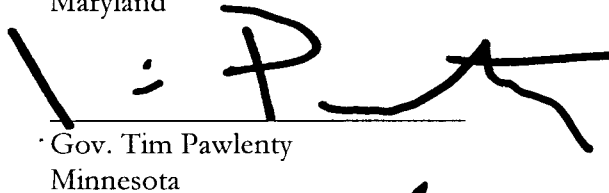

Gov. Paul Patton
Kentucky

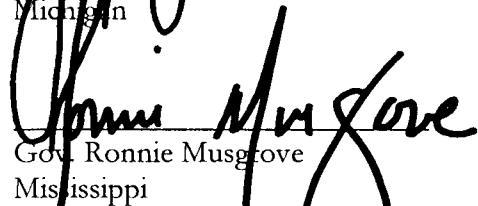

Gov. Mike Foster
Louisiana

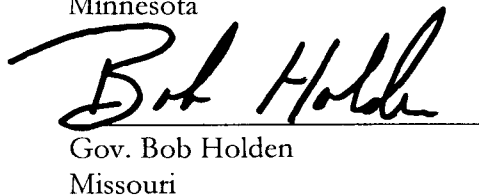

Gov. John Baldacci
Maine

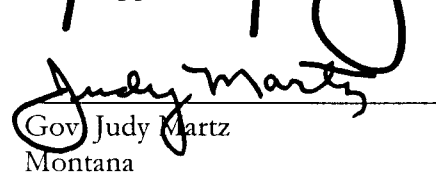

Gov. Robert Ehrlich
Maryland

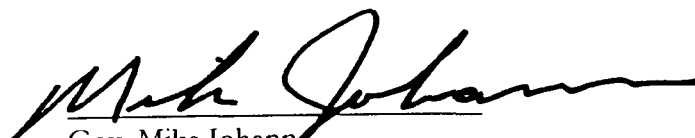

Gov. Jennifer Granholm
Michigan

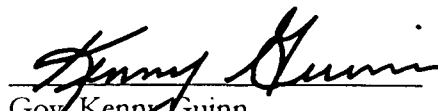

Gov. Tim Pawlenty
Minnesota

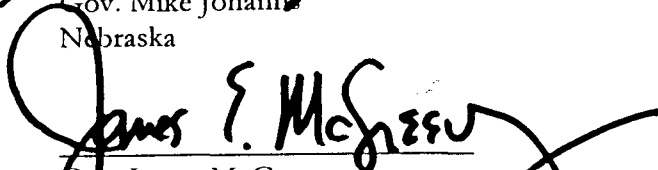

Gov. Ronnie Musgrove
Mississippi


Gov. Bob Holden
Missouri

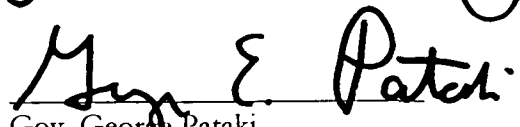

Gov. Judy Martz
Montana

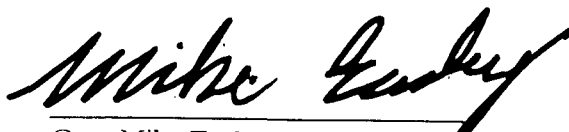

Gov. Mike Johann
Nebraska

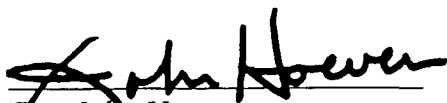

Gov. Kenny Guinn
Nevada

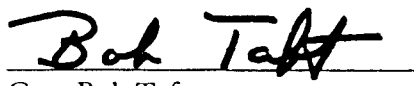

Gov. James McGreevey
New Jersey

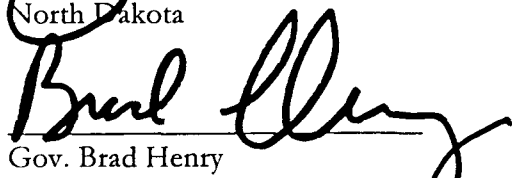

Gov. Bill Richardson
New Mexico


Gov. George Pataki
New York

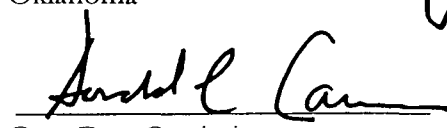

Gov. Mike Easley
North Carolina

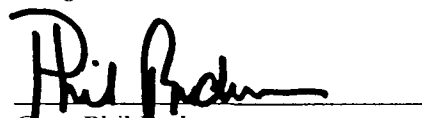

Gov. John Hoeven
North Dakota

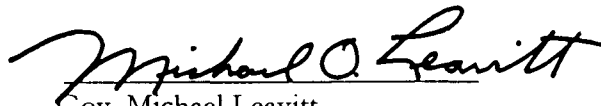

Gov. Bob Taft
Ohio

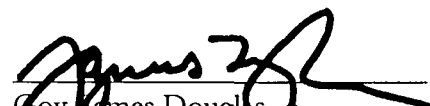

Gov. Brad Henry
Oklahoma

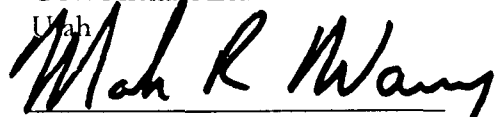

Gov. Ted Kulongoski
Oregon

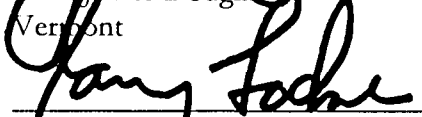

Gov. Don Carcieri
Rhode Island



Gov. Phil Beden
Tennessee

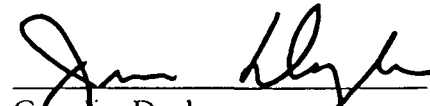

Gov. Michael Leavitt
Utah



Gov. James Douglas
Vermont


Gov. Mark Warner
Virginia


Gov. Gary Locke
Washington


Gov. Bob Wise
West Virginia


Gov. Jim Doyle
Wisconsin


Gov. Dave Freudenthal
Wyoming