

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NATIONAL SERVICE GROUPS CONVERGE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. TO SAVE AMERICORPS

News Conference Illustrates Devastating Effects of Funding Cuts Through Personal Testimony From Community Partners, Business Leaders and Young People Representing the 39,000 Corps Members Who Will Not Be Able to Serve

200 Business Leaders Sign Full-page Ad in Today's New York Times

1,000 Community Partners Sign Statement

Web site, www.saveamericorps.org, Launches

All Urging President Bush and Congress to Secure Emergency Funding for AmeriCorps to Prevent Hundreds of Programs from Closing

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 26 – Representatives from some of the hundreds of AmeriCorps programs that will be eliminated as the result of AmeriCorps funding cuts, the community partners who depend on AmeriCorps members to meet community needs, and the young people who are being told there are not enough positions for them to serve their country, united in Washington, D.C. this morning to illustrate what the funding cuts will mean for the National Service movement in America.

The event, moderated by David Gergen, Professor of Public Service and Director of the Center for Public Leadership, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, coincided with the publication of a full-page ad in the New York Times, signed by 200 business leaders, asking the President and Members of Congress to save AmeriCorps with emergency funding.

At the news conference, a statement was released - signed by more than 1,000 community organizations that deploy or depend on AmeriCorps members to provide vital community services - urging presidential and congressional action to prevent hundreds of AmeriCorps programs from closing.

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The launch of a new web site, www.saveamericorps.org, was announced to provide links to the latest information about the funding crisis and provide tools and instructions for concerned citizens who want to act to restore funding and to show their support for AmeriCorps.

Speakers included corporate CEOs who are champions of national service. Joe Banner, President and COO of the Philadelphia Eagles, and Vanu Bose, CEO of Vanu, Inc., spoke about the outstanding success of AmeriCorps as a public/private sector partnership and urged the leadership in Washington to preserve the programs they support and hundreds like them.

To illustrate the importance of national service to the American business community, Banner unveiled a full-page ad, signed by over 200 private sector leaders including the CEOs of Gap, Inc., Starbucks, Timberland and Fleet Bank, and published in national newspapers this week and next. The ad calls on the President and Congress to approve emergency funding of \$200 million to prevent hundreds of AmeriCorps programs built as public/private partnerships from closing.

Also speaking during the event was an AmeriCorps alumna - representative of the 300,000 who have served - who spoke about her life-changing experiences serving. She was followed by two patriotic young people who applied for AmeriCorps positions for next year, were accepted, and have recently learned that their positions will not likely be among the 28,000 available.

AmeriCorps is about partnerships: between private and public sectors, and between programs and communities. Representing the thousands of organizations that will no longer benefit from AmeriCorps services, Sister Mary Johnice Rzakiewicz, a Felician nun with a degree in elementary education, discussed why she was among the 1,000 community partners to sign the statement urging the President and Congress to save AmeriCorps. Sister Johnice relies on AmeriCorps members in her work at the Response to Love Center in Buffalo, New York, which provides a home and services for the needy, poor, and marginalized members of the community.

Kyle Caldwell, speaking on behalf of the Association of State Service Commissions, which he Chairs, read a statement in support of the more than 400 programs losing partial or total funding and the young people who want to serve but will not have the opportunity.

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