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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF CHICAGO

July 1, 2003

RICHARD M. DALEY
MAYOR

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
United States House of Representatives
2269 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-1314

Dear Speaker Hastert:

I am writing to urge your support to ensure the on-going vitality of the AmeriCorps program. As a result of recent Federal funding shortfalls and administrative problems, the AmeriCorps program is being required to make massive cutbacks which threaten its existence at the national level. I am asking for your help to reverse this situation and to preserve this vital community service program.

The number of AmeriCorps members nationally is being cut by 80 percent, from 67,000 in FY 02 to 13,000 in FY 03. In Illinois, the 645 AmeriCorps members in FY 03 are being cut 87 percent to 84 members next year. In Chicago, the City Year Chicago program, which is helping to raise test scores in South Side and West Side schools through innovative tutoring programs, lost 100 percent of its AmeriCorps funding. This comes at a time when volunteers are clamoring for the valuable community service that is the basis of the AmeriCorps program. I ask that we all work together to ensure that these volunteers are not deprived of the experience that they are seeking.

Members from both sides of the aisle are working to overcome the administrative difficulties at the Corporation for National and Community Service and to develop a strategy to provide \$200 million in supplemental FY 03 funding to reverse the drastic cuts to the AmeriCorps program. I urge you to support these efforts so we can save these valuable national service initiatives.

Sincerely,

Mayor