National Service Hearing: Creating More National Service Opportunities

Transcript | March 28, 2019

This transcript was prepared by official military court reporters based on an audio recording of the hearing.

Commission:

- The Honorable Dr. Joseph Heck, Chairman
- The Honorable Mark Gearan, Vice Chair for National and Public Service
- The Honorable Debra Wada, Vice Chair for Military Service
- The Honorable Dr. Janine Davidson, Commissioner
- The Honorable Avril Haines, Commissioner
- Ms. Jeanette James, Commissioner
- Mr. Alan Khazei, Commissioner
- Mr. Tom Kilgannon, Commissioner
- Ms. Shawn Skelly, Commissioner

Panelists:

- Kaira Esgate, CEO, America's Service Commissions
- Brian Larkin, Program Officer of Flint, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
- Natalye Paquin, Esq., President and CEO, Points of Light
- Shirley Sagawa, CEO and Founder, Service Year Alliance
- Jaime Ernesto Uzeta, CEO, Public Allies

OPENING STATEMENTS

Dr. Joseph Heck

Welcome to the fourth hearing of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service, and thank you for being here today or for tuning in via our Facebook live video.

Today the commission meets to ponder an important question: How can we as a country create more national service opportunities. Our distinguished panel will discuss the options to support an expansion of national service in America, including possible options for new sources of funding, new program models, systems, infrastructure, and partnerships.

While this morning's hearing explored how to improve the current system, this hearing is focused on the expansion of national service opportunities. National service is defined in the commission's mandate as civilian participation in any nongovernmental capacity, including private, for profit, nonprofit, and faith based organizations, that pursues and enhances the common good and meets the needs of communities, the states, or the nation, in sectors related to security, healthcare for the elderly, and other areas considered appropriate by the commission. National service includes programs such as Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and YouthBuild. The commission is also looking to include faith based, nonprofit, and private sector organizations to create additional service opportunities.

Although between 80,000 and 85,000 individuals serve the nation through full time AmeriCorps or Peace Corps opportunities, and over 200,000 seniors participate in Senior Corps programs, the potential for service in a country of more than 329 million people remained largely untapped, and we know more Americans want to serve.

In 2015, nearly a third of Americans, or about 63 million, said they volunteered in their community through an organization. A 2013 survey conducted by the Aspen Institute found that 53% of voters aged 18 to 39 said they would be somewhat or very interested in participating in a full-time national service program. A separate survey by the Aspen Institute found 55% of

millennials surveyed reported they were definitely or very likely to participate in national service.

So how can we ensure that there are more opportunities so that Americans that are inspired to serve can actually do so? The commission is considering policy alternatives that expand existing sources or establish new and nontraditional sources of funding to provide more national service opportunities. The commission is also considering the creation of new models and/or systems that can be expanded to create more service opportunities.

I hope that our panelists will address these important issues as directly as possible in their oral statements and in their responses to commissioner questions. So, let me welcome our panelists.

We have Kaira Esgate, CEO of America's Service Commissions; Brian Larkin, Program Officer of Flint for the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation; Natalye Paquin, Esquire, President and CEO of Points of Light; Shirley Sagawa, CEO and Founder of Service Year Alliance; and Jaime Ernesto Uzeta, CEO of Public Allies. Thank you all for joining us today.

I'd now like to yield to the Vice Chair for National and Public Service, Mr. Mark Gearan, for an opening statement.

Mr. Mark Gearan

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I will be brief, just to welcome all of you here and to thank you very much for your for our opportunity to engage with you on some of these important issues. We have before us great expertise from people who have dedicated their lives to these important issues, so we thank you most sincerely for that.

It's important to be here at The Bush School. Government and public service certainly at Texas A&M will happen here this weekend with this big event happening. It really illustrates

how this university is engaging America's young people in important efforts to give back to the community.

And certainly, here at The Bush School, particularly as a former board member of the Points of Light Foundation, certainly honoring President Bush and Mrs. Bush's legacy is one that we warmly embrace, and we welcome you here and look forward to the testimony.

So, this is a commission of purpose and interest and we are very grateful for the thought leadership that's before us and we look forward to the conversation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Thank you, Mark.

So, before we begin, let me explain how we will conduct today's hearings. The commissioners have all received your written testimony and it will be entered into the official record. We ask that you summarize it, to the extent possible, in no more than five minutes, if you'll speak to us from the heart about the issue you want us to know about the most.

Before you, you will see our timing system. When the light turns yellow, you have approximately one-minute remaining; and when it turns red, your time is expired. After all testimony is completed, we will move into questioning from the commissioners. Each commissioner will be given five minutes to ask a question and receive a response. The commissioners did very well in the last hearing, and I hope we can keep up the same pattern in this hearing.

Depending on time, we will proceed with one and possibly two rounds of questions. Upon completion of commissioner questions, we will provide an opportunity for members of the public who are in attendance to offer comments either on the specific topic of today's hearing or any comments on the commission's mandate at large. These comments will be limited to two

minutes. The light will turn yellow when you have 30 seconds remaining and turn red when time is expired.

So now that we've got all of the logistics out of the way, we can actually get to the important stuff. So, let's begin with our panelist testimony, and I'll begin with Ms. Esgate.

Ms. Kaira Esgate

Great. Thank you, Chairman Heck, and distinguished members of the commission. Thank you today for the opportunity to provide input on recommendations the Commission on Military, National, and Public Service can make to create more national service positions.

As a national association of state service commissions, America's Service Commissions envisions a future in which all states embrace service as a strategy to build community and solving local challenges. The nation's 52 state service commissions are governor appointed public agencies or nonprofit organizations that currently administer more than 80% of AmeriCorps, state, and national grant funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 explicitly created a state federal government partnership responsible for connecting national service programming with communities tackling local needs. This partnership was again reaffirmed with the Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009. The involvement of governors and their state service commissions are key to the success of national service in the United States. State service commissions play a critical role in developing and supporting programs that address community needs. National service is indeed national and not just located in urban areas in large part because of the role state service commissions play in making it accessible to small, rural, or underserved communities.

This historically decentralized structure of AmeriCorps state and national is in many ways what has led to its success over the years. Governors and state legislatures can play a significant role in establishing a culture of service in their respective states, including prioritizing

civic education and service opportunities for K 12 students, allocating state funding to expand service opportunities and to address priorities, as well as providing further incentives to serve.

In addition, governors can challenge their administrations to identify ways to incorporate service strategies in meeting the mission of their respective agencies. Any recommendations to improve and expand national service should emphasize the important role of states in implementation. Federal resources should be increased, federal policies that create barriers should be removed, and recommendations should improve state and local control of the federal resource.

For the past 25 years, state governments, through state service commissions, have played a critical role in developing and expanding service opportunities. From expanding Senior Corps RSVP programming in Iowa to creating the Statewide Reading Corps in Minnesota, state legislatures are continuing to invest financially in national service as a solution to meet pressing state needs. In Massachusetts, the state funded Commonwealth Corps provides additional service opportunities beyond those provided by AmeriCorps in the state.

In addition to the many examples of the past, we've seen new legislation on the horizon, including proposals in California to expand AmeriCorps to 10,000 members, as well as increase the value of the education award in the state; a proposal in New Hampshire to increase funding for AmeriCorps programs serving low income students; and a bill in Arizona that would provide a matching scholarship for AmeriCorps members. Legislation is currently moving through the Nebraska state legislature to exempt the education award from state taxation, as is already the case in Iowa and Minnesota. Further, longstanding programs such as the Washington Vet Corps are sponsored by state agencies in this case, the Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs to help those agencies meet their state mandates.

In order to create more national service opportunities, we must recognize the need for funding to strengthen the infrastructure to support those additional opportunities. Although incredibly impactful, national services programs are not easy to operate, and adequate funding is

necessary to ensure systems and supports are in place to ensure high quality service opportunities.

In our written testimony, we provided detailed recommendations for the commission to consider to create more national service positions. In my remaining time, I will review some of those highlights.

One, support continued and increased funding for AmeriCorps, state and national, along with appropriate increases in funding for state service commissions to administer these dollars at the state level. Program dollars alone will not result in increased service opportunities. Resources are needed for training, program development, monitoring and staff capacity to develop and provide oversight of the programs in each state.

Two, support funding and implementation of the Serve America Fellows as authorized by the Serve America Act of 2009. While already authorized, this initiative requires funding to launch in order to provide national service positions allocated to states through state service commissions to address emerging needs.

Three, provide annual increases to the cost per member service year, or MSY, for AmeriCorps programs to allow these programs to develop the infrastructure necessary to scale future expansions and to provide an annual cost of living increase for AmeriCorps members.

And, four, incentivize state investment by prioritizing access to national service positions for governors and state legislators that allocate state resources for new service positions.

In conclusion, as the commission moves forward in its work, we urge you to strongly consider the role state government currently plays and can continue to play in managing federal resources to create effective and efficient opportunities for Americans to serve. Thank you for your work on this commission and the opportunity to provide input today.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Great. Well done. Thank you.

Mr. Larkin, you're recognized for five minutes.

Mr. Brian Larkin

Thank you, Chairman Heck, and members of the commission, thank you for inviting building support and other assistance that local nonprofits need to apply for, recruit, and train national service members.

Secondly, the Accelerator works with the Community Foundation of Greater Flint to administer the National Service Fund. This fund offsets costs for organizations that host AmeriCorps programs and members such as local match requirements. This allows national service to be an option for organizations that otherwise wouldn't be able to cover their costs.

The third component focuses on place-based solutions. Along with locally designed AmeriCorps programs, the Accelerator identifies successful AmeriCorps initiatives from across the country and brings them to the community to help them respond to ongoing and emerging needs.

And finally, the Accelerator provides support to members and alumni to help them succeed during their term of service and beyond. The Accelerator has significantly increased the national presence in Flint. Starting in 2011 with just one AmeriCorps program and 25 members, Flint now has six programs and approximately 200 members addressing challenges in education, opioid abuse, public safety, and more. In addition to that, there are three Senior Corps programs with nearly 250 members serving the me to testify. My name is Brian Larkin, and I am an Associate Program Officer at the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, which is headquartered in my hometown of Flint, Michigan. My path to the foundation was rooted in service. When I was a new college graduate serving as a LISC AmeriCorps member, I discovered my future career

and a passion for revitalizing Flint. It has carried me through my professional journey thus far. I'm here because national service has been great for Flint, and I want to share something that's been key to that success.

In 2011, leaders from Flint's nonprofit community, with support from the Mott Foundation, established the Flint National Service Accelerator. This was based on the growing sense that with more coordination, training and community support, both the number and impact of AmeriCorps members in our community could be greater. How it is with our local United Way, the Accelerator works with the Flint community in four ways. First, it provides capacity building support and other assistance that local nonprofits need to apply for, recruit, and train national service members.

Secondly, the Accelerator works with the Community Foundation of Greater Flint to administer the National Service Fund. This fund offsets costs for organizations that host AmeriCorps programs and members such as local match requirements. This allows national service to be an option for organizations that otherwise wouldn't be able to cover their costs.

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And finally, the Accelerator provides support to members and alumni to help them succeed during their term of service and beyond. The Accelerator has significantly increased the national presence in Flint. Starting in 2011 with just one AmeriCorps program and 25 members, Flint now has six programs and approximately 200 members addressing challenges in education, opioid abuse, public safety, and more. In addition to that, there are three Senior Corps programs with nearly 250 members serving the area. So, we've gone from just 25 members to over 450 service members serving the community of Flint.

That's an increase that's made a real difference in Flint, especially in the wake of the city's water crisis. AmeriCorps members, including several NCCC teams, were among the first people on the ground distributing water, filters, coordinating volunteer efforts, and providing other critical services. Today, AmeriCorps members continue to help with recovery efforts, from serving in Flint schools to supporting students and families, stripping neighborhoods, helping residents get lead mitigating foods, and assisting nonprofits through the newly created Flint Recovery Corps. The City of Flint Police also worked with the Accelerator and through the AmeriCorps NCCC teams in the past year. In a community that struggles with blight and crime, they boarded up over 600 homes, removed more than 51,000 pounds of trash, and distributed information packets, water, filters, while reaching out to neighborhood groups. Together, their efforts contributed to a 15% decrease in violent crimes.

The Accelerator has put Flint at the forefront of current efforts to create a place-based approach to national service. It continues to attract interest and is now being replicated in other cities and states.

If the commission seeks to draw other funders into public private partnerships, I encourage you to tell them about the Mott Foundation experience. In 2018 alone, Mott Foundation grants of $645,000 leveraged approximately $2.6 million in additional support for national service in Flint.

On behalf of the foundation, I want to thank the Corporation for National Community Service, its Michigan field office, and the Michigan Community Service Commission for their ongoing partnership and support. Flint would not be as far along in recovery efforts were it not for the dedicated and passionate members of AmeriCorps and Senior Corps.

I would like to close by inviting all members of the commission to come and visit Flint and see a model that could be replicated in other communities nationwide. Thank you.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Thank you, Mr. Larkin.

Ms. Paquin, you're recognized.

Ms. Natalye Paquin

Thank you, Chairman Heck, and members of the commission. Thank you for this opportunity to offer thoughts on behalf of our network to address the scope of national service and the importance of innovation in its expansion.

Points of Light is the largest organization dedicated to volunteer service. Our mission is to inspire, equip, and mobilize individuals to take action that changes the world. We're excited to partner with the commission on ideas for expanding national service.

While I know you are considering a variety of factors and issues, it is my opinion that a critical factor to gaining support for national service and its expansion is to make it relevant. Up and coming generations, especially digital first-Generation Z, expect a continuum of options to engage, from traditional opportunities at nonprofits to using their time and talent to advocate for a cause.

According to the Corporation for National and Community Service Volunteering in America report, 24.9% of Americans say they volunteer with a traditional nonprofit, while 62.5 say they help or are involved in other ways. Points of Light believes that national service is the backbone of the nonprofit sector. It drives a lifelong passion for service. It directly impacts communities, and it shows how we both can utilize and further develop skilled employees and volunteers.

In a 2018 report issued by Verified Volunteers, where they surveyed 957 nonprofits of various sizes and missions across the United States, their client base, 56% of the nonprofits

indicated that more than 75% of their workforce comes from volunteers. We believe that much of these volunteer resources would not be possible without national service members.

As traditional service changes, we believe it's necessary to create a society where it is easy for every individual to make a difference and lend support to causes, they care about. People are giving back in a full spectrum of ways. Each weekday, Points of Light recognizes an ordinary person doing extraordinary work with a daily Point of Light Award. These honorees serve and give back to their communities in ways that are as innovative and diverse as they are.

For example, Gabby Frost from North Wells, Pennsylvania, a teenager trying to combat teen suicide, she created an online community called Buddy Project where people could make new friends, support one another, and become mental health advocates. Within 12 hours of its inception, 3,000 people signed up. Five and a half years later, more than 232,000 people have signed up for the Buddy Project. Her innovative ideas to reach youth where they are and to support them in ways they need could be viewed as a more contemporary example of service.

It is not just ordinary citizens we should focus on. The private sector also has a role to play. The 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer shows that 76% of people surveyed say that CEOs should take the lead on change. Increasingly, the report shows that trust is shifting locally as people report that they hold more trust in their employer than in any single institution, with trust levels at 75% globally.

As trust in the private sector continues to increase, that creates an opportunity for government to support private partnerships that make service more relevant and accessible. Recognizing the transformative role, the private sector can play, in 2018 Points of Light and Starbucks piloted a Starbucks Service Fellows program. This innovative employer led program allowed Starbucks to invest in their employees, leverage untapped community talent, and deploy local resources to lift the community.

Employees worked 20 hours weekly at Points of Light network affiliates and the rest of the times in their local Starbucks store. In the six months, 36 Fellows in 13 markets across the United States collectively provided more than 17 hours [sic] of community service. We believe in the power of programs like this to redefine the private sector's ability to support civic engagement.

One of the Fellows that I met really spoke out about the fact that her participation in this program, she uncovered new skills. She said, "I am a better partner for Starbucks." These types of employer led programs invite new people to the world of service. We believe everyone has something to give, and we also believe that if you meet people where they are, they have a better opportunity to participate. Thank you.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Ms. Sagawa.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

Thank you, Chairman, and all of the commissioners. Thank you for your service. I know this is a heavy lift and that you all have other responsibilities. I so appreciate the seriousness with which you approach this topic.

As you know, I'm the CEO of Service Year Alliance. Our mission is to make a year of service a common expectation and opportunity for all people growing up in America, and we do this by inspiring and equipping others to help build that infrastructure that's needed to make it happen.

I'm not going to read my testimony. I'm going to just emphasize a handful of points that I want to leave you with. So one is, be bold. This is our moment. You don't get presidential elections all that often in which there's such a robust debate about what the future of our country is. This has got to be the future of our country.

I've been doing this for 30 years. This is the most you know, often people say, oh, service, that's so nice. Now people are saying it's necessary, our country is falling apart. And whether it's needing to rebuild communities, needing to find opportunities for young people to get on a pathway to be able to be part of this robust economy, or to bring people together across divides, people are saying, across all backgrounds, that this is the time.

Second, it will take legislation. It's not enough to just kind of tweak some of the problems in AmeriCorps and keep growing incrementally. We need to be bold and envision a future that is much more comprehensive. So, it's not just about increasing funding for one program, which I totally support. Please, increase funding for one program. But build the infrastructure that you would need to make it an expectation to serve, to have young people do that service and meet people across programs. Right now, that's the exception, not the rule.

Make it possible for people to transition out of service into the career of their dreams or college in a way that's much we do a lot of that work because it's one of our missions, our goals, but it is very limited what's able to be done top down.

So that brings me to my third point, which is, please, think about place as a way to model what you're looking for in terms of universal service. You can't boil the ocean; we've got to start somewhere. We're working with 10 communities right now, about to add another 10, that are Flint is one of them that are trying to put all these pieces together in a way that the expectation is created that programs are connecting across lines, that the transition is very strong, and the alumni are engaged in a way that is you know, it protects the investment that we've put into these people.

The piece that we really want to see is connecting the military and civilian sides. Why not have military veterans serving alongside the national service corps members? Why not recruit together? We've talked a lot about that. I've put into the record our Enlisting America Pledge, which was signed by many leaders in the military, calling for civilian national service, because they think there are a lot of people who aren't going into the military who ought to be

doing something too. So, it's not to equate the two; it's to say everybody should give. We're giving a lot; you guys should do something.

Another point I wanted to make is we need to make this possible for people of all backgrounds. Super easy. I can create a program tomorrow if you're going to give me a whole bunch of, you know, highly competitive school graduates and let me, you know, hire them for very little money to do something impactful. Easy program to create, can do that we can do that.

It's really hard to get to make sure that if we are engaging young people who have barriers to work, that they're going to be engaged productively in a way that's meaningful to them and makes a difference. If we want everyone to have the chance to serve, that means people who are getting out of prison. It means people who are disabled. It means people who have dropped out of school and don't have literacy levels. It means people who don't speak English. It means people who are aging out of foster care. And we need more supports to make it possible for more people to serve. We've got some proposals around that.

Finally, I want to stress two other things quickly. One is the private sector is a really important part of this. It can't be done just with the private sector, but if you do things inadvertently to squelch private sector action, as sometimes occurs, that's not good either. You know, many of the greatest new programs are being created outside of AmeriCorps, and some of the historically strongest programs are not funded by AmeriCorps. So, if you create an AmeriCorps centric system, you're leaving out a lot of other programs.

Finally, I just want to say, in your report, don't lose us in the details. Please make bold recommendations and make them simply on principle. And it's great that you have so much analysis being done, and that will come in handy; but if that's the report, people are going to get lost. So please make sure that you don't lose the forest for the trees.

Our headlines are everyone can and should serve, regardless of their background. Everyone should be able to choose if and where to serve, including both military and civilian

national service. Full time national service should be rewarded with increased opportunity. Government support is necessary and not sufficient and should leverage private sector resources and engage communities, and we need the infrastructure to make this vision possible. Thank you.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Great. Thanks, Ms. Sagawa.

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

Thank you. I love that.

Chairman Heck and distinguished members of the commission, thank you for inviting me here today. My name is Jaime Uzeta, and I serve as CEO of Public Allies.

Founded in 1992 as one of the original AmeriCorps programs, Public Allies is a national network of organizations and individuals working to create a more just and equitable world. We do so by developing inclusive leaders, innovating cultures, and transforming communities. We believe that leadership is an action that anyone can take, not a role that only a few can hold, and that lasting change can only come when citizens of all backgrounds step up, take responsibility, and work together.

At the core of our work is our 10-month AmeriCorps apprenticeship program, which we implement in 25 cities throughout the country. Our apprentices, whom we call Allies, are recruited mostly from historically underserved and underrepresented communities. We see as assets young people who are too often defined by deficits and we empower them to transform their lives, their futures, and their communities.

Our Allies are over 80% people of color, more than 60% women, 60% low income, and 25% LGBTQ. Our staff reflects a significant ratio and ethnic diversity as well. Our apprentice

and staff alumni network is 8,000 strong and includes CEOs, heads of foundations, elected officials, and a former First Lady.

The Public Allies apprenticeship is an experiential journey of self-discovery, professional development, and community service. Allies are placed within a nonprofit organization or a government agency where they help build that group's capacity to address a broad range of critical issues, such as education and workforce development and environmental issues. And in the course of service, Allies are responsible for recruiting and engaging upwards of 50,000 volunteers and establishing partnerships with over 4,500 different organizations annually. As a result of their service activities, the collaborations developed and the additional volunteers engaged, an annual average of 150,000 people are able to receive services that they otherwise would not.

For AmeriCorps members, the service placement serves as a practicum in an entry level professional position. They develop the project management and interpersonal skills that are required to succeed in professional positions, and they begin to identify their own strengths as leaders. Members also develop a sense of collaboration, networking skills, key relationships that can open up doors of opportunity way beyond their Public Allies experience.

The services delivered being delivered by Public Allies or the Allies themselves is enhanced by a rigorous 200-hour leadership and professional development curriculum addressing topics ranging from career readiness and nonprofit management to group dynamics, conflict resolution, and cultural competence. This equips members with the content knowledge necessary to be successful in the nonprofit sector, the soft skills required to succeed in the 21st century workplace, and the opportunity to reflect on how social issues such as poverty and poor education and homelessness impact their own identities and their communities.

Looking forward, we applaud the commission for the many ideas it's already exploring and that are seen in the interim report, such as increasing the living stipend for those

participating in national service programs and providing an expanded educational award for each year of national service completed.

In addition to those ideas, we encourage the commission to examine how national service can continue to expand its impact in the following ways: One, encouraging greater national service participation from underserved communities. We believe that true change happens when young people with closest proximity to the community's problems are supported to create solutions informed by their personal experience.

Two, diversifying the types of organizations that can engage with national service. It is imperative that we broaden the number of publicly supported national service opportunities so that all who wish to serve can serve. And, three, incentivizing the engagement of nontraditional participants in service, such as opportunity youth and formerly incarcerated citizens returning to communities. These nontraditional participants are often the most overlooked when organizations are seeking volunteer talent.

Service programs focusing on this population, such as Public Allies and others, are capable of providing the supports necessary to ensure this population of volunteers can find success. But these delivery models frequently cost more per participant, and that clearly needs to be taken into consideration when making grant decisions.

Over the years, we've learned that national service can act as a powerful engine for the self-determination and transformation not only of individuals from underserved backgrounds but of entire communities. And at a time when trust in each other and in our institutions is at a historic low, we think we should do all we can to help renew Americans' faith in the common good.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify about the role of national service in building long term commitments to communities while also meeting the development needs of our diverse and evolving workforce.

QUESTIONS BY THE COMMISSION

Dr. Joseph Heck

All right. Thank you all very much for your oral testimony.

We'll now move into questions from the commissioners. And I'll start, put myself on the clock for five minutes.

So, we hear the debate over, you know, growing the number of positions. Like the Serve America Act in 2009 talked about going from 75,000 to 250,000 over eight years, or roughly a growth rate of 25,000 per year. Service Year talked about increasing that rate, you know, to 100,000 per year. But the and we've heard, you know, it's not just about money to fund positions but the money into the infrastructure that supports the positions, right, to be successful.

So, I'm going to ask each of you briefly to state: What do you think is an adequate growth rate of numbers of positions that can be supported by the infrastructure as we grow? What kind of rate can we attain?

Ms. Esgate?

Ms. Kaira Esgate

Thank you, Chairman Heck. So, I would definitely say that growth is an important part of this, absolutely. And as my verbal testimony as well as my written testimony really emphasized, the infrastructure piece of that is critically important. What we don't want to have happen is there be an influx of interest and not have appropriate positions out there to do it, and so I want to make sure that we're thinking about supply and demand on this as well and I think that's a really important piece here.

So, I would say certainly, you know, the Serve America Act, when we thought about 25,000 positions a year, that seemed pretty aggressive at that point in time. I agree with Shirley's point about being bold. I think it is important; this is the time to do it. But I think that we need to get a little bit far in advance of that to make sure that when we do bring on those new if it's a 10,000, if it's 25,000 positions, we have organizations that are prepared to host those members, whether they be through a federal resource or other resources as well.

So, I would say certainly we see a lot of program development efforts currently with state service commissions to try to get the next crop out there, so I think that if we continue those efforts, we could look at 10,000, 25,000 members a year. I think that that is doable. But again, that investment in developing the infrastructure is going to be an important component to do that.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Mr. Larkin?

Mr. Brian Larkin

Sir, as you mentioned, when Service Year Alliance recommended that the federal government expand into the 100,000 members serving annually, I think what we really support is kind of that long term goal and I think that's why everyone is here of, you know, let's look at 2025, let's look down the road; and if we're going to have a million Americans engaged in national service, then it's going to take bold easy enough to say it's going to take those type of numbers. We are going to get there incrementally, recognizing along the way then what are the challenges and pieces that are holding it back holding us back and what are some of the obstacles that are at play.

So, one, I think the numbers are very doable. But then also I think from just a perspective of the climate that is around service, Americans are in agreement that increasing funding for national services is a priority. I mean, it's historically bipartisan, it's politically popular, it's a

proven strategy. There was a TargetPoint Consulting found that 83% of voters support maintaining or increasing the federal investment in national service, so it's not a hugely controversial issue. So, I think it's the time and opportunity to go after something ambitious.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Thank you.

Ms. Paquin?

Ms. Natalye Paquin

Yes. Well, we agree with our colleagues, and we think that whether the number is 25,000 or 100,000, the key is really investing in the infrastructure and making sure that organizations are ready for our citizens' service.

So, we don't have a particular opinion on what the actual growth rate should be. We think that growth is important, and it's more it’s more important to just stay focused on the fact that you want to grow, and that the infrastructure needs to be there to support it.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Okay.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

Just to be clear, we think 25,000 a year is the right number. I think there might have been a little confusion. And we've done some surveying of the existing field to understand what the absorption factor is. We can probably double the number of people serving to about 150,000 without doing too much to the infrastructure.

If you want to go beyond that, a few things are necessary. One is to really build out a place-based infrastructure so that there are ways that you can get some economies of scale across different programs, sharing resources, et cetera. Having doing some fellowships so that the young people themselves can make choices about where to go is a really important piece, especially to bring in some of the smaller organizations.

We believe a certification system will unlock innovation; we have one. I know state commissions are interested in doing it as well. The Accelerator that you heard about in Flint, there should be one in every community, and we've had a lot of interest on the part of other communities to replicate that. And then finally, you know, we do a lot of work with organizations that are interested in starting programs. We're doing one now in humanities. We've been working on an Ocean Corps. We've been working on a corps relating to leadership in aging, and we've done a whole report on all the different areas where you could do it. So, it's really a matter of providing more technical assistance to organizations.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Mr. Uzeta?

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

Yeah, I think I'd want to just echo what I've heard. I mean, things like the National Service Accelerator are excellent models in thinking from a place based perspective, and that's certainly the way we're thinking at Public Allies and thinking to what extent can we measure success beyond just the Allies that are out there; is there a way of moving the needle in a way that would hold us accountable in the communities that we serve within a specific period of time. So that in general, I think, is where, you know, the place-based component I think is really important.

The one more piece I would add to it is just the recognition. We've talked a little bit about this, but depending on it really depends, when you're starting to expand these numbers, what kinds of folks we're bringing into the program. And when you get when you're reaching out to more diverse audiences, you have to or members or potential service members, you have to recognize there are lots of additional challenges that other young people, opportunity youth and others not just necessarily opportunity youth, folks from lower socioeconomic backgrounds have, so they have bigger challenges, things that we have not even anticipated, and we still learn from all the time when we're trying to do this outreach, even with, you know, a variety of our programs.

So, the bottom line is there's always these extra layers that get more complicated when you're reaching out to harder to reach and harder to bring in communities. So just I would just urge you to keep that in mind when we start thinking about whether it's, you know, 25,000 per year or another number; the infrastructure is really essential.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Thank you.

Vice Chairman Gearan.

Mr. Mark Gearan

Thank you. Let me build on our Chair's question of scaling and turn to higher education this is the higher education wing, we've both been college presidents and federal work study. And many of you have advocated an increase in better work study as increasing the opportunities for community engagement, so it gets to the question of scale and place. And so, I'd be interested in your reactions to that percentage of increasing federal work study at 7% to 25%, or what are the dimensions of that and what would you see as some of the barriers?

And, Shirley, you're pulling that mic. Be bold, Shirley.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

I have more things to say.

Mr. Mark Gearan

Give me a bold answer.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

So that proposal has been around for decades, as you know.

Mr. Mark Gearan

I know.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

And what happens every time it comes up is the university community says, oh, no, we need those people to do stuff in the schools. You're going to raise the cost of education.

Mr. Mark Gearan

Work in the library, uh huh.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

And then we look at the statistics and we realize that most schools that are community service in work study are already doing over 25%, so it would actually result in no net increase in the number of schools that are doing it and yet bring out all of the opposition.

So, I would propose that you do something like or propose something like if you are willing to put X%, 50%, 75%, a bigger percent of your work study funding into community service, you get more money. So, there's more of an incentive and there's an incentive to kind of really invest in a significant way.

In some of the proposals even the administration has made around, you know, making it more about work based learning, what we would think engaged learning, service learning, all of the above are good, and we'd really love to see universities do service years as part of the curriculum. It's been hard to get them to do it, though.

Ms. Natalye Paquin

We would add to not look at the to not look at it in terms of increase the percentage that you want to increase, but look at it in terms of universities are members of communities, and is there a problem within that community that the university would like to lean in and help solve, and can they lean in and help solve that problem through the support of their students, and which students would be more interested in. And then take that approach to help design a program where you would get more students engaged.

And so, we would really encourage universities to be more impact and outcome focused as opposed to simply considering what percentage should be dedicated into a particular area.

Mr. Mark Gearan

Any other reflections?

Mr. Brian Larkin

I would echo the sentiments of Ms. Paquin. I was thinking in my in our testimony, we identified the numbers, you know, how much in the city of Flint we've seen an increase in number of members.

But the real, real impact is the ability to address issues in new ways and for the Accelerator, really the kind of the focus or target of the Accelerator is the community of Flint. And so, the universities are a big portion of the communities in which they reside. And the question that is posed here is really how can they best utilize their resources through service to support the community at large, and so if that is through a specific number or percentages you identify, then great.

But if there's other means or mechanisms, they're a part of that community as a whole and when we're thinking about solving the community, you can't do it without one of your biggest partners.

Mr. Mark Gearan

And does the Accelerator have work study as part of their mix?

Mr. Brian Larkin

I'm not sure. I'd have to check back, and I get you an official answer to that, though.

Mr. Mark Gearan

That would be interesting. Yeah.

Ms. Kaira Esgate

I would just again add to what my fellow panelists shared. I mean, I do think that partnership piece here is really critically important, so I don't know that there's a certain percentage that we want to target. I mean, I think the more college students are out in the community, I think that that is a good experience for them both for the community itself as well as for those students.

But I think the partnership piece is critical here, because I think the other thing that we want to make sure too is that those college students are having good experiences, too, that they actually see this as a stepping stone to do further service, that they don't that they're not having a poor-quality experience and therefore say, you know what, I tried that in college, I didn't like that, and therefore I don't want to do it anymore.

So I think we want to kind of think on the flipside about that as well and so it's really important that we're investing in partnerships and making sure that the nonprofit partners, assuming that most of these positions would be with nonprofit partners, are also in a position to accept and really embrace those college students as well.

Mr. Mark Gearan

Thank you.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Okay. Vice Chair Wada?

Ms. Debra Wada

On the previous panel, we talked about how do we get the military and national service community to better work together so we can raise all boats. And coming from your perspective the flipside, right we have a number of military service members who leaves the service every year, looking to transition into their next lives.

How do we do a better job in terms of are there barriers or are there any issues that we should be aware of as we try to make sure that service members who are leaving the service understand there are opportunities like yours in communities across this country, and how do we best make sure that we are integrating veterans and service members into your programs?

I'll open it up to anybody.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

I'll start.

Ms. Debra Wada

Sure.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

Or if he has other ideas.

I think a big challenge is awareness; so, when people are leaving the military, I'm not sure they know that this is an option they can pursue. We do know from research that service civilian service is extremely powerful as a transition strategy and it is what a lot of transitioning veterans want, but they don't know.

So, you know, we've thought about trying to use our platform to tag positions that are especially great for transitioning veterans as one solution. But something that would be valuable would I think that there could be some kind of an incentive fund to ask programs to especially target veterans and to make sure that any kinds of additional supports they might need could be available.

Often, also, veterans like to support other veterans, so what we've seen in the programs that are out there is a lot of them do have a kind of a peer to peer dimension to it, which is really a powerful way to kind of serve both veterans in two different ways.

Ms. Debra Wada

Thank you.

Anyone else?

Ms. Natalye Paquin

We'll add to that is to invite them. We know the number one reason why people volunteer or serve is because they're invited. And I worked about 15 years in education and when we were trying to get parents more engaged in, you know, coming to programs, we had to actually extend invitations. And what we learned in education is notification is not an invitation, so getting a flyer doesn't mean that you think it's for you, right? So, the first thing we would say is invite them.

The second is to really help, you know, volunteers or veterans to understand their impact, because if you understand your impact, you're likely to come back, and then give them a good experience. Be prepared for them when they show up. And so those will be some of the strategies that we would suggest, not just for veterans but for any underserved or hard to reach community and getting them more engaged.

Ms. Debra Wada

Okay.

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

I think those are great answers. I'd add just one more piece. I mean, I think building on what Ms. Paquin is saying, if you're reaching out to folks who have served in the military and they're coming in and they have similar challenges that others from underserved communities have, the infrastructure has to be there, again.

So, I mean, some of the things that the commission is already considering in terms of increasing living wage, those would certainly come into play if we're wanting to reach out and bring folks from the military into national service.

I need to I'm realizing, because we have our 20 operating partners throughout the country, I wanted to go and see what else we have done and how we've experimented with that and see what we've gotten in terms of feedback. But the point of just inviting them on a basic level and giving a sense of belonging, that's a huge theme in everything that we do. It's just again, it's the invitation and seeing somebody that you identify with also participating, and feeling that embrace is just key. So that's what I would add.

Ms. Kaira Esgate

And I would just quickly add one more thing from my experience in California. One of the interesting things we've found in trying to think about how do we get veterans into national service programs was also thinking about spouses, and it's so often that that was an interesting way to expose our military or veterans to the idea of doing national service was actually engaging their spouses in national service themselves and that actually helped raise awareness and also then made that connection for them about the idea that national service and military service are complementary as well.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

Just really quickly, we worked also to try to make it an allowable use for the GI Bill, and I think there are some, you know, pros and cons there, but that is another thing that you should look at. Because when you can use GI Bill resources for training, you know, this is a kind of training and it's in some ways a more appealing kind of training than some of the things that are available.

Ms. Debra Wada

Good. Thank you very much.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Ms. James.

Ms. Jeanette James

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to all of you for coming and sharing your time with us today. I'm going to ask this question of Ms. Esgate, but all of you I'd be interested in your thoughts.

So, the goal of the commission is every American inspired and eager to serve, and we've talked a lot about young Americans and youth, and I'd like to broaden that a little bit. In the previous panel, we talked about senior, senior Americans, and there are certainly programs for senior Americans.

But we've also heard about some of the challenges for engaging senior Americans, so and one of them is about competitive grant programs. And so, I'd be interested in your thoughts on whether restructuring the competitive grant models, so that they're available to foster grandparents and senior companions, what would that be something that would help senior the senior programs?

And I'm just interested if there are any other suggestions that you or any of the other panel members would have in working your work with the senior Americans and getting them involved, more involved. Because just like with our youth, you know, we have more and more senior Americans who retire from the more traditional workforce that want to do something, and they're an untapped resource.

Ms. Kaira Esgate

Certainly. So many of our state commissions actually work with Senior Corps programs within their states. Actually, there are a couple of states that actually provide state funding to expand the existing Senior Corps programs that are federally funded, so I think that there's something interesting there as well.

I think maybe the issue is not necessarily the competitive grant process but really emphasizing innovation. So, I do think that we need to think about the models right now. I think many of the models for our Senior Corps programs are 30 years old actually, more than 30 years old at this point and so I think what individuals were looking for back then and what they're looking for now I think has changed.

So, there are some other senior service models that are out there. They're really trying to take the professional skills that folks had in their careers and really reapply that in new settings, so I think that that's interesting to think about.

In the Serve America Act, there was actually an Encore Fellow concept which really would take individuals 55 and older and encourage them to devote a year of service. So, it's a twist on kind of the existing Senior Corps programs that are out there, but again, it's connected to that national service infrastructure.

So, I think it's really from my perspective, it's more about looking at innovative models more so than necessarily thinking about competitive grants for the existing programs. So, I would encourage the commission to think about that idea as you want to engage more seniors. I think we certainly want to do that.

The other thing too that I think is you know, many of us know this, but we forget about it, too, is that there is no upper age limit on AmeriCorps, right? So, individuals we know of AmeriCorps members that are in their 90s, and I think one of the fun things with the Serve America Act as well was make the education award transferable to children and grandchildren as

well, because before there wasn't necessarily an incentive. You do a year of service as an older American, and then, you know, what are you going to do with that education award? Maybe that doesn't make sense for you, but for a grandchild, that might be something that's very attractive to you as well.

So, I think it's kind of looking at some of those things, can we make tweaks here and there, but I do think that the innovation piece is going to be really important moving forward.

Ms. Jeanette James

Any other thoughts?

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

I would just add; we're looking at that in exploring partnerships with strategic partnerships with organizations that focus primarily on the aging and see how we can bring them into national service. But there's a challenge that we see, and that we see not just with them again, it goes with folks from different backgrounds is even placing sometimes some of these Allies in nonprofits can be challenging, right?

So, there's like there's a perception issue that we have to deal with on the other side, on the demand side, that is something that marketing could potentially address, but it's something that has to be part of the solution. So even if we're trying to bring in, you know, the aging into national service on the greater level, as well as some of these other folks that we're talking about, not to blow you know, blend everything together, but opportunity youth, et cetera, the placements themselves, the nonprofits have to shift their own perception of what it's like to bring folks in and select them as the volunteers as part of a matching process.

Ms. Jeanette James

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Joseph Heck

All right. Dr. Davidson.

Dr. Janine Davidson

All right. Thank you. Thank you all for coming here today. Appreciate you sharing your perspectives and your expertise and your experience with us. We talked a little bit about work study, and I'd like to kind of pull the string on higher ed a little bit more.

Can y'all share some of your, you know, best practices or examples of how your organizations have partnered with higher education institutions to catalyze service or to you know, either coming in or going out or while students are in school, just some of your thoughts on those partnerships?

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

You want to go?

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

You go ahead, you start.

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

I can kick it off. We are doing some things there, a lot of things, actually. We work with higher education institutions as both our operating partners who actually implement our program, and then in negotiating college credit for the apprenticeship. In Los Angeles, for example, we work with LA Trade Tech and have actually created a course around the leadership development components that we focus on so that we can get give more young people access to it, even if they weren't actually in Public Allies.

But there's so much more to be done, and I think the biggest barrier ends up being financial and thinking about I think a lot of things that the commission is already considering in terms of relieving the financial burden is key. And I'll just I'll mention, like, one of the things that we've experienced, we have a Pathways Program and when the Ally comes in, they have three different choices. One is continuing on, going on to a career, continuing going into higher education, or doing a second year of service. And based on what they say, we try to customize their experience and give them exposure that would help them accelerate their pathway, right?

And it's been successful in the sense that 90% of our alumni are within 90 days in their pathway. But one of the things that we didn't factor for is the blurred line between working and taking higher education, that pathway, as an option. So increasingly, you know, the majority has to do both, and so then we start talking about, again, it's looking at community colleges and different ways of kind of working around it, and that's something that we're iterating around and trying to figure out different solutions to.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

We've done a ton of stuff. I don't know that we've really cracked this yet. We did a toolkit with a whole bunch of different ways that higher ed institutions can support the Service Year movement, everything from recruiting to placing to creating programs. So that toolkit, I'm happy to share.

We had a partnership in Virginia under the leadership of First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe to have every university and college in Virginia do something in the toolkit, which we thought was pretty successful. We had we've done a course with ASU, it's an online course in their public service program so that any corps member can learn the sort of history and ethic of service and if they want to get credit, they pay at the end. And I'm not sure of the details, but we did that. And we also have a variety of recruitment efforts aimed at colleges.

We did a competition for two years to try to get higher ed institutions to create Service Year programs that were credit bearing and part of the curriculum, and we had winners in three categories each year and some of them were really interesting. You know, a community nursing program, a program an innovation program between the University of Pittsburgh law school and business school. So, there were some kind of cool things that came out of it, but we also felt a little bit like that was our hardest lift.

Ms. Natalye Paquin

For us excuse me. For us, we would actually take a different spin on what universities can do. And actually, at Points of Light, one of the things that we struggle with is we struggle with academic research, with real data that proves a point, that responds to a question. And we know today information is really a prime asset, and we don't have enough thoughtful research.

And so, what we would ask universities to do is really think about the service movement; think about you know, think about it from an employer's perspective, from an employee's perspective, from a nonprofit perspective, from a community benefits perspective. Longitudinal research, case studies, articles, I mean, there are many ways that universities could lend their intellectual power to educating, advancing, and in helping to inspire the public about why this is so important.

Mr. Brian Larkin

To echo some of the conversations and ideas expressed earlier, it's beyond just higher education trying to produce numbers of service members and more to really understanding what are the service needs of the community. So again, going back to that place based approach, in Flint, having the Accelerator, the platform is there that the university can approach and say, okay, if the challenge, for instance, is a safety one, where you're looking at a community and the board ups and the things that I mentioned, okay, let's help develop an Urban Safety Corps, okay, and our contribution to this can be XYZ. So, for another corps that was established that works in

our K 12 schools, okay, well, then now here's an opportunity to integrate for students who are studying in higher education and looking at going into education.

It's not really taken with the lens of higher education needs to come and address this in a certain way. It's here is the platform, here is the table, how can you bring those resources. And then that way it can sustain longer, because as you know with higher education, there's changes in tenure, there's changes in priorities. But if they are integrated into a system that's addressing a challenge and they're either providing the manpower at this place or providing the resources at that time or providing the convening space, then that way it's really it's something that's able to sustain much longer and their contributions have a greater impact.

Ms. Kaira Esgate

And then quickly, just to add, I'd also encourage you to think about higher ed institutions as infrastructure. So, we have a number of state service commissions that actually provide grants. And particularly in rural states, an institution of higher education has the systems in place to deal with all of the paperwork that needs to be done, the financial pieces that need to be done, so they're actually able to be a community partner that is able to place members throughout the state or a particular region and you don't have to find a small nonprofit to try to do that, but there's also the scaling that the institution of higher education can assist with.

So, I think it's also an interesting piece. It's not just engaging students as members but also what role the university can play in actually supporting members out in the field as well. Thank you.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

You know, that seems pretty common in rural areas and our place based our two rural placed based sites are based out of universities.

Dr. Janine Davidson

Great. Thank you.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Thank you.

Mr. Kilgannon.

Mr. Tom Kilgannon

Well, thank you all for being here, and I'll address my question to Ms. Esgate and Mr. Larkin. Every community has a need for firefighters and police officers, EMT, strong, robust efforts in those service opportunities.

What is the relationship between national service organizations working to encourage those community service opportunities? And if they're not that robust, does an opportunity exist in that area?

Ms. Kaira Esgate

So I think that a number of our state commissions are working in what we call the disaster space, so really trying to work with their emergency management agencies, and there's programs at the local level that are working with local fire, police, et cetera, to really kind of find those synergies there, so I think there's, but I think there's more opportunity there without a doubt.

We know that some of the AmeriCorps members around the country are actually trained as CERT volunteers, so Certified Emergency Response Team volunteers, so that is a curriculum I believe it's 20 hours; I can double check that, though where they basically understand how they

can actually help augment first responder efforts in times of need in particular communities as well.

So, I think that there's some stuff that's happening there right now, but I think that there's more opportunity for those to be connected further and for us to continue to invest in natural service programs that do have a disaster or public safety realm in them. Public safety is a funding area, certainly, but it's not one where we typically see a lot of programs around the country, so I think that there can be further partnerships and outreach in order to make that connection more fully.

Mr. Brian Larkin

And as I mentioned in my testimony that there are ways to find direct partnerships between police or fire and safety, but it has to be understood on what are your goals. And so, for instance, in the Flint example it was, okay, well, let's identify targeted areas where we know there is a lot of activity coming on and police has a certain role, it has a certain law enforcement activity, but then after that, what's next?

And so, as we developed our Urban Safety Corps strategy, the police would come in, target an area, get it you know, address a lot of the issues that are within their authority, but then what are the environmental issues that are behind it? So that's why you see the 600 plus board ups, the 51,000 tons of debris removed, and now you're communicating to your community at large that this is not an area where it's okay to do these sorts of activities.

Because in the public safety aspect, criminal activity kind of looks at the environmental clues for where these things can and can't occur, and so service steps in in that place. It's not stepping in per se to fight crime, but it's stepping in place to serve the community, to uplift, and put up a new brand and new image on it. So that's one direct example but there's others, and I think it really stems from identifying and having them at the table. So, we had our police chief at the table to really identify, well, hey, this is what we need, and kind of this is how it's shaped. And because the Accelerator was in place, it wasn't a case of having to go to figure out which

nonprofit organization can then go and get the service members and say hey, this is my challenge, where does this fit in, is there an existing corps or do we need to create a new one?

Mr. Tom Kilgannon

So, as I understand your answers, it sounds to me like an event happens, there's a crisis of some kind, and there's a response to it. But there seems to be perhaps more opportunity in the space where a young person says, I'd like to do a six month or a one-year internship with a fire department or a police department. Is that correct?

Ms. Kaira Esgate

Yeah. I would think that in most cases it's not necessarily that we have a direct line. We're not necessarily pipelining folks into those careers, so I think that that's something that I think there's potential there, absolutely, but I think that that's not something that we've not seen a lot of programming, at least that I'm not that I'm familiar with. But I can certainly see that opportunity and folks could be doing community outreach, they could better understanding the needs of the community in that area and then that could then lead them to a career in fire, police, et cetera.

But I'm not aware of a lot of programming that looks like that at this point in time.

Mr. Tom Kilgannon

There's a new one in Fairfax County, Virginia, with the police, that might be worth looking into.

Ms. Kaira Esgate

Thank you.

Mr. Tom Kilgannon

But I appreciate your responses on that. Thank you all.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Ms. Haines?

Ms. Avril Haines

Thank you. I really appreciated your point that as we expand, we need to think about how do we actually get to communities in a sense of where we need to encourage participation, in particular in service, and attract folks to service who have been underserved in a sense in these areas. And whether it's low income or formerly incarcerated persons or tribal areas or, you know, a whole series rural spaces, et cetera, others have mentioned some of these issues.

And I guess using Shirley's guidance of think bold, what is sort of the most kind of important, critical, "innovative thinking that you imagine" idea that the federal government could do to encourage and to essentially promote that kind of participation?

And from all of you, but, yeah, please

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

Oh, I'm sorry.

Ms. Avril Haines

No, no, no. For you to start, but please.

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

Yeah. So, on the innovation side, I would say a couple of things. I mean, there are a couple of principles around it, but I would say just starting with the idea of being innovative around it, I would think that it and it's something that historically hasn't been something the federal government has been able to do as well, having served in the federal government as well, is just the idea of iterating around a range of experiments towards that end, right?

So, it's when we're thinking I mean, there's a marketing sort of approach to this that would be required, and that's kind of my default. Just because of my background, I am going towards that and thinking about how you appeal to young people. And it's recognizing that with any sort of marketing strategy you're going to need to segment and recognize what the different audience looks like, different members of the audience look like, and which of their needs what their each need states are and how you're going to move each of them, right?

When I was talking earlier about this sense of belonging, it's really it's just really fundamental to so much of this because it's this idea is it somebody do you see somebody coming into your neighborhood to help you, and this is in the imaging, in the messaging, and what does it look like that they can see out there in the ethos, or are they do they see themselves helping their own community?

And it seems simple and obvious, but it's a it’s a shift there, and if they can opt out because it's an other type dynamic, then they're not going to embrace it. And if you think of I mean, I just think back to the beginning of AmeriCorps and kind of the initial notion of it and it's kind of bringing the best and the brightest into, you know, a commitment to civic duty. And that's still the case, but there's also the recognition of what does best and brightest look like and being broader in terms of how we interpret that and how we convey our interpretation of that.

So I would think in the federal government level, I think that there's it's about partnerships and it's about thoughtful marketing and messaging, and that should and the

messaging has to be reflected in the policies themselves, and so it's you know, it's not a simple sort of answer.

But to the earlier point just about the innovation piece, it's, you know, being broad and being bold and recognizing, look, here's the here's the way the landscape has changed since we first started this program. Here's what our goal is, and here are the series of hypotheses we have in terms of how we might be able to bring more people into it and testing a variety of approaches.

And there's some programs, like the P3 program, for example, that allows you know, that provides federal funding but allows you to be folks at a more local level to be flexible about how they blend pools of funding to really meet those needs. That nimbleness is critical, I would say, to helping to shift this so that you really cast a wider net and bring more people into the fold.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

Yeah, I think that there's a real benefit to, in a policy sense, if there's going to be, for example, funding for communities to build out a community wide plan is that you incentivize or require that they take into account how are they going to engage these harder to engage populations, and that they're I think experimentation is natural in a setting where you let local communities make plans, and so we're going to learn. You know, one community might set up an emergency fund because we know a lot of people with limited incomes, you know, if they have to move, they can't put a security deposit down and they need an emergency fund, or their car breaks down and they can't get there. You know, so there's and another community might decide to pursue a housing solution. And we would learn a lot from that, instead of imposing it right from the beginning, oh, here are all the answers.

So, I would really urge to try to build it around that sort of a community incentivized plan.

Ms. Natalye Paquin

I was in the back this morning and I heard one of the commissioners use the term "awareness, aspiration and access." Was that Shawn?

[Laughter.]

Ms. Natalye Paquin

The three As. And, you know, I wrote that down because it really resonated with me. And so, when I think of bold, right, we think about the fact that we all live digital lives, so service and awareness of service and increasing aspiration and access may be some way through technology. You know, when we think about how you reach youth, you know, perhaps it's gameification.

I know in Philadelphia they're opening a new stadium, it's like an E stadium for virtual games around the world. So imagine if we really thought about being bold, imagine the government creating games, creating VRs, creating all types of technology solutions that was just distributed free and the key concept was really around service, and you had upgrades and incentives and perhaps your national or international winners can actually cash in incentives for all types of things, you know, through partnerships.

And so, you know, I would say that bold thinking has to include digital solutions and delivery has to do has to be innovative through technology.

Mr. Brian Larkin

The key innovation I would say that really would be supported, and this will come as no surprise, is the Accelerator model. I think as communities are trying to identify their own solutions and challenges, it's a model that's flexible. It's one that lifts up the strengths of a community, but then it also identifies how to support those and bring them along the way, and it can be really flexible in a space.

So, if there was one thing at the top of the list, I would say kind of federally promoting, is supporting an Accelerator model.

Ms. Kaira Esgate

And just quickly, I would say flexibility. I think, you know, when we think about kind of federal funds and really if we're talking about going bold, we're going to have to do things differently. And so, I think that flexibility to maneuver to think about how we're combining federal resources, state resources, local resources, in new ways, creative ways, in order to support that I think is really, really important.

And the other thing I would just say as well, I think some of the most impactful programs I have seen are actually recruiting members from the local communities because that's where it really resonates, and that really folks are much more open to receiving this service, depending on what that service may be, and also it builds that culture of service and the understanding of what it means to commit a year of service in that local community as well.

So, I think that that's really important too, as we're thinking about bringing in new populations to the idea of doing a year of service, it's really important too that those that are serving are actually from that same community.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Ms. Skelly.

Ms. Shawn Skelly

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to thank the panel. My first chance to thank you very much for being here today.

Research suggests that national service alumni, people who serve, gain hard and soft skills through their service. And one of the things we've been it's been told to us, I think just here today, that we bring a unique if not first holistic look of different forms of service under the same under the same lens.

I know that I personally took it as a learning moment when I participated in a trip to a military war college with some of our staff and talked to senior academics there, and then later, as a group of commissioners, we had a conversation with an executive at LinkedIn talking about the workforce. And they both made almost the exact same point, which really struck me, about how the new economy has difficulty in identifying people with skills and finding places where people come out with skills to solve problems, so predominantly soft skills but also linking those with hard skills.

Generally, you can take someone with soft skills and train give them hard skills, but both were thinking about those things in the context of public service and the military piece of public service and then the pure economy really struck me.

And, Mr. Uzeta, I'd like to start with you, please, since you mentioned pathways. How do we get people to understand that pathways can be devised, do exist, that develop skills that matter to the economy post service, to the individual and to the economy as a whole? Get that employer partnership, that corporate partnership, as well as the influencers, if not the decision makers such as people in Congress, when we talk about, we need legislation to do big, bold things get them to understand that there are real benefits to service in that way? How do pathways matter with regard to skills in the economy?

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

Yeah, thank you for that question. That's a big one, I think, on a couple of levels. I think one, the question is how do we get others to recognize the impact. I will say we're looking at it in two ways at Public Allies. So as I mentioned, we think that the Allies already get 21st century skill development, interpersonal skills and project management, a lot of things that the folks at

LinkedIn and others would think about, but there's even more to be done on that level and we're actually looking at our whole curriculum and we've done a survey on the future of work and what we call the future of citizenship and where do we need to bolster our own curriculum to add creative problem solving skills, for example. So, there's more to be done on our end, too.

And I think elevating those stories, though, in terms of if you do this sort of analysis, when you look at what, you know, the Global Economic Forum or any of these groups are looking at, you can peel back the layers and so much of what exists right now in those future of work studies is embodied if you break down all the different components, interdisciplinary skills and others that even though we want to enhance it more, there's a lot of creative problem solving skills.

And the ability to work across communities and communities and sectors is very much part of the whole national service experience, and so that is it's, you know, the world is coming more towards national service on that level, right, than national service having to go towards the world in terms of the skill set.

So I think a lot of this is around it goes back to the messaging and marketing and it's not just, you know, like some advertisement, it's in convenings and how do you start how do you start building these bridges between the sectors so that there are connections. And maybe it's not about here's how national service helps creates a better employee that you should consider to bring into your organization. Maybe it's on the other subjects and you kind of weave that into convenings that already exist. Does that make sense?

It's not necessarily on that specific subject, but find out where anything that's having to do with the workforce is going on and making sure that national service is present at every single one of those so it reframes the perception, because so much of it is a mental model shift that's required.

And so it's and as I was saying earlier, it's not just required in terms of what happens to the alumni, and they themselves need to help and understand how their service can connect for job opportunities, the alumni of Public Allies, but it's also the organizations themselves understanding how these young people have skills that are unique.

So that's I mean, those are I'm happy to go into a bigger discussion about what that might look like concretely, but those are just the broad principles, I would say.

Ms. Shawn Skelly

Thank you. Anyone else?

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

I would just add, you know, there are some workforce fields for which service is already a major pipeline and that doesn't get recognized in a lot of the conversations that we have about workforce development, so it's not at the table when there's a meeting of people talking about, you know, the future of work, when in fact 10% of employees are in nonprofits, for example, and this is a huge pipeline for nonprofit employees.

There's also a lot of programs there's a lack of programs in some areas where there ought to be a ton. Like early childhood, we know we're going to need a big early childhood workforce and it does take some training; healthcare would be another example.

And then finally, I would just say we've got an initiative now, we call it Service+Tech, where we're trying to expose corps members and alums to tech careers on the theory that some will actually go into technology companies or other types of companies and bring with them what they've learned being in the community, or they will go on to careers in nonprofit work or education and they will have some knowledge of technology and will learn how to code and they'll bring that to sectors that are going to be badly in need of those skills. So, I think those are just some random thoughts.

Ms. Natalye Paquin

I would just add, really briefly, the idea of data plus stories equals proof, right? Because we talked about universities getting more involved in helping us with academic type research. And then there's stories, there are many stories that any of us could tell, people who actually are participating in these experiences can tell.

I think what we should also look at is how the fact that communication is a circle and today communication is interactive, and so how we communicate the stories and the data, and the information will probably have a greater impact and as much impact as what we're communicating.

Mr. Brian Larkin

Kaira mentioned to you earlier about this culture of service, and I think that goes both ways in that the culture of service impacts the people who are receiving the services, whether it's students in the K 12 programs or partners. But as well as if you’re if you're in the city of Flint and you're talking about AmeriCorps, you've interacted with a service member in some capacity or another, so you have that notion in your mind if you're in a community where service is a thing. Beyond just knowing one particular corps, there is a culture of service. You know if you're getting a member, they have kind of this kind of standard.

Well, within the within the Accelerator itself, one of the targets is, okay, well, since we recognize we're creating this culture of service, we're putting out this number of members, what can we do to provide for them. So, when I mentioned before pieces of it, the last piece was really about member and alumni support. So whether it's monthly Accelerator meetings that they have, life after AmeriCorps day, trainings in different skill sets, like providing all of this into the individuals at a regular basis, and it's not on the specific nonprofit that's hosting two members or the other one is hosting four members. It's every month we're having these things and we're

providing these and there's professional development through the one year, the two years; but then afterwards, there's alumni.

So first, there's this knowledge and awareness that, hey, we have these community service members that are coming out, and then there's the pouring into them in a systemic way that's consistent. Because you can't just pop out one program one time, you know, or host a business training session. It has to be these resources consistently available, and it takes a coordinating agency to really kind of keep that going throughout to the point where you don't have to set up something new. You're creating, every year, a new cohort of individuals who are going out into the workforce and the workforce is ready for them.

Ms. Kaira Esgate

Just a couple of quick thoughts. Building on Brian's point, I think the emphasis on the member development side of this and really helping making those linkages for members I think is critically important. I think that's something that when we look across the country, you know, some programs do that well, but most programs really struggle with that because of resources and maybe not necessarily connections to those types of resources in the community. So, I think that that's important.

And I think on to Shirley's point about the pipeline work, I think that's really important. So, for example, K 12 education, I think we've been really clear about and being intentional about pipeline work, but I think in many of the other areas that Shirley mentioned, and others, there's opportunity to define those pipelines to really help a member understand, okay, you've done a year of service in this way, so here are your next steps, and really helping them see the vision for that is important.

And actually, even something that we're exploring at the association level in partnership with our state service commissions is even creating a pipeline for national service professionals. So, you know, maybe you serve as a member and you decide that you want to become a program director someday, maybe do it at a state commission, maybe you go with a corporation or with

the Peace Corps someday, but this idea of actually helping people visualize a career in national service I think is also an interesting pipeline that we might want to think about as well.

Dr. Joseph Heck

All right.

Mr. Khazei.

Mr. Alan Khazei

Again, I also want to thank you. I mean, this is a fabulous panel, and thank you all for your dedication to this cause. It's really a lot of great ideas.

The thing that struck me in this conversation is how all of you have talked about the importance of place. I mean, Shirley, you've put it in your oral testimony, your written testimony. Jaime, you talked about how Public Allies finds leaders that people don't actually think of as leaders, but anybody can be a leader with the right support. Natalye, you mentioned universities are members of communities, and Brian, of course your Accelerator is all place based. And Kaira, you just mentioned often if you have people from the local communities serving in their own neighborhoods and backyards, that's the best; and you also mentioned the Serve America Fellows program that has never been funded, which could be a way to accelerate it.

So, my question is: If we want to make and I also appreciated, Shirley, what you said about don't boil the ocean, and Brian, you put out the million goal and if we ever get to a million.

So my question is, if we wanted to make some real concrete recommendations on having some demonstration communities to really show what universal service could be like in some places as beacons that could then and again, if we're right and this really is transformational, if

you really had universal in communities, I think you would see really a big change what would you recommend?

And also, how do we convince the Congress and people with we serve philanthropy too, because like, you know, if there's going to be 5,000 more service year positions, people will say, well, spread them out around 50 states, you know, that's 100 a state. Whereas really, to get a demonstration community, you might want to put 2500 in one and 2500 in another one all of a sudden.

So, I guess, two parts. One is and maybe we'll start with you, Shirley, since you've really been pushing on this, and then I want to hear from everybody what would you recommend? If we were going to put a recommendation in, what are some key elements for a place-based strategy as models, as beacons, and then how do we convince people to do it? Philanthropy?

Again, you know, often philanthropy will be like, well, I'll support a service program, but I want to support it in 10 places. I mean, what you've done with Mott, Brian, is great. Or the Congress will say spread it out, let's give everybody a little piece. So anyway, maybe start with Shirley and then we'd love to hear from all of you.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

I'm excited about that idea. I hope you will recommend it. I think that there are if you if there were a call for communities to raise their hands, I think this has to be voluntary and it has to involve a leadership group in communities who will, you know, really pull in higher ed and employers as well as the nonprofit and service groups and elementary and secondary education and the youth serving organizations and say, what are our biggest problems here we can solve? You know, how are we going to prepare young people, so they do make this commitment?

Bring in the military; that presence starts in the community, whether it's veterans or if there's a base or if there's recruiters or ROTC, et cetera, National Guard, and have them at the table and then think about like what we would need to do to, you know, move boldly here with

new programs, new opportunities, how would we transition everyone, and what would we do to make sure that everyone has a chance to serve.

I think if you put some guardrails around it, so it does look like what you want, we're going to learn a ton. Make sure some of the communities are rural and midsize cities and large cities and drive some resources there. I think that's the only way we're going to really know if this is a valuable thing to do for a million people is if we do it in a serious, concentrated way for, you know, 100,000 people.

Mr. Brian Larkin

And one thing I would say to that is really aligned with what Shirley was saying is supporting the work; a lot of the work is already going on. They're leading it in some of the place-based activities that are going on, and with our Accelerator we're providing technical assistance and inviting people to come.

But one thing that was really baked into her statement I think is important is finding the appropriate partners. So, if you're really trying to get this off the ground early, forcing it on a place or a community won't make as much sense. The Mott Foundation historically has been invested in the city of Flint, period. And so, doing a system that says, well, how can service support the city of Flint greater makes perfect sense. We're a place-based organization; it's a passion of ours.

Another example I can give, the partnership now that we're moving with Kaira and America's Service Commissions, with we also have a historic focus on after school education, so how can we do that. So, figure out, if you're trying to do place based, who are the place-based funders? Who are the entities and organizations, or who are the place based private organizations that really have a sense of ownership of their place of home where you're doing public private partnerships. Those are the people to partner with. Those are going to be the ones that kind of stick through it through the early phases when you're trying to figure it out and amplify it at a much larger level. Because I think the conversations are really already moving forward and the

vehicles are in place but making sure it's to place it in the right places with partners who really buy into that sense of place.

Ms. Natalye Paquin

Sure. I would offer, just from personal experience, I happen to be rolling off the National Advisory Board of the Salvation Army and I was on that board for nine years, and the Salvation Army was very fortunate to receive a gift from the Krocs, the McDonald's owners, and that gift was to invest tens of millions of dollars in cities around the country but the cities had to have a matching grant, right, had to have matching funds.

And so the model was and I can't speak specifically to the model, but this is the concept of the model that, you could obviously reach out to the Salvation Army to get more information but it was they looked at certain communities, and so there was a criteria about the type of community, low income community that they would actually make an investment in, and then they assessed the level of readiness for that community to actually receive the grants.

And the way that you assess the readiness for the community is to say, okay, if you want, let's just say this is random, this is not the actual number $2 million, then you have to put up $2 million. And not only do you have to put up $2 million, but we need to see a number of community leaders that will be around the table, from a governance perspective, to help support this, let's just say two, three, four years out, so that there was some view and line of sight to the fact that not only can we get this off the ground and up but there's at least a commitment by leadership to support it for the first three fiscal years or five fiscal years.

And so, you know, my recommendation would be to look at some models where they're that are place based and draw some insights from the learnings there.

Mr. Alan Khazei

Thank you. Jaime?

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

I would you want to go?

Ms. Kaira Esgate

No, go ahead.

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

So, echoing everything that folks were talking about in terms of place based, I think something that I think about a lot and something that we're working on at Public Allies is this notion. Whenever you're trying to design around a really complicated issue, it's really difficult to do unless you've got you sort of create constraints. If they don't already exist, sort of creating constraints that allow you to tackle the problem and work backward from it, right? And place based is one sort of approach.

Another way of looking at it is sort of a time boxed approach, and the way we are looking at it at Public Allies increasingly I was talking about future of work and citizenship. The reason we're looking at that is that we believe that the next 10 to 15 years are going to shape the next century in so many ways, and that we're at an inflection point in our country and so many of our institutions are sort of being reinvented and these lines are being blurred, and there's going to be lots of displacement, as we know, but not just displacement in terms of you know, driverless cars, that's one thing, but it's also just a whole mindset and a skill set that we need to have.

And if you look at it, I mean, it depends on what report you're looking at and if there are different ways of looking at it, like the last industrial revolution and how long that transition took. But if you look at it, it's really frightening and it makes you realize that to meet this moment, as our institutions are struggling to catch up with how quickly things are changing, it

will require this massive upscaling, an unprecedented massive upscaling of a large number of young people at an unprecedented pace. Right?

It's like this marshal plan is kind of dynamic, right, and it feels like people are looking at different parts of the elephant and this requires a cross sector initiative, being very proactive about it. This is way beyond something Public Allies alone would be able to do. But we're just we are asking we're using that as a framing for how we see our work over the next decade and we're being bold and saying this is how we want to move the needle within this time frame and then we're saying what does our foundation look like within a short period of time. Three years, what does it look like, how do we prepare ourselves for that?

I say all of this because as we're having these conversations, you know, if you're looking for demonstration points and ways of marshalling around this and sort of a broader call to action that allows you to allocate resources accordingly, that that's another thing to consider is sort of, again, it's the time constraint and recognizing where we are in history, and there's no better way of testing how effective, you know, national service would be in terms of, you know, beyond like just really meeting the moment to make sure that the country makes it through, accelerates the pace at which it adjusts to these transitions.

Mr. Alan Khazei

Great. Kaira.

Ms. Kaira Esgate

I was just going to say, sorry, I believe like a place based approach is a really thoughtful way of doing this and I think a lot of our state service commissions are interested in thinking about this as well because it makes sense to them to be able to put an influx of resources into a community and see what might happen with that.

Some of the key things I think that would be important with that kind of approach, though, is I do think having the communities make a commitment and having a plan so we're not just saying hey, here's, you know, our $100 million, or whatever that number may be, but what's the plan for those resources. I think that's critically important.

Building on some of the other points, too, I think having commitment of leaders across sectors, so not just elected officials but also nonprofit leaders, corporate business leaders, philanthropic leaders in that area as well, I think that's really important. Having local funders committed, so I think a federal investment in this way would be really, really nice, but I think having that local commitment, whether it be from philanthropy, individual donors, corporate philanthropy as well, I think those are going to be important building blocks.

And I also, when I think about how you might view this in the community, I think having some core programs or kind of backbone programs that could probably scale pretty quickly is going to be important, but then I also would say that having, again, flexibility, right? So having some opportunity to really test new models or, you know, put a fellow in a nonprofit and see what happens with it, or do those types of things where it may not be part of the current structure but would really allow for some of that flexibility and innovation that I think would be important to thinking about how do you really take national service into a community and really change the face of that community in a very positive manner.

Mr. Alan Khazei

Thank you.

Dr. Joseph Heck

All right. That concludes the first round of questions. I hope everybody is hanging in there okay. The red light was on a little bit longer than I would like, so in the second round I'm going to ask the commissioners and participants to tighten it up a little bit to be respectful of everybody's time. I'll put myself on the clock for five minutes.

One of the things that I mentioned in my opening statement is the idea that we're looking at some, you know, new, out of the box, unique fundraising type ways to find resources. One of those things could potentially be a congressionally chartered foundation, so I'd like your opinion on what do you see as some of the risks and/or benefits? And if one was created with an overarching, broad fundraising mandate in support of national service, do you think there are foundations and corporations out there that would contribute?

Why don't I start down here with you, Ms. Esgate.

Ms. Kaira Esgate

So, I think the idea of a national foundation is an interesting one and I think that there is potential there. I think what would be we'd need to better understand how would the foundation actually give out its money, and so I think that that's really important to kind of think about that piece of it. Is it a match to existing federal resources, is it investing in innovative strategies? What that might look like I think would be important because I think that's ultimately what's going to attract funders to it. So then understanding where that money is going, I think is going to be important.

My sense is there are national funders that would be interested in this idea and so I think that you could create a culture amongst foundations and others to really contribute to that, but I think again them understanding where that's going to go as well. And I think that we would also want to make sure that the money is going across the country as well, so it's not just urban areas, it's not just rural areas, that there's definitely a commitment to spreading those resources throughout the country.

And I think probably a focus on national funders. I would want to encourage local funders to stay local in this work, because I think that the resources are scarce in many respects and so we want to keep that investment local if we could. But national funders contributing to a national effort makes sense to me.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Great. Mr. Larkin?

Mr. Brian Larkin

Similar to one of my previous answers, I think it really comes down to the funder on who would support this. While there might be some interest, we see private sector and other foundations really getting behind ideas that directly align with their funding strategies already, so it would really come down to the funder in that case.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Ms. Paquin.

Ms. Natalye Paquin

You know, we know that there are about 1.5, maybe up to 1.8 million nonprofits that currently exist, and last year there was over $400 billion that was contributed to nonprofits. And so, we think the idea might be a little premature, and perhaps it would be best to scan the current ecosystem of nonprofits and giving to see whether or not the objective could be furthered through the current giving ecosystem.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Thank you.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

I don't usually I don't think I've ever disagreed with Kaira, but I'm going to disagree 100%. I can't think of a single funder who would actually want to give money to this, and I'll tell

you why. There are no national service funders. We get them by telling you know, talking about workforce and education and like every other you know, we now have 20 funding areas we're pursuing. It's really hard.

One of the big barriers would be people perceiving that this is displacing government investment, and I think that would not be appealing. And then finally, you know, the national infrastructure that's currently supporting this field is about a half a dozen organizations, and half of them have undergone staff layoffs in the last two years. It's a really hard space to be in. So, if there is some magic funder out there that wants to really capitalize a federal related foundation, I would think that would be really cool, but I just think it would be a heavy lift and I wouldn't put my energy there.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Mr. Uzeta.

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

I think I'd have to echo that. It's challenging to raise money philanthropically for a lot of what we're doing. And everything we're talking about in terms of framing and messaging and mental models, all would have it's, you know, to the tenth power when you kind of think about this on a philanthropic level and what a sustainable revenue mix looks like.

And I would say that if we're already thinking about how to increase the living allowance, we're trying to think of how to supplement it, you know, through philanthropy, and if the federal government is out there doing the same thing, drawing from the same sources, my concern would be about the potential for cannibalizing a limited pool. And that makes that would just I think that would be counterproductive.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Thank you. Thank you all. Insightful.

Mr. Gearan.

Mr. Mark Gearan

Let me dial back a little bit to the rich conversation we had about place, and it's been sort of this inflection point that Shirley is summoning us to be bold on. But there's so many threads of what Bryan Stevenson would say is proximity, you have to be proximate to the issues you're working on, or the collective impact of the Stanford Journal of Social Innovation. There's just so many we're almost at an inflection point.

So, Alan, maybe I can turn to you, because in your testimony you said something very interesting to me. You said 76% of those surveys had CEOs, that's well respected, 75% globally, and you cited the Starbucks program and some of our commissioners

Ms. Natalye Paquin

Well, that cite was from the Edelman the 2019 report of the Edelman Trust Barometer, right.

Mr. Mark Gearan

It's a very interesting one, in the Starbucks Service Fellows examples that exist that some of our commissioners have huge interest in the beverage, at least.

[Laughter.]

Ms. Avril Haines

I single handedly supported them.

Mr. Mark Gearan

Yes, one of those 36. But speak to me about other ways and you're uniquely positioned here with us today to speak to other ways where the corporate sector could increase its engagement in this space.

Ms. Natalye Paquin

Well, yes, thank you. You know, one of the things that well, first of all, the corporate sector is engaging. They're just engaging in a different manner. Because we at Points of Light recognize Civic 50, and so these are 50 of the topmost civically minded corporations. Many corporations have a day of serving, they offer volunteer time off, so there are a number of ways that corporations are currently engaging.

What we find exciting about this model in particular is the fact that when you think about service, and national service in particular, over a 12-month period, Fellows typically have to only commit to that job or that role.

In this particular case, the company is actually investing in their part time employees and saying we will help supplement your income, which will give you 40 hours of work. The hours that they work with a nonprofit are not equal to the hours that they work for at the store, but they're gaining additional skills. And so, we believe that to the extent a company could afford that not every company could afford that, and so we don't know that this is the absolute sustainable model, but there's a good start here. To actually invest in your employees, you have these discretionary funds and send your employees out into communities, and so we think that it's a good model.

We also think that partnering with someone like CNCS, where potentially there could be matching funds, if you wanted to extend this to other companies where these companies have consumer facing employees and they wanted to invest in their employees and give them more opportunities for growth, but not necessarily in their workplace, you know, perhaps there's some model where we would work with CNCS or other institutions to figure out where are the sources of funds coming from to make this sustainable and to grow the model. But we're really excited about it.

Mr. Mark Gearan

Sure. Thank you.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Ms. Wada.

Ms. Debra Wada

I just want to continue this conversation, because if we are to bring sort of the corporation, the philanthropic, the nonprofits, government, all together, how do and we create this great synergy, how do we then market it to the American people, what this is, national service? Right? We understand it here. At least for me, I've learned what it is from being a part of this commission.

But for the average American, understanding what national service is, and why should I as a taxpayer provide money to a corporation to have national service, or why shouldn't the philanthropic community pick up this, you know, responsibility? What's in it for the American taxpayer? How do we explain that to them?

Because in the end, all our recommendations are going to Congress and to the president and to the American people, and we have to explain to them why this is important, not just to this

community or to other communities, but your community, and you as part of that community and part of this country, this is why it's important. So how would we go about doing that? Sorry.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

I'm happy to make this case all the time. So, we always talk about three things. You know, we start with changing lives, that there are young people out there for whom this will be a transformational experience, that they will go on and, you know, find careers and do important things, and it may be people who otherwise have no other pathways, so we talk about that.

We talk about the problems that we can solve at scale if we had this type of human capital available to communities. There's so many things that, you know, robots can't do that people can do, and it's everything from doing peer coaching to help end opioid addiction to, you know, just mucking out the house after a disaster, so we talk about that.

And then we finally talk about that we need public spirited leaders for this country, and anybody who is feeling a dearth in that area, you know, and when we think about who is going to be who's going to be in charge in another 20, 30 years, we want them to have had this experience. So that's how we make the case.

Ms. Debra Wada

Any other thoughts?

Ms. Natalye Paquin

Sure. I would just offer that it really depends on your audience and, to Shirley's point, clearly articulating the value proposition to that audience.

And so, I would just offer for corporations in particular, today's consumers are activists; today's employees are activists. They expect companies to have some type of social agenda, and that social community agenda should be consistent with the business interests, but you can't stand on the sidelines.

And so for companies in particular, why this would be important is because what it helps with employee recruitment, it helps with retention, it helps with market positioning, it helps with brand improvement, and so there are a number of ways that companies could benefit from being engaged in partnerships that support national service.

Ms. Debra Wada

Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Brian Larkin

And one approach could be also it's about we've talked about this place-based work and this culture of service, looking at a small area. But looking at the country as a whole, the federal government could tap into the young people's kind of this social consciousness with a campaign of sorts that promotes national service as a way to make the world a better place and gain valuable skills, plus getting this education. Or there could be a targeted communication approach that goes through of course then it comes out to resources, you know, that versus another, but that could be a strategy.

Ms. Debra Wada

Thanks.

Ms. Kaira Esgate

I'll go. I'll be quick. So, I think that everything that's been shared I think is on point on that. I think that the other piece here too is given the inflection point where we are in our country right now, this idea of building our civic infrastructure again, I think there's something important there. I recognize that may not resonate with everyone, but I believe that there is something to be said about our history of volunteer engagement and being involved in our communities and that national service is a natural extension of that. I think that that is really important for us to think about here.

And I think also just the idea that national service is rebuilding communities and it really is targeting specific priority areas, and I think something we've seen in recent years is models are starting to be developed around the opioid crisis and I think that as new priorities are emerging in this country, national service can be a solution to those priorities. And so, I think really, as talking to different folks about what might resonate with them, is also understanding what are those issues and examples of how national service is addressing them.

Ms. Debra Wada

Thanks.

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

And just to clarify, when you're saying who are we making the case to, is it or how do we make the case, is it to taxpayers that you're describing, or to corporations?

Ms. Debra Wada

Ultimately, right? Because, I mean, the federal government is not going to have the resources to be able to fund this. We're going to rely on a myriad of whether it's corporations,

nonprofits, philanthropics, government agencies, I mean, everybody is going to have to come to the table for this to work.

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

Yeah.

Ms. Debra Wada

So, part of that is, from the federal government side or even from state or local taxpayers, like how do we explain it to them? To the person who is sitting at home, has no idea what we're talking about, may or may not have known somebody who participated in some sort of service, and we're saying, you know what, you've got to this is going to be good for you.

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

Yeah.

Ms. Debra Wada

It's like a medicine, but you're going to want to like it.

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

I mean, I think we touched on a lot of points. I think the zeitgeist right now, there's a growing awareness just across the board, right, in terms of there's increased polarity, there’s people know it and feel it. There's a sense of despair, frankly, in terms of what to do. And this is felt across every sector. I mean, corporations look at this, feel this way. You know, government feels this way, individuals feel this way. And to me, it's a matter of time. There's the urgency around it, right? To me, it's a framing around the urgency of what everyone is feeling and putting a name to it and recognizing that it requires everybody to kind of step up.

And, I mean, clearly, corporations are recognizing this. And I think back to like when I was you know, when I was in politics, in government, I left, and I was hoping corporations were thinking this way, but they weren't thinking about this the same way; it was just traditional corporate social responsibility.

Now, it is, you know, like what Michael Porter talked about in terms of, you know, shared value partnerships and people corporations are being much more innovative. And to Mr. King's point, recognizing that it is it’s critical for their own generationally, millennials are thinking this way. For their own employees, they have to think this way. This is the future workforce, and this is the way they as a corporation, who you think might be resistant to this, if they're evolving so dramatically in this direction, to me it shows that there's something shifting.

And so, I would I think there's this framing around identifying maybe it's a key issue and it's identifying a big challenge that we're all going for. And I think that's how I would start to get at it.

Ms. Debra Wada

Okay. That was helpful. Thank you very much.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

I would like to put in the record, this is the marketing material that we've done on our campaign, but it definitely lays out how we do it.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Ms. James.

Ms. Jeanette James

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to direct my question to Ms. Esgate. So, we understand the importance of the state service commissions, and this morning we heard very compelling testimony from Mr. Bugbee about the work that OneStar does here in Texas across this very large state to support the service activities that are going on here.

My question and I'm interested in knowing to what extent do the state governors and state legislatures, to what extent are they interested in elevating and expanding?

We're talking about expanding national service, whether it be expanding the number of positions or investing in the infrastructure so that we can expand the positions. But I'd like to get a sense from you where the governors are on this and whether, in your view, there's a place for the federal government to encourage or interact with the governors to further this goal.

Ms. Kaira Esgate

Yes. Great question, thank you so much. So, I would say that the governors are very supportive of national service and we've seen that from both parties, so that's been something that I think that we're very proud of, to see that bipartisan support for national service within the states.

Now, some governors have taken the next step and are actually proposing initiatives to expand national service in their state. For example, in my verbal and my written testimony, I talked about California, where Governor Newsom has suggested that they increase the number of AmeriCorps members from basically double, from about 4,000 to 5,000 now to 10,000, and also double the value of the education award within the state with state funds. So, I think that that's an example right there, a new governor coming in and having a commitment to this and actually working really closely with the state service commission on this.

So many of our commissions are part of the governor's office themselves, and so those obviously those commissions are better positioned to work with the governor very closely on these ideas. Other commissions are part of the lieutenant governor's office. The lieutenant governor can take a lead role. For example, in Utah, our commission is part of the lieutenant governor's office and there's a lot of synergy there between that state service commission and the lieutenant governor's office as well. So, I think that, you know, a part of it is where the commission is located, certainly, but generally we do see that support from governors.

Also increasingly we're seeing state legislatures also being very interested, so I also mentioned during my testimony some of the new pieces of legislation that we see moving through, so I think the key that we've noticed there is that we now have a number of AmeriCorps alumni who are members of state legislatures, right? And so, when they get elected, they want to see, how can I support national service in my new role? And so that's actually been very important. So, for example, with the Nebraska legislation, to look at exempting the ed award from state tax that a member an alum of AmeriCorps is carrying that legislation and helping to marshal it through that process.

So, I think that as we continue to see more alumni in elected offices, I think we're going to continue to see that growth and opportunity. But again, over the last 10 years or so, we've seen a lot of governors that have stepped up and said, this is important in my state; I see the power of national service to really impact the communities and the priorities of our state and so I want to make sure that I'm making commitments to that.

The last thing I would just say on this front as well is I think there's a lot of interesting things governors can do within their own cabinet as well, so really challenging their cabinets to say, hey, you are in charge of employment development, so how are we thinking about how employment development and national service can be working together in this particular state, and actually using some of those development resources in combination with AmeriCorps and other national service resources to again create new opportunities as well.

So I think there's a number of ways that governors can kind of pull the string on this or the thread through in order to really do this but I think that we can continue to ramp up governor support, and I think you as a commission, with your national platform, can really challenge governors to step up and say, you know what, this is important to us and we really believe that we should be investing in that way.

Ms. Jeanette James

All right. Thank you.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Ms. Davidson. Dr. Davidson.

Dr. Janine Davidson

Sure. I mean, I when you serve on a commission like this, you know, you're excited. I mean, we're all excited about this. We're all, I think, in agreement on the value of service, the things that we've all talked about. We're super excited about the ideas you've brought to the table.

But at the end of the day, we have to write a report, which we're also very excited about.

[Laughter.]

Dr. Janine Davidson

And that report will probably be delivered about this time next year, hopefully a little bit earlier, maybe February or March, which is an election year. And I'm thinking about we you know, Commissioner Wada asked about how do we convince people that this is important. But let me talk about the intersection of timing and also of message.

In your opening remarks, Shirley, you said that this is our moment, and then you also said that our country is falling apart. And Mr. Uzeta, you said there's a sense of despair and that there are big challenges, and so now I'm getting sad.

And so, I'm wondering, you know, what is the hook? Because this is how public policy works. We're all policy makers and we get this, right? There's always, like, these ideas swirling around, and nobody listens to all of us geniuses that are crying in the dark for years and years and years on whatever the issue is, right? And then something happens, and people ask for answers and then we're all Johnny on the spot with all the stuff we've been talking about for the last two decades, right?

So, what's the spark? What's the thing that's going to get people to say, ah, this is our moment? Why is it our moment? Can you help me understand that?

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

Go ahead.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

Sure. You know, it's an interesting thing because there’s in some ways, it's our moment because some things are going well, and this is building on what's really best about America. You know, people do want to roll up their sleeves and do things. So, part of the moment is the numbers are great, the polling numbers. People across all kinds of demographic backgrounds believe in this when they understand and it's brought to their attention, so that's key.

I think people respond best when you really talk about the opportunity side, that this is about a new social compact where if you invest in your country, your country will invest in you. So, although I actually can spend a lot of time on the doom and gloom side, this is a tremendously optimistic thing to put forward, which is why so many candidates are gravitating to it.

So it's hard to say what is the thing that's going to happen that will make this the answer, but I do think one of the things that has happened is people are worried that we're divided too much and that we're not asking enough of people and that we're not putting these kinds of opportunities forward, so it's a it's a hard message. I don't disagree with that.

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

I would say I'd say two things. One is that let me first address the spark piece. The spark is those are just hard to predict, as we know, right? So I remember when I would design these campaigns for MTV, we would focus on you know, we'd kind of breakthrough on a specific issue, whether it was anti-discrimination or anti violence or whatever it was; and I'd say 90% of the time when we actually broke through, it was just in an unplanned way. And so, the best you do is you set up an infrastructure and so that you can respond nimbly to opportunities and so you've laid down that foundation, and you can respond and take advantage of it. And you can be super attuned to what those opportunities are and run quickly when they come.

So, I would just say that in general that it's hard to actually package that, like package a viral video or whatever; it's hard to tell.

But I think the other side of this I would say is that there is doom and gloom in terms of this challenge that we're facing and this inflection point that I was describing earlier, but it's also this huge opportunity because there are so many other trends that you can look at in terms of democratization of communication and education becoming an ecosystem. There's just the need for interdisciplinary skills and the way the fact that corporations are starting to look at this differently.

There are lots of points that you can and trends that you could harness to say, well, if this is happening and we're at this inflection point and the next 10 to 15 years are going to, you know, define if we believe that the next century, how do we remake it or how do we redesign things based on what we've learned works and doesn't work? And so, to me, that's incredibly exciting

and it's there's an opportunity to, instead of shielding ourselves, be proactive about how we want to redesign and taking advantage of the moment.

Dr. Janine Davidson

Anybody else want to share?

Ms. Natalye Paquin

Just briefly, I would say there are a couple of things. One is and I saw this on, I don't know, Good Morning America or the Today show or something like that, so it's real authentic research.

[Laughter.]

Ms. Natalye Paquin

That optimism is a muscle and pessimism is a habit, and if you want to increase the muscle you have to stop the habit, something like that. So, I actually think that, you know, the hook here from an optimistic perspective is service is actually happening. It's how we are categorizing it, how we are capturing it. It's happening. It's happening in a number of ways, whether people how they vote, how they use their voice, through social media, where they spend their money, where they choose to work, all of these different ways people are engaging and providing service; we're just not capturing it.

And the United Nations with its sustainable development goals, SDGs, they issued a report in July last year, 2018, and they said we are not going to accomplish these goals by 2030 unless we get more people involved, and so we need people power and we need the power of the best in people. And so, I would say that it's happening, and we just need to leverage more people sooner, faster, to accomplish more in our communities.

Dr. Janine Davidson

Thank you.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Mr. Kilgannon.

Mr. Tom Kilgannon

With respect to raising awareness of service and the opportunities, we're going to I want to ask you about the difference between a national campaign and a state campaign. So, I'm going to give you a big pot of money and tell you that you now have the opportunity to go out and raise awareness in marketing, you through a website, an advertising campaign, and recruiting a spokesman.

Would you create one website and market at the national level, or 50 websites and do it at the state level? With advertising the same thing, with a respected spokesperson, is it one, is it a number at the state level?

And understanding that the ideal answer is both, that's not acceptable here. What are the pros and cons of trying to do this at the national level or at the state level?

Ms. Kaira Esgate

I'll start. So, I do think the answer is both. However, I understand that's not an allowable answer.

So, you know, I think that because we are talking about things in communities, I do think that there is something to be said for local and statewide in that. However, I also recognize that one of the things that we see is that people want to serve in different parts of the country. Like,

also something that's very interesting about this idea is that you can go and serve in another part of the country and learn, like, oh, I've always wanted to go to X, and this is a great way for me to learn about that community as well.

So, I do think that the national piece does have something there. I think that you can bring kind of "you're part of a national movement," there's something I think that's very attractive to a lot of folks about that.

But I also think that the state piece, because it can really focus on what does it mean to serve in this state, what are those opportunities there? And obviously, from my vantage point representing state service commissions, I'm going to think about the state part of it there. I do think it provides them an opportunity to really talk about priorities in the state and how people can make an impact in those local communities in a way that would be a little bit more difficult in a national campaign. But I do think a national campaign helps the state campaigns be more successful as well.

Mr. Brian Larkin

I would say it has to depend on the goals. You know, I mean raising awareness, just generally speaking, about that something exists, that's one approach and that’s nationally, if you can get the word out and everyone's talking about it. But executing a strategy is going to have service is local, you know. What's effective and needed in a place, you know, how you develop the specific corps that are there, the way in which they function, the training that's provided, I mean that really has to be informed locally and has to be sensitive to the space, and that's how you address a lot of the issues that were some of the questions brought up here.

And in the earlier session I got a chance to sit in. You talked about how do you get more diverse pools, or how do you get pools that are reflective of communities? Like service has to be structured in a local format. It needs to be responding to the needs and shaping the space. But at the same time, while you're trying to raise that awareness, I think that there's a chance for both.

So, I'm not saying both, because that wasn't an option, but making sure whatever we decide, making sure we're executing a service strategy that's really informed locally.

Ms. Natalye Paquin

I think you need a centralized campaign, a national centralized campaign. When you think about "Get Tested," "Don't Drink and Drive," "Buckle Up, Arrive Alive," or I think it was the American Heart Association that had a 10 year campaign to lower heart disease in women and they started the first three years was just awareness, right? Did you know that heart disease was the number one killer of women in America, more than X, Y and Z, and then here are your risk factors.

So, yeah, my answer is the campaign should be a national campaign.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

So, I'm really struggling with this one. It's a great question. We've tried to do national campaigns before, and they've been really undercapitalized, and they haven't worked; it may be because they were undercapitalized. I think it's hard to find one spokesperson that's going to have the kind of broad appeal, because what's cool about our country is how diverse it is and, you know, somebody might think Chance the Rapper is the perfect spokesperson and somebody else might think you know, so, yeah, you get the problem.

Also, I do like the idea of creating some kind of a national template that can be taken down to the community level so you can say we had a campaign that was called "For one year, this was my office," and you kind of showed really cool different places you can serve, and there's been some customization of that. So, programs are taking it and showing "For one year, this was my office," and that's worked pretty well. So, I do think that to make it relevant locally, it will be important to do that. But I'm actually kind of wary of having a single spokesperson.

Also, like what if the spokesperson has some problem that surfaces. I don't know, I'm anxious about that.

[Laughter.]

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

That would never happen.

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

I would say it's hard to come up with something. I think you have to go back and look at what you're trying to solve for, what specifically is the call to action, what's the hope around it and is it is there I would think in a campaign framework, and how long can a campaign actually last. You have to really work backward from this specific challenge. And again, it's like we were saying earlier, it's segmenting your audience and realizing how the folks you want to influence most may look at it and you have to tailor your message to each of them. So, I would just say it's hard to say national, local, in general right now.

But some principles around it would be it seems like it would be something like a national campaign with local plug in opportunities, anything that allows that call to action and what it is that does allow you to kind of jump with a spark is so key in this scenario, right? And the things that are evolving when you start looking at marketing and engagement and trends and technology, the idea of being able to own something yourself and being able to customize it and then and running with it. Like, you know, the ice bucket challenge or whatever it is, those are the things that really sort of take-off and they're and some would say it's really hard to sort of package those, but there are some principles to creating campaigns like that.

I just think there are a range of possibilities. I would just echo what we've talked about in terms of understanding how social media and technology is trending and how you might leverage that today. The kind of campaign I would do now is much different than what I would have done

five years ago, and so but it really has to work backward from who you're actually trying to target, and I think it would be a combination of local and national.

Mr. Tom Kilgannon

Thank you.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Ms. Haines.

Ms. Avril Haines

This is unintentional, but this builds perfectly off of Tom's question. Kaira, I really wanted to start with you, because one of the things in your written testimony is this idea of a one stop shop website, basically, that would allow people to understand sort of I think you say advertise, basically, all national security sorry all national service opportunities, whether they be military or civilian or a variety of things.

And I guess one is, I'd love to hear more about why you think that's so important; and two, just how would state and local folks do you think plug into that kind of a concept if it were to work?

Ms. Kaira Esgate

Yeah, I think it really builds on some of the testimony in your first panel today about the idea about really making sure that the military side as well as the national service side are reinforcing one another. And so I do think that if an individual is interested in serving their country, then being able to go to one place to kind of understand the range of options, and maybe

they go there because they think they're interested in national service and actually figure out that maybe military service is a better fit for them, or vice versa.

So, I do think that opportunity to really understand all of the variety of options out there and actual stories and kind of experiences of folks too could be a great way to do that. I mean, I do think in the digital age now, it's really important that we do have those resources out there. And I do think, for example, expanding the scope of military recruitment centers to include the national service, that could be a nice complement to that as well.

I do think, in kind of building on this and the last question as well, I do think that if a national campaign is going to happen, also having ways or extensions for the state and local level are an important part of that. So, I do think that one of the challenges that we have is that national service is very diffuse. You know, if you serve in an education program in Texas and what you might be doing in an environmental program in the state of Washington, that is going to probably be a very different experience too. So, I think helping people understand that is really important as well, and so I think that we would have to make sure that a national site could do those types of things. But I think we want to recognize that people are going to come to this from different points of view, different perspectives, and having kind of a place where they were able to do that and then help them kind of figure out what's the best path for them as an individual would be very powerful.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

Can I just say something about that? Because we run that website. It just doesn't have the military stuff on it. We've spent millions of dollars to build it and I think that there would be a way to adapt it to incorporate both military, and we've just added the Peace Corps this last week. So, there are definitely some shortcomings. I don't think it's perfect.

But it also allows for any community to create its own site and just pull in its own positions. So, Flint, you know, could have I think it probably does have one. Our communities

each are able to use the functionality to create that, so it wouldn't be hard to incorporate military. It incorporates both AmeriCorps and non-AmeriCorps programs. So, you know, there is something to having the ability to search for, you know, "I really want to go to California and work on clean energy," and be able to find that.

Because what happens now is you get recruited to an individual program; like Public Allies will, like, you know, pull you in. But if you're not right for Public Allies or it's not right for you, you don't necessarily know there's all these other programs you could do.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Ms. Skelly.

Ms. Shawn Skelly

Thank you. I'd also like to pick up on my colleague Mr. Kilgannon's point about raising awareness, but I'd like to take it down to what I think is probably one of the most hyper local, formal formalized versions of community we have, and that's schools K 12. And, Mr. Larkin, I'd like to start with you, please. We're from the federal government and we're here to help and that's where our recommendations are going to go, right to the president and to Congress.

So, from the lofty heights of the federal level, how can federal assistance be brought to bear to introduce and increase awareness of service programs, national service programs, in middle schools and high schools?

Mr. Brian Larkin

Well, one model that we have locally that I think has been really effective was we have a corps that's based in the schools. So, if you're a student right now, if you're a sixth grader at an elementary in Flint and you play on the flag football team, your coach is an AmeriCorps service member. And if you participate in a summer camp program or if you participate in the

community education, work after school, like you're interacting in all of these ways. If you think about the pivotal people throughout your life who helped you become who you are, in Flint there is a high likelihood that that's a service member, that that's a service person.

How can we set up one kind of understanding of a model that incorporates it in K 12 that's responsive and respectful for the existing space you know, recognizing the existing space of educators and the structure of administrators but how do you embed service within that and then inform, be really intentional with the informing of students about those opportunities and those experiences.

That person that you confide in in chess club is actually here through AmeriCorps and they're going to be here through the summer program, and when you get to be their same age, you have these opportunities too. So being really intentional about putting it right I mean, when we're thinking about K 12, and especially when we're thinking about the really early ages, they believe kind of what they see. If you go to a third-grade classroom right now and ask them what they want to be, they're going to name either something they've seen on TV or something of someone who's related to them. Not too many people are going to want to be an urban planner, like what I went to school with, because you don't see it, you know.

So I think, from the highest levels, it is putting a service member in front of them who is consistent and providing a space and then explaining what their service is, either through branding you know, whether it's the simple branding of wearing the shirt and them saying, oh, I see you're a person with an A just like that person, what is it? Being consistent with that space and then expanding from there. But it's been really, really effective in our community and it's been through all our other folks.

Ms. Shawn Skelly

Can I follow up with you, because you're talking about the interaction with the individual young people.

Mr. Brian Larkin

Yes.

Ms. Shawn Skelly

But do you have anything you could share about how the placement of those service people influences their parents and their families with their regard for service?

Mr. Brian Larkin

Well, we've seen some examples, actually, where my colleague likes to speak about myself and the family, and it's written up in my written testimony as like "the first family of service," because my mother is involved, and my sister, and other things. But we have a lot of people who are coming right now who are starting, and then now their parents are coming through for a term of service. Similar to what a lot of people said, there's no upper age limit on service.

And it's not we have a unique opportunity here, and this goes back to a previous question about whether it's doom and gloom. We have the unique opportunity that I would say the bulk of the American public has not soured on service. They're not turning they're not unengaged because they turned it down or don't want to do it. It's like, "oh," being exposed. So we've seen a lot of that, where young people are getting engaged and then a year later their parents or they're serving together with parents or they're serving with peers and they're engaging in that space, and then some of these resources that providing with there's a program through a middle school called Girls on the Run and then they're talking about healthy behaviors and healthy attitudes and then now how some of their families are utilizing some of these same things.

And then we have festival you know, 5K races and things like that. You see the whole family is coming out because we provide transportation from the school site where corps

members are there and then their family for the first time, it's like, "Oh, I never really supported this cultural institution and knew I could come here, I never did those things." So, we're seeing it happen organically, though.

I wouldn't say that it's prescriptive, that there's a carry-on program or there's a bring your family along program. But we're seeing again with that and that's really a culture of service and people are recognizing and engaging in it more and more ways than we ever imagined before.

Ms. Shawn Skelly

Thank you. I yield back, sir.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Great. Mr. Khazei.

Mr. Alan Khazei

So, I want to pivot and start initially with Natalye on this question about international service, and if anybody else wants to chime in, you're welcome to.

So, you've had affiliates with Points of Light in over 30 countries. YouthBuild has expanded to multiple countries. Wendy Kopp started Teach for America; she's now leading Teach for All, it's in 40 countries. Barbara Bush, the granddaughter of President Bush we're here at his school, and we're real honored to be here started Global Health Corps to help young people serve doing health work abroad.

What can we do, from your experience, to incentivize or support more service internationally or overseas? Would it be a good idea to have a grant program, somewhat like AmeriCorps but for programs that want to operate internationally? Could be maybe out of a

corporation, maybe out of USAID. Or what have you learned out of the Points of Light that you've done globally?

Ms. Natalye Paquin

Yes, it's a great idea, and thank you for the question. Actually, I think it was three weeks ago I was in India and we had it was our global meeting, our annual global meeting. We were in New Delhi and there were leaders, executive directors, from about 22 NGOs from around the world. You know, they're talking about shared problems, shared experiences, really being innovative and creative with each other; and then learning more about our NGO that we work with in India is iVolunteer, one of the largest volunteer organizations in the country.

A couple of things that we learned, and this was just from travel, like did you know that by 2028, India is going to be the largest country in the world? They will be larger than China. They'll have almost 1.5 billion people, that's just in nine years, right? 2028, is that nine years?

[Laughter.]

Just in nine years, and, you know, so we say as goes India goes the world, and it's important for them to get it right.

The point of this is that international travel and international connections expand us in unexpected ways. We come back enlightened and with greater sensitivities and probably expanded perspectives. Our Points of Light, in particular nonprofits, are always looking for human resources, and so we think expanding national service and working with nonprofits that have global reach and placing those corps members in those communities help build stronger communities globally; but then also, when the leaders come back, they help build stronger communities locally. And so, we think it's an excellent idea, and I'm expanded just from three weeks ago.

Mr. Alan Khazei

Thank you.

Mr. Jaime Ernesto Uzeta

I'll just add that I think that is as we're considering what the future looks like and the need and what the skills are that young people are going to need to thrive, the ability to think globally, and because we're so connected digitally, is going to be so critical. And depending on, you know, on how you're looking at the research, so the idea of creating opportunities for somebody to go globally because you know, around service, would be really unique and a way of connecting the dots that would be very powerful and it's a really I think that would be a big value out of national service to underserved communities in particular.

Ms. Shirley Sagawa

I think that so some of the programs you mentioned are great because they are taking people who live in those countries and enabling them to serve in those countries, right? So, the question is how many Americans should be serving abroad, right? And I think that a lot more could. Because of the way the federal structures have grown up, Peace Corps is one program; it's not helping, necessarily, you know, as many of the NGOs that might want to start something, and there's been funding from the State Department. So, I think it would have to be an intentional effort to kind of and I think there's a lot of potential there, but I think there's some things to weigh as you're thinking about it.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Great. Well, that ends round two, so thank you very much for hanging with us, Ms. Esgate, Mr. Larkin, Ms. Paquin, Ms. Sagawa, and Mr. Uzeta. We greatly appreciate your time today and the valuable information that you've provided to the commission. A lot of food for

thought. I will now dismiss the panelists you're welcome to take seats in the front row there, if you'd like and open up the airtime for public comments.

The commission is committed to transparency and openness with the public. In keeping with these principles, the commission intends to provide the public with an opportunity to deliver public comments during our hearings.

As a reminder, in order to provide the greatest opportunity for as many participants to offer a comment as would like, public comment is limited to a two-minute period per person. As is noted on our website, sign up for public comment took place between the opening of registration and the start of this hearing.

When you signed up, you received a numbered ticket. To ensure fairness, tickets were randomly drawn. I'll call out the ticket numbers and ask that when your number is called, please come forward and make a line behind the microphone located to my right, your left, and provide your comment.

If time does not permit well, that's not going to be the case, because we've only got six people wanting to make comments, so we'll have plenty of time.

Additionally, if you have any written statements that you would like to submit for the record, please provide them to the staff at the registration desk. So, in order: Numbers 6018, 6021, 6017, 6020, 6019, and 6022. Did everybody go home?

[Laughter.]

So, during your comment, please be aware of the lights in front of me. The light will turn yellow when you have 30 seconds remaining, red when time has expired. You will also hear a

buzzer. I'll ask you to please introduce yourself to the commission and any affiliation you might have before making your comment.

Sir.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Harold Woods

Commission members and Mr. Chairman, I'm Harold Woods, senior director of SOSAmerica.org, and so it's Service Over Self. I am grateful for the opportunity to share with you a few thoughts with you. As a retired businessman and concerned about the need for continuing renewal to our country, I commend the SOS America initiative to you as part, a big part, and solution that you are charged with.

General Borling, as you probably know, testified before you in Washington, D.C. some time ago. And since I live here in Texas, he called me and asked me to run over here really quick because he is in Washington right now.

But I take this opportunity to emphasize that the military is the most respected institution in the nation, yet only a small percentage of our young men and young ladies qualify physically and mentally for our volunteer service. We most assuredly need to expand the opportunity for the military, and the SOS America advocates an affordable one-year, small unit military experience.

Imagine mixing geography backgrounds and ages 18 to 26 in that unit of young people whose physical and mental requirements would be based on their ability to take care of themselves versus the strenuous requirements of all volunteer force. They would train and serve in platoons of 30, companies of 100, and respond on demand to the needs of the services, guard, reserve, federal and state agencies; shared values and experiences, the affirming of the reality that they serve, that this is their earned benefit and a benefit to our nation.

It's all about nation building in America, and I commend to you all SOSAmerica.org, or Service Over Self. Thank you.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Thank you. And if we can have the copy of your typed remarks there for the record, if that's okay?

Mr. Harold Woods

Yes, I will.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Great. Thank you very much.

Any other ticket numbers still present? If you are, please come forward. Just line up, queue up behind the mic.

Mr. Sherman Tylawsky

Thank you all for being here. My name is Sherman Tylawsky. I am a first year Masters of International Affairs student here at The Bush School.

I'd like to bring up something that might have been mentioned earlier but might relate to that a little bit more. I think the foundation of public service, at least in my view, and perhaps many here in this room and across the country, is really the protection of our rights within the within our founding documents.

I think when people see that rights are being protected, whether it's free speech, whether it's freedom of religion, freedom to petition, et cetera, I think people will see not only see other different points of view and like to pitch in, but they will also see that there is in the hope that

this country will be a major force in protecting human rights, protecting all these liberties and we're able to have a much more civil conversation.

I think there's a lot of polarization going on right now, and unfortunately a number of institutions out there, whether they be educational institutions or perhaps even political institutions, are, in my view and many people's view, really shutting down certain parts of free speech because they think it's offensive or because it's something that they disagree with.

But I do encourage the commission and others to consider any sort of measures or proposals that would support free speech across the country to ensure that we have this sort of discussion. So, thank you all.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Great, thank you. Thank you for being here today.

Please introduce yourself and any affiliation and provide your comment.

Mr. Parc Smith

Sure. Hi, my name is Parc Smith. I'm the CEO for American YouthWorks, where we run several conservation corps in Texas and Louisiana, disaster relief programs, and the YouthBuild program in Austin.

I wanted to just speak to a few of the points today and share a few ideas. This idea about how do we approach national awareness versus this local awareness, and I think it is really that combined messaging that we need to continue to strike on, which says we have you know, let's just say something like "National service, engaging locals to make a difference in your community," and showing those images that people would understand are happening in each of these communities across the country, and then here's how you engage with your locals.

So, it really needs to be a dual message, because we've seen that when we perform in disaster relief at times, we've found that sort of the federal message is a little bit scary in some of our rural communities in the south; your welcome is not always as great. But when we wear our Texas Conservation Corps shirt and we show up, then they feel like "These are young people who are from our community and they're helping us and they're here," and it's just a different level of reception. And so, it's just recognizing that people are motivated by local issues, and yet the national awareness is really helping draw some attention and support in a bigger way.

Thinking about member development, really helping the programs have the opportunity to pay attention to the industry recognized certifications, that's something that YouthBuild has been really strong at. The conservations corps are providing wildland firefighting certificates and other things that will move them into career pathways, and so, you know, just highlighting that opportunity to get industry recognized certifications is an important aspect to remember.

And then in terms of expanding in a bigger way, our communities are in need of significant infrastructure repairs. We have backlogged maintenance on our public lands, in our city parks, in our county and state lands, even our roads and bridges, these areas where young people can gain skills, help the local community with their needs. And some of the funding can come from city infrastructure, some of it can come from the national service initiative and combining those together can make a significant difference.

We found that the National Park Service did a study that found that conservation corps were able to save 65 to 85% of the cost of other ways of either using some of their own staffing or using external contractors to do this kind of work, because we've got young people who are motivated and willing to live in a tent rather than a hotel at night so per diems are a lot less. There's ways in which you can leverage those dollars together and make a bigger impact encouraging those folks to work together. Thanks.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Thank you very much.

Afternoon, ma'am.

Ms. Mary Grace Landrum

Chairman Heck and commissioners, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you this afternoon. I'm Mary Grace Landrum. I'm a state service commissioner here in Texas with the OneStar Commission, appointed by the governor of Texas. I'm also an elected former elected school board member in a district with over 35,000 students, 56% of whom are economically disadvantaged; 52% are English language learners. And two nonprofit agencies have been very helpful in the past with supporting these students with after school programs, including tutoring, so they've enabled and increased the capacity, their capacity, through AmeriCorps programs.

Unfortunately, they no longer participate in AmeriCorps programs due to administrative burden, they've told me. Their need that they've identified is to streamline the application process, reporting, and funding administration. My hope is that we'll be enabled we'll be able to do that maybe with the new transformation or through the new transformation plan, and that we'll still be able to keep the really robust valuation and support that's provided to the programs. I happen to chair our program committee and continue to be impressed with the processes that we have in place for doing that.

I would also be remiss if I didn't tell you that I'm from Houston, and that I particularly appreciate that without the National Conservation Corps members and the AmeriCorps members, our recovery would not be where we are today, even though it's still ongoing. I was at an event last night and I had two Houston City Council members say, "Please advocate for increases to NCCC and thank you to our members," so we deeply appreciate that.

And I'd like to end with a story from one of the faith based small nonprofits who's still working there. They're working in a community with 350,000 individuals in Katy, Texas, which is right adjacent to Houston, and their executive director said he's raised $300,000 in the last month to help rebuild the 15,000 homes that are still uninhabitable just in that small part of Houston. Unfortunately, he's only able to spend, so far, 106,000, because he doesn't have the field volunteer administration, the site coordination, the construction logistics and the planning available to him to actually spend those dollars that he's already raised. That's the kind of work that NCCC does and provides, and we deeply appreciate it. So please consider that.

Lastly, if I have two quick seconds, your thoughts your question about the national campaign, I'd like you to think about the fact and you might want to look at a YouTube video and/or a TED Talk by Simon S I N E K, Sinek, and it's how to tell your story. And most of the time, when most of us, myself included, talk or tell a story to someone, we start with what do we do, how do we do it, and oh, maybe why we're going to do it.

Unfortunately, the part of the brain, according to his research, that makes decisions about taking action is that part of the brain that needs the why question answered. So, you might think about why do we need to do it in framing that campaign, and then answer the other two. Thank you very much.

Dr. Joseph Heck

Great. Thank you so much for being here. Are the other ticket holders still here? No? Okay.

Well, if anybody else that's in the audience has suddenly been moved to want to make a comment after hearing the great discussion, anybody want to offer a comment, come on up. We've got time.

All right. First victim.

Mr. Sean Harper

My name is Sean Harper. I am a member of the NCCC, and I just wanted to say that I am here because I did not get into the school of my choice and my parents had offered NCCC as a gap year, as a way to somewhat discover myself and what I want to do. And I did not picture myself doing this, even during CTI. I was somebody who could barely read a tape measure when I started my first project, and now I feel like I can just build my own house.

And I saw during CTI, and during now, that most corps members still feel like they are just not able to do what NCCC expects them to do, and I feel like that's mainly because that's mainly because they have a lot of self-doubts, something I had when I was in CTI and something that I overcome when I started working with working on my round one and round two projects.

I am now actively trying to apply for a second term because I have such an adventure so far. I think that when you are branding or advertising NCCC or a public servant in general, you should really try to make it seem like anybody could do it. Make it seem like you don't need this skill or talent or knowledge to be a public servant. It just takes the will to do something about a problem.

Dr. Joseph Heck

All right. Thank you so much.

[Applause.]

Last call.

Okay, seeing no other public comments and there being no other business before the commission, this hearing is adjourned.

[Bangs gavel at 1533.]

APPENDIX

Panelist Shirley Sagawa, CEO and Founder of Service Year Alliance submitted two additional documents for the record. The documents can be referenced starting on page 96.

A Project of Service Year Alliance

Serve America Together is a campaign to make national service part of growing up in America.

For too long, the burden of our collective freedom and civic responsibility has been carried by the few. The college affordability crisis has left too many students with debt that they're struggling to repay. Millions of young people are out of work, their talents untapped. Communities across the country face significant unmet challenges including education inequity, disaster relief, aging populations, and substance abuse issues. And, Americans are more polarized than at any other moment in history.

Imagine a future in which young people earn college tuition by addressing our communities' greatest challenges – where they are empowered to shape their own destinies regardless of zip code. Imagine a future in which empathy trumps apathy and participation and problem-solving outmatch indifference. Imagine a shared experience far stronger than anything that may seek to divide us.

This future is entirely achievable if a year of service is a common expectation and opportunity for all. America has been at crossroads like this before. If we are going to achieve this bold vision, we must be audacious in our call to action. Our country can do big things together. And Service Year Alliance is organizing the stakeholders, the strategy, and the movement we need to bring this vision to life.

To achieve this vision, we have a four-pronged strategy:

1. Grow awareness among influencers and policymakers that universal national service is the solution our nation needs now.

We will develop the storytelling assets, research, and evidence base to make a compelling case for universal national service. We'll grow and enlist our network of influential Americans in elevating the prominence of our message through a comprehensive communications campaign, including speeches, print and online media, live events, and more. Policymakers and influencers will be talking about the need to grow service to bridge our divides, solve challenges in our communities, and create the public-spirited leaders our country needs.

2. Build the diverse, bipartisan coalition representative of service in American life that will be necessary to advocate for, build, and sustain the most equitable, impactful universal national service system possible.

We'll recruit organizations from across the service sector--including public, military, civilian, and faith-based service--to build the largest coalition for universal national service our country has ever seen. We'll also seek partners from other sectors that have a vested interest in service, like higher education, municipal leadership, and more. And we'll work to influence the Commission on Military, National, and Public Service as they develop and release their recommendations. The result will be a bold and unified vision for the future of national service in America.

3. Grow demand for universal national service at a local level and ensure communities across America are poised for success within a future system of universal national service.

We'll work with communities across the country to create universal national service plans, to demonstrate that communities are clamoring for service at scale to solve pressing local problems. We'll provide models for collaboration across sectors, building upon our previous experience growing service years in partnership with cities and state, including partnership with education agencies, local businesses, and community organizations. We'll focus on communities in strategic districts,so that policymakers are hearing from constituents in their own backyards that we need more service, now.

4. With the above assets, pass legislation and secure funding to establish a system of universal national service in America.

These three assets--local demand, national awareness, and a broad, unified voice for service--will provide the platform we need to galvanize action from policymakers. We will leverage these assets at key moments to drive the federal agenda towards creating and funding a system of universal voluntary national service, consistent with our vision--so that one day service is truly a common expectation and opportunity for every young American.

The Data

- 63% of Americans support the establishment of a universal national service system
- 1 in 4 young Americans would definitely serve
- 75% of Americans support national service as a strategy to address unmet needs in our communities and empower the individuals serving
- 61% of voters are more likely to vote for a candidate who would guarantee funding to establish a service position for every qualified national service applicant

To learn more and get involved, please contact Yasmeen Shaheen-McConnell at yasmeen@serviceyear.org

ENLISTING AMERICA:

A Call to National Service from Those Who Have Served

National service is what our country needs in the 21st Century and we encourage everyone to get behind this big idea.

America works best when every individual is invested in a positive vision for our collective future. That demands active citizenship built around the responsibility to serve. We, the sponsors and the undersigned – all veterans of military service – believe that universal voluntary national service would ensure that young people grow up as responsible, engaged citizens, not just individuals.

1 There should be an opportunity – and expectation – that every young American serves their country for a year.

Some individuals may not be eligible, or may simply choose not to serve in the military; they should be encouraged to seek opportunities in civilian service instead. They would serve full-time as civilians some time in the decade they enter adulthood, between when they are 18 and 28 and receive a modest stipend. Such national service, in one of a range of opportunities from education to conservation, from AmeriCorps to the Peace Corps, would be voluntary – not legally required – but instead culturally expected.

2 There are many ways to serve your country; military and civilian national service are two sides of the same coin.

Service is required to create the citizens our country needs. The military alone cannot – and should not – provide all the service opportunities required. Many young Americans will serve as civilians. As veterans of the military, we recognize that military and civilian service are part of a continuum of national service.

TAKE ACTION

If you are a military veteran who would like to sign this pledge, or view the list of more than 200 flag and general officers who have, please go to: **about.serviceyear.org/enlisting_america.**

If you represent an MSO, VSO, or other military-affiliated organization and would like to work with us, please contact **yasmeen@serviceyear.org.**

If you want to know more about our work, please go to **about.serviceyear.org.**

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A BETTER YOU. A GREATER US.

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Michael F. Spigelmire
Lieutenant General
U.S. Army

Pat M. Stevens, IV
Major General
U.S. Army

Mitchell H. Stevenson
Lieutenant General
U.S. Army

John M. Stewart, Jr.
Rear Admiral
U.S. Navy

George Stotser
Lieutenant General
U.S. Army

Jack Strukel
Major General
U.S. Army

William D. Sullivan
Vice Admiral
U.S. Navy

Gordon R. Sullivan
General
U.S. Army

Peter U. Sutton
Major General
U.S. Air Force

Thomas E. Swain
Brigadier General
U.S. Army

Guy Swan
Lieutenant General
U.S. Army

Joseph Sweeney
Command Sergeant Major
US. Army

William W. Tager
Sergeant Major
U.S. Army

James M. Thompson
Lieutenant General
U.S. Army

Roger G. Thompson, Jr.
Lieutenant General
U.S. Army

W. Russell Todd
Major General
U.S. Army

John Totushek
Vice Admiral
U.S. Navy

Carroll P. Trahan
Command Sergeant Major
U.S. Army

George Trautman
Lieutenant General
U.S. Marine Corps

F. Andrew Turley
Major General
U.S. Air Force

Dean L. Turnbull
Sergeant Major
U.S. Army

Thomas R. Turner
Lieutenant General
U.S. Army

Christine M. Turner
Brigadier General
U.S. Air Force

Robin Umberg
Brigadier General
U.S. Army

Dave Valcourt
Lieutenant General
U.S. Army

Jan A. Van Prooyen
Major General
U.S. Army

Louis C. Wagner
General
U.S. Army

William S. Wallace
General
U.S. Army

James M. Walley, Jr.
Rear Admiral
U.S. Navy

Guy Walsh
Brigadier General
U.S. Air Force

Lloyd T. Waterman
Brigadier General
U.S. Army

Scott G. West
Major General
U.S. Army

Jerry D. West
Rear Admiral
U.S. Navy

Bobby Wilkes
Major General
U.S. Air Force

Michael J. Williams
General
U.S. Marine Corps

Johnnie Wilson
General
U.S. Army

Dennis C. Wilson
Command Sergeant Major
U.S. Army

Fred F. Woerner, Jr.
General
U.S. Army

Stephen G. Wood
Lieutenant General
U.S. Air Force

Robert M. Worley, II
Major General
U.S. Air Force

Albert Zapanta
Major General
U.S. Army