



## NSCA e-Alert

March 23, 2009

### Let's "Bring It Home!"

Every day, the landscape in Washington changes. Our strategies are developed in response to those changes.

Last Friday, we asked project directors, friends and supporters to respond immediately to our e-Alert request to contact Senators. You responded in large numbers. Thank you!

As you know, the long awaited **positive** legislation of the GIVE Act and the Serve America Act will introduce new and innovative programs that will expand service and reauthorize Senior Corps. NSCA **thanks** the House, the Senate, and the administration for this legislation and for hearing our voice. NSCA believes that passage of the bill, along with NSCA's proposed changes, will strengthen our Senior Corps programs.

While we seek to include, change, or omit language in the legislation regarding the issues identified in our previous alerts, our primary concern remains the delegation of authority to state commissions. We continue to do only what will be strategically helpful in this process. It's time to "bring it home!"

**Right now, we ask that ONLY constituents of Senate HELP Committee members - in the states listed below - continue to educate their Senators as to the added value specific changes to the bill can accomplish.** Changes in the bills cannot be accomplished without the involvement of each FGP, RSVP and SCP project director in these key states: **MA, CT, IA, MD, NM, WA, RI, VT, OH, PA, NC (2), OR, WY, NH, TN, GA, AZ, UT, AK, OK, KS.**

**If you ARE NOT a project director in one of these states, there is no need for action at this time.**

**If you ARE a project director in one of these states and haven't already done so, please:**

- Call or fax your Senator on the HELP Committee **Monday before noon EDT** with the following sample letter/script. Their contact numbers are listed

below.

- Get all of your coworkers, volunteers, clients, friends, family, neighbors, Advisory Council, Board and program supporters to contact your Senator on the HELP Committee.
- In addition to the following sample letter/script, please fax NSCA's position paper on the delgation of authority to states to your Senator on the HELP Committee. The position paper, which contains background information, concerns, and recommendadtions, is available on the NSCA website - [www.NSCAtogether.org](http://www.NSCAtogether.org).
- After you contact your Senator's office, please send an email to [info@nscatogether.org](mailto:info@nscatogether.org) to inform us of: a) your name, b) location of your program c) who was called and d) their response.

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## SAMPLE LETTER/SCRIPT

Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_,

I am your constituent and a <*program director, friend, supporter*> for <*FGP, RSVP, SCP*>, a Senior Corps program. The Senate is expected to consider the Serve America Act on Monday, March 23, and as a strong supporter of national service I am so thankful that you and the HELP Committee have drafted a bill to not only reauthorize national service, but also to add innovative new programs. However, I must urgently inform you of changes needed to make that bill most successful.

### **1. Please delete the language which delegates authority to the State**

**Commissions.** Transfer of authority from one central, longstanding, and efficient entity to fifty state entities operating with widely varying funding priorities, organizational structure and capacity could have potential and irreparable damage to Senior Corps programs. While some AmeriCorps programs have done well under state oversight, the limited duration of their service commitment lends itself better to this option. Senior Corps volunteers are known for their longevity, with many serving in Senior Corps programs that have been in existence for over 40 years. They need and deserve consistent and centrally unified administrative program oversight.

**2. Please add a provision that allows 15% of Foster Grandparents and Senior Companion volunteers to be above the poverty level and still receive the non-taxable stipend.** There are many potential volunteers who are just a few dollars above the income eligibility level and therefore cannot be stipended volunteers. In many cases, they are retired individuals who are highly qualified, capable and educated with life and work skills to serve as volunteer leaders. The language would specify including over-income only when the program can document they could not recruit enough low-income volunteers.

**3. Please add a provision that allows Senior Corps programs to solicit and accept donations, including donations from clients and families.** Primarily allow SCP and RSVP providing respite and in-home long term care to receive these donations. You may not know that Senior Companion Program and RSVP programs are not limited to serving low-income clients. Many clients are middle income and have the means and willingness to donate to our programs. Federal law currently allows many other programs such Title IIIIE (Meals on Wheels, congregate meal sites, caregiver

respite) to solicit and accept donations. Extend this same authority to Senior Corps programs.

Senator, as your constituent and a <*program director, friend, supporter*> of Senior Corps, these changes must be made to make this bill most productive.

Your Name  
Your Address

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## HELP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### Democrats by Rank

Edward Kennedy (MA) no need to contact his office  
Christopher Dodd (CT) 202.224.2823, fax 202.224.1083  
Tom Harkin (IA) 202.224.3254, fax 202.224.9369  
Barbara A. Mikulski (MD) 202.224.4654, fax 202.224.8858  
Jeff Bingaman (NM) 202.224.5521, fax 202.224.2852  
Patty Murray (WA) 202.224.2621, fax 202.224.0238,  
Jack Reed (RI) 202.224.4642, fax 202.224.4680  
Sherrod Brown (OH) 202.224.2315, fax 202.228.6321  
Robert P. Casey, Jr. (PA) 202.224.6324, fax 202.228.0604  
Kay Hagan (NC) 202.224.6342, fax 202.228.2563  
Jeff Merkley (OR) 202.224.3753, fax 202.228.3997

### Independent

Bernard Sanders (VT) 202.224.5141, fax 202.228.0776

### Republicans by Rank

Michael B. Enzi (WY) 202.224.3424, fax 202.228.0359  
Judd Gregg (NH) 202.224.3324, fax 202.224.4952  
Lamar Alexander (TN) 202.224.4944, fax 202.228.3398  
Richard Burr (NC) 202.224.3154, fax 202.228.2981  
Johnny Isakson (GA) 202.224.3643, fax 202.228.0724  
John McCain (AZ) 202.224.2235, fax 202.228.2862  
Orrin G. Hatch (UT) 202.224.5251, fax 202.224.6331  
Lisa Murkowski (AK) 202.224.6665, fax 202.224.5301  
Tom Coburn, M.D. (OK) 202.224.5754, fax 202.224.6008  
Pat Roberts (KS) 202.224.4774, fax 202.224.3514

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## Important Reminder

We advise Senior Corps project directors that program staff and stipended volunteers can only engage in lobbying activities on their own time and not *"while charging time to a Corporation-supported program."*

**Thank You,**

**Fred Lugo**  
**President**  
**National Senior Corps Association**

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