

National Senior Corps Association  
2008 Senior Corps Congressional Education Campaign

To All FGP, RSVP and SCP Project Directors, staff and friends:

The National Senior Corps Association (NSCA) invites you to join an unprecedented, nationwide and united effort to educate Members of Congress about Senior Corps through personal visits with your elected officials and staff in their local offices.

Over the next few months, NSCA is asking each Senior Corps project director to make a personal visit to both your U.S. Representative and your Senator to tell them about the great things happening in your program(s) and discuss some important issues that will impact the future of Senior Corps.

There is nothing better project directors, volunteers and our supporters can do to create more impact than a personal visit with our members of Congress. NSCA wants Congress to know that Senior Corps programs make an impact that can be felt across America, that your Senior Corps program makes a difference in your community, that Senior Corps programs are important to the health of our country and that Senior Corps is a strong and united community. Congress will know that if each project director works to develop an on-going, positive relationship with our elected officials.

Letters, calls, emails and faxes are helpful at certain times but now is the time to strengthen our relationships through personal visits.

Through the Senior Corps Congressional Education Campaign, NSCA encourages all Senior Corps project directors to work on behalf of all three programs. For instance, the FGP proposed budget cut sets a dangerous precedent for all Senior Corps programs. The issue of recompetition proposed in the GIVE Act for RSVP has serious implications for all Senior Corps programs. In our present dire economic climate, NSCA believes the future of our programs depends upon our ability to work together and advocate for increased funding and growth for all Senior Corps programs. We invite you to join this united effort.

In this Alert and on the NSCA website, you will find:

- Information on how to make an appointment with your elected officials.
- Specific talking points based on our NSCA 2009 Congressional Budget Request.
- Suggestions on what and who to bring with you for your visit.
- An easy way to follow up with NSCA after your visit.

Visit the special Congressional Education section of our website - [www.nscatogether.org](http://www.nscatogether.org) – for all the documents and print materials you will need.

Important Reminder: We advise Senior Corps project directors that program staff and volunteers can only engage in lobbying activities on our own time and not “while charging time to a Corporation-supported program”.

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT:

Read Meeting with Your Member of Congress on the NSCA website.

Find contact information for your Members of Congress. The NSCA website has a link to locate your Members of Congress by zip code.

Make your appointment.

#### PREPARING FOR THE VISIT:

Your Program Dream Team: Invite one volunteer and one site supervisor to accompany you on your visit.

A folder with the following:

National Senior Corps Association 2009 Congressional Budget Request: print from Congressional Education section of NSCA website

What's in it for your legislator's constituents?": A list of specific ways your Senior Corps program(s) leverage bigger dollars or provide cost-effective solutions to critical issues in your legislator's state or district.

For your Senators: a list of all Senior Corps programs in your state (found on the CNCS website: "Search for FGP/RSVP/SCP Program in [State Name]" )

For your Representative(s): a list of Senior Corps programs in their district and/or a list of Senior Corps volunteer stations.

News articles or a few special stories to share with your Member of Congress and/or their staff about the difference Senior Corps volunteers make in their state or district.

Also consider bringing a small token to leave behind such as a recognition gift with your program name, a photo of a volunteer at their site, etc.

#### THE VISIT:

Thank your legislator for the service they provide as your Congressperson or Senator and for any past support for Senior Corps. Did your U.S. Representative vote "Yes" on the GIVE Act? Find out on the NSCA Website.

Using the NSCA 2009 Congressional Budget Request go to the NSCA website– go to Congressional Education section – and print Request)

Review Background information: Review basic descriptions of each Senior Corps program (located on NSCA 2009 Congressional Budget Request). Bring along a highlighter to emphasize your program(s).

Discuss need for increased funding: Restoration of the 2008 rescission and increased funding. Tell your legislator how the rescission impacted your program.

Discuss elimination of proposed \$40 million cut for Foster Grandparent Program: Review consequences of cuts (also on Budget Request). If you have a Foster Grandparent Program, tell your legislator exactly how a 41% funding cut will impact your community, including the seniors, children and volunteer stations.

Discuss the GIVE Act: Find out how your legislator voted on the GIVE Act, ([www.nscatogether.org](http://www.nscatogether.org) – go to Legislator Education). Talk with your legislator about ways the GIVE Act would benefit Senior Corps programs: for FGP and SCP, reducing age requirement to 55, increasing income eligibility guidelines from 125% to 200% of poverty, allowing 15% of volunteers to be over income without displacing low-income volunteers (so that seniors who earn, for instance, \$200 over the income guidelines could serve). In essence, allow more seniors to volunteer.

Discuss your reservations about recompetition in the House version of the bill (i.e. frequent sponsor changes could be harmful and disruptive to public awareness, volunteer recruitment, staff consistency, and resource development). For details on NSCA's advocacy efforts re. recompetition, please refer to prior Action Alerts posted on our website.

You can conclude by asking your legislator to support Senior Corps by:

(1) telling the Appropriations Committee to increase funding for Senior Corps, and

(2) telling his or her leadership to bring the GIVE Act back for a vote before the summer recess. (This is particularly important for Republican representatives in the House who may "support" national service but voted against the GIVE Act for political reasons.)

FOLLOW-UP: This final step will be extremely important for our Washington Representative, Priscilla Chatman, J.D, as she continues to work on your behalf on Capital Hill.

Send a Thank You note to everyone you met with.

Email the following information to [info@nscatogether.org](mailto:info@nscatogether.org):

Who did you meet with?

When did you meet?

Did anyone go with you?

How did your legislator respond to your request for:

- Increased funding for your Senior Corps program(s)?
- Increased funding for all Senior Corps programs?
- Elimination of the proposed \$40 million cut for the Foster Grandparent Program?
- Bring the GIVE Act back to the floor for a vote in 2008?

**THANK YOU!**

**We are Stronger Together!**

Questions? Email [info@nscatogether.org](mailto:info@nscatogether.org)