



## Service-Learning United United in Our Support of Service-Learning

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### **House Passes Landmark Legislation to Expand Service-Learning *The GIVE Act (H.R. 1388) Passes with Strong Bipartisan Support***

**Washington, DC, March 19, 2009**—Yesterday, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the most significant overhaul and expansion of national service programs in 16 years. The bill comes in response to President Obama’s challenge to Congress to pass legislation that would usher in a new era of service and civic responsibility for our nation.

The House passed H.R. 1388, the Generations Invigorating Volunteerism and Education (GIVE) Act bill by strong bipartisan vote of 321 to 105. This bill improves and provides new support for national service and service-learning programs administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, including Learn and Serve America—the only federal program dedicated to funding service-learning activities in local schools and communities.

“We applaud the passage of the GIVE Act (H.R. 1388) and are grateful for the commitment, bipartisan spirit and collaboration with which this bill was created,” National Service-Learning Partnership Executive Director Nelda Brown said. “Nearly 100 service-learning organizations in schools and communities expressed their support for this landmark legislation. We are confident this bill will play a vital role in giving more young people the opportunity to learn and serve as part of their lives and educations.”

Read Service-Learning United’s letter of support.

<http://www.nslponline.org/images/SLUHR1388SupportLetterFINAL.3-12-09.pdf>

Now, service-learning advocates turn their full attention to companion measure in the Senate, the Serve America Act, S. 277. The bill dramatically expands support for service-learning, increasing the authorized funding level for Learn and Serve America from \$43 million to \$97 million. It also includes many important reforms to streamline and improve operations and transparency.

The bill creates the Youth Engagement Zones, competitive grants for local school-community partnerships that commit to engage a majority of K-12 youth—with an emphasis on engaging all high school students—in a comprehensive continuum of service-learning opportunities in school and community-based programs. This idea was proposed, conceptualized and developed by service-learning advocates during a process that included a service-learning forum on March 10, 2008 at the College of William & Mary in Virginia and a several working group meetings, discussions at the 2008 National Service-Learning in Minnesota one year ago, and several conference calls and online discussions.

Read a summary of Serve America’s Service-Learning Highlights.

<http://www.nslponline.org/images/ServeAmericaSLSummary.FINAL.doc>

While service-learning advocates look forward to the passage of the Serve America Act, there are still some issues service-learning advocates are working to address before the bill is passed. We must now reach out Sen. Enzi as well as the Democrats serving on the

Senate's Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee to make sure these adjustments are made to Serve America before final passage.

These key adjustments include:

- **We must make sure the Youth Engagement Zone Initiative is fully funded.** This initiative provides competitive grants for local school-community partnerships that commit to engage a critical number of K-12 youth (with a special emphasis on engaging all high school students) in a comprehensive continuum of service-learning opportunities in school and community-based programs that take place during school and non-school hours. The current allocation of \$15 million is not enough to make sure the program can be fully implemented nationwide. Increasing this to \$25 million will help ensure more local school-community partnerships can participate and can implement key activities such as Semester of Service and other authorized activities.
- **We must call upon members of the Senate HELP Committee to ensure the functions of the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse are protected.** New legislation proposes to create one National Service Clearinghouse that would serve Learn and Serve America as well as AmeriCorps and Senior Corps.

Download our Serve America Take Action Talking Points and Senate Outreach Contact List. This information speaks directly to the service-learning implications of this bill and provides contact information for key Members of Congress.

<http://www.nslponline.org/images/SLUServeAmericaTakeActionTips.FINAL.doc>

For those of you attending the 2009 National Service-Learning Conference in Nashville, stop by the National Service-Learning Partnership's exhibit booth to pick up a hard copy of the talking points and your SPEAK. ACT. NOW. Take Action Button.

Join us for Service-Learning United's Policy Town Hall Meeting on Friday, March 20 at 10:45 a.m. (Room 109). The session is titled "Yes We Can: Service-Learning in the Age of President Obama."

Visit the Service-Learning Blog for updates and reflections about the passage of the bill—as well as the National Youth Leadership Council's blog, which is broadcasting events from the 2009 National Service-Learning Conference.

[www.service-learning.blogspot.com/](http://www.service-learning.blogspot.com/)

Please spread the word. Forward this message to your members, affiliates, colleagues and friends.

**About Service-Learning United:** *Service-Learning United is a growing alliance of state and national organizations working collectively to educate our nation's leaders, policymakers, and citizens about the positive and powerful impact service-learning has on our young people and the communities they serve. Service-Learning United is convened by the National Service-Learning Partnership. Visit [www.servicelearningunited.org](http://www.servicelearningunited.org) for information.*