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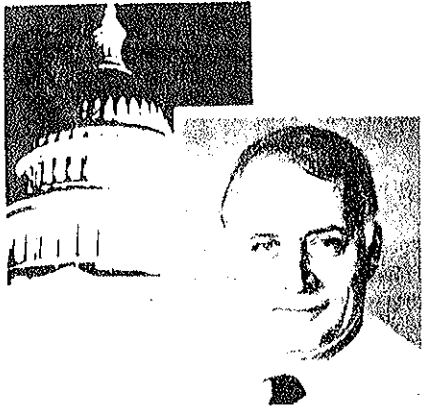
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# The Durenberger Report

U.S. Senator Dave Durenberger Reports to Minnesota

11-90

## Builds on Minnesota experience

# National service proposal approved

Legislation authorizing a variety of national community and service learning programs was approved in the final days of the 1990 session of Congress. The compromise proposal was passed by the Senate on a 75-21 vote on October 16 and by a 235-186 margin in the House on October 24.

Dubbed the "National and Community Service Act of 1990," this legislation authorizes \$287 million in new funding for a variety of grant programs over the next three years.

A more complete listing of the grant programs authorized by this legislation is included elsewhere in this newsletter, but briefly the Act:

- \*\* Creates a new Commission on National Service to administer new grant programs. The Commission has the authority to delegate administrative duties to appropriate federal agencies.
- \*\* Establishes a series of grant programs which will assist states, local school districts, post-secondary institutions, and community groups finance a variety of youth and community service initiatives.
- \*\* Earmarks funds for the establishment of four regional clearinghouses, to assist local initiatives and to share information and increase visibility for these initiatives around the country.
- \*\* Modifies and expands a number of existing service programs at the post-secondary level, including a requirement for better publicizing existing student loan deferral and forgiveness options involving community service.
- \*\* Formally authorizes President Bush's Points of Light Foundation.
- \*\* Communicates a "Sense of the Congress" that states should limit liability for "Good Samaritan" donors of food for charitable purposes.

## Legislation draws on experience, input from Minnesota leaders

As a co-sponsor of this legislation -- and a member of the conference committee which ironed

out differences between different bills that passed the House and Senate -- I believe this is an important step forward in expanding youth and community service nationally. I'm also pleased that the legislation includes several recommendations offered by a task force of Minnesota youth service leaders which I convened last year (see below).

First, the legislation creates a new Commission on National Service to administer grants. That's very important in focusing visibility and accountability for national service programs in an agency that has a broad purpose. It should increase the chances that community groups and other youth serving organizations will have an equal shot at receiving grants.

Second, the legislation retains Senate language emphasizing broad-based community collaboration in designing and running service learning projects aimed at K-12 age young people. Our experience in Minnesota is that kind of collaboration between school and non-school organizations is very important.

Third, the legislation earmarks funds for up to four regional clearinghouses on youth service. That's a recommendation made by the task force I convened and is intended to offer a variety of support services, training, recognition, and other assets to local initiatives. I am very hopeful that -- based on Minnesota's past leadership -- one of these clearinghouses will be located in our state.

Fourth, the legislation includes funding authority for a full-range of service programs included in the original Senate bill: K-12 and post-secondary service learning, youth crops, and post-secondary demonstration. This helps reinforce the notion of a "continuum of service learning opportunities" -- beginning at a very young age and continuing through post-high school -- which is now evolving here in Minnesota.

Fifth, the legislation includes funding authority

for President Bush's Points of Light Foundation -- helping to assure greater Bush Administration support and interest in funding and implementing the legislation, and also recognizing the President's strong contributions to expanding volunteerism and youth community service opportunities.

Sixth, the legislation authorizes funding for three years -- giving a greater sense of permanency to the initiative and, as authorized funding levels increase, a growing national commitment to youth

and community service.

And, finally, the legislation ended up receiving Bush Administration support and strong bi-partisan support in the Senate. One of my principal objectives throughout this process has been to work with other Republicans to both respond to legitimate questions and concerns and to share some of what I have learned about the value of these initiatives from youth and community service leaders in Minnesota. I think those efforts paid off.

## Service learning should be considered an important part of educational reform

As a strong advocate of federal legislation supporting national and community service, I've drawn on my own experience as a community volunteer and a long-time proponent of using volunteerism to help meet our obligations as American citizens.

So, for me at least, encouraging volunteerism and good citizenship are ample reasons to support federal legislation to promote service opportunities for our nation's young people.

But, because I represent a state like Minnesota -- with its strong links between youth service and education -- I've also concluded that youth service legislation must be viewed as part of much needed educational reform.

As a society, we face stiff challenges in an increasingly competitive world. But, we all know there are ample warning signs about our ability to meet that challenge.

We hear every day about the 25 percent of American public high school students who are dropping out... about the 700,000 students who graduated in 1987, but had deficiencies in basic skills equal to those who didn't... about falling SAT scores and rising poverty rates... about the \$25 billion a year that American employers must spend to teach newly hired employees the basic skills they need to perform on the job.

But, the costs of our shortcomings in education aren't just short-term.

According to the Committee for Economic Development, a single year's class of dropouts will cost this nation \$240 billion in lost earnings, taxes, and added social programs over the lifetime of those youngsters.

There are as many proposals to address the shortcomings in American education as there are critics. And, clearly, no single solution will suffice.

But, I've become convinced that -- for many students -- we must radically redesign the way we deliver educational programs. We must work much harder to make education more relevant to the world of work, and more interesting and challenging to students. And, we must work

harder to improve self-esteem and to draw on educational opportunities "out there" in the community, often just waiting to be asked.

Our experience in Minnesota suggests that service learning can be one important vehicle to draw on these outside resources, and to make them a more central part of the education of our young people.

To succeed, service learning must not be considered separate and apart from more traditional "book learning." The real leaders in this field -- teachers like Dan Conrad at Hopkins High School -- have designed ways of integrating outside service opportunities into the classroom.

Ideally, this process will begin at a young age and be continued throughout high school and college. It will also be available to students who don't succeed in traditional learning environments -- through alternative school programs and conservation and other service corps initiatives.

And, hopefully, this process will draw on youth serving organizations in the community -- groups like 4-H and Scouting and the YM/YWCAs -- which have years of experience in non-traditional ways of both teaching and learning.

Finally, the best and most relevant service learning opportunities will be designed with strong input from students. What better way to incorporate the true spirit of service learning than to make sure that young people themselves are involved at every stage in the process.

I'm pleased that the national and community service legislation that was adopted in the 101st Congress has the potential to support all these goals. As that legislation gets implemented -- and as others follow the lead of states like Minnesota -- service learning must also be thought of as an integral part of educational reform.

That's critical not only for education, for this nation, and for the next generation of Americans who will help guide it.

## Commission appointment will be first step in implementing new law

Now that the "National and Community Service Act of 1990" has been passed by Congress, the obvious question is "What happens next?" And, especially, "When and how can states like Minnesota begin applying for grants."

Because of the complex nature of this legislation, neither question is easily answered. But, the consensus of Congressional staff members closest to the issue is that appointment of the new Commission on National Service must be the first step taken in implementing the new law. The Commission has the authority to hire a small staff to assist it with its work.

The Commission is to include 21 members, with no more than 11 belonging to the same political party. The Secretaries of Education, Health and Human Services, Labor, Interior, and Agriculture

and the Director of ACTION are ex-officio members.

All 21 members of the Commission are to be appointed by the President, but seven members are to be appointed from nominees submitted by the Speaker of the House and seven from nominees submitted by the Majority Leader of the Senate.

Once appointed and staffed, the new Commission will then take at least several months to draft and approve rules and regulations setting up the various grant programs it will administer. All of this probably means it will be well into 1991 before grant applications will be accepted.

Because full funding (\$62.0 million) was appropriated for Fiscal Year 1991, however, it was clearly the intent of Congress that states and others eligible for grants be funded prior to September 30, 1991, when the current fiscal year ends.

\*\*\*\*\*

Each of the grant programs has different criteria, making it difficult to generalize about how states will go about applying for funds.

## New commission to administer a variety of new grant programs

The "National and Community Service Act of 1990" authorizes a number of new grant programs which will be administered by a newly created Commission on National Service.

The Commission is to be made up of 21 members appointed by the President, with nominations for 14 members coming from Congressional leaders.

The legislation authorizes \$2.0 million per year for the Commission's operations, with a requirement that four regional clearinghouses be established around the country to assist local initiatives.

Grant programs which are authorized by the legislation include:

1. **K-12 Service Learning Programs** -- Grants to states with subsequent grants to school and communities for service learning projects involving school-aged children and young people.

2. **Post-Secondary Education Innovative Projects for Community Service** -- Grants to post-secondary education institutions for student community service.

3. **Youth Corps Programs** -- Includes American Conservation and Youth Service Corps programs.

4. **Full and part-time National and Community Service** -- Demonstrations of stipended national service programs in up to ten states.

5. **Points of Light Foundation** -- Gives legislative standing to previously established Bush initiative.

6. **Youthbuild** -- Authorizes the ACTION

agency to make grants for local service projects involving construction and rehabilitation of low income and transitional housing and other community facilities with a living allowance paid to participants.

\*\*\*\*\*

Authorized funding levels for the various programs is as follows:

\*\* **Total authorization for all programs** -- \$62.0 million for FY 1991; \$105.0 million for FY 1992; and \$120.0 million for FY 1993; three-year total \$287.0 million.

\*\* **For school-aged, service corps and national service programs** -- \$54.0 million for FY 1991; \$93.5 million for FY 1992; and \$103 million for FY 1993; three year total \$250.5 million. Of these amounts, no less than 30 percent (\$16.2 million in FY 1991; \$28.05 million in FY 1992; and \$30.9 million in FY 1993) must be spent on each of three categories of programs: school aged and college programs; conservation and youth service corps; and full- and part-time national and community service programs.

\*\* **For Commission on National Service** (including four regional clearinghouses) -- \$2.0 million each year; three year total \$6.0 million.

\*\* **For Points of Light Foundation** -- \$5.0 million for FY 1991; \$7.5 million for FY 1992; \$10 million for FY 1993; three year total \$22.5 million.

\*\* **For Youthbuild program** -- \$1.0 million in FY 1991; \$2.0 million in FY 1992; and \$5.0 million in FY 1993; three year total \$8.0 million.

For the school-age programs, for example, the Commission may make grants to states or local applicants for planning, curriculum development, research, communication and other purposes; or the actual implementation, operation or expansion of statewide service learning programs.

In addition, the legislation sets up a formula for distribution of funds based on each state's school age population and Chapter I funding allocation. The grants can be for up to three years and are to be matched from non-federal sources on an increasing basis -- starting with a 10 percent non-federal match in the first year and increasing to 30 percent by the third year of the grant.

A second grant program in the law is also established for higher education institutions to design and carry out service learning projects.

These grants have to be matched 50-50 from non-federal sources. They may be used to create and expand service opportunities, to integrate community service into the academic curriculum, and for teacher training.

A third subtitle of the law sets up a grant program for full or part-time conservation and youth corps. Grants may be made to local applicants, to the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior, to the Director of ACTION, or to states.

The legislation sets up a number of stipulations for activities that can be carried out by these service corps, training and education service requirements, a 25 percent non-federal matching requirement, age and other eligibility requirements, and limits on compensation and benefits.

Finally, a fourth subtitle authorizes the Commission to make grants to states for the creation of full and part-time national and community service programs. These are intended to be demonstration programs, so the law limits the Commission to awarding grants in the first year to no more than five states for full-time programs and five states for part-time programs.

The national service demonstrations are limited to individuals age 17 or older, with modest living allowances and post-service benefits provided each participant. The maximum post-service benefit for part-time participants is \$1,000 per year of service and, for full-time participants, \$2,500 per year of service. These benefits can be spent only for specific purposes set out in the law including payment of student loans, the downpayment or closing costs on purchase of a first home, and college tuition and expenses.

## **Regional clearinghouses to play key role in expanding national service programs**

One important contribution which the Minnesota working group on youth service made to this legislation was insisting that funds be earmarked for the establishment of several regional resource centers around the country.

Under the new law, the Commission on National Service must provide funding for not more than

### **Thanks to the ad hoc working group on youth/community service!!**

Keith Baker, Greater Mpls Chamber, Linda Bauer, teacher, Hill City public schools, Tom Berg, prog officer, McKnight Foundation, Paula Beugen, consult, Mn Office on Volunteer Service, Rep. Kathleen Blatz, IR, Bloomington, Kim Boyce, exec. dir., Ramsey Cty Extension Serv, Kevin Collins, intern, Mn. Campus Service Initiative, Larry Fonnest, dir, Mn Conservation Corps, Lara Lee Geraghty, dir., Mn. Office on Volunteer Service, Linda Glesen, City of St. Paul Youth Corps, Rick Jackson, vp, Metro YMCA of Mpls, Glen Jeffrey, chair, National Youth Leadership Council, Jim Kleismeyer, pres, National Youth Leadership Council, Mark Korf, pres, Mn Cmty College Student Assoc, Mark Langseth, dir, Mn Campus Service Initiative, Lynn Mikula, Mpls Animal Humane Society, Keith Morton, exec dir, University YMCA, Rep. Ken Nelson, DFL, Mpls, Gerry Ouellette, teacher, The Marshall School, Duluth, Kent Plumley, leg dir, Cmty College Student Assn, Mary Jo Richardson, Mn Department of Education, Adam Rautio, student, Cooper High, New Hope, Ted Sauer, teacher, Hopkins Schools, Stephen Seldel, Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, Patti Stuhlman, Mpls Cmty Ed, Kit Sturgeon, student, Carleton Col, Northfield, Rich Willits, assoc dir, Nat Youth Leadership Council.

four such "regional service clearinghouses."

Public and private nonprofit agencies that have extensive experience in community service programs are eligible to receive assistance under this part of the law. The clearinghouses are to provide a number of services, including:

\*\* Assist state and local community service programs with needs assessments and planning.

\*\* Conduct research and evaluation on community service.

\*\* Provide leadership development and training to state and local community service program administrators, supervisors and participants.

\*\* Administer award and recognition programs for outstanding community service programs and participants.

\*\* Facilitate communication among community service programs and participants.

\*\* Provide information, curriculum materials, technical assistance on program planning and operation, and training to states and local entities eligible to receive funds under the law.

\*\* Gather and disseminate information on successful programs, components of successful programs, innovative youth skills curriculum, and projects being implemented nationwide.

\*\* Make recommendations to state and local entities on quality controls to improve program delivery and on changes in the programs authorized by the law.

### **For further information**

For further information on the new national youth and community service legislation, please contact Jon Schroeder in my Minnesota office at 1020 Plymouth Building, Minneapolis, Mn. 55402; 612-370-3382; 800-752-4226.