

Congress is Pushing Civilian Security Corps

Congress is exploring options for forcing "all able young people" into mandatory service. It is calling this "volunteerism," but Congress makes its interest in a mandatory civil security service very clear.

Its reasons: to provide security in the war on terror, to create social change by bringing together youth of "diverse" backgrounds, and to limit government costs. The problem: civilians have the right to decide how they spend their own time, including how they prepare for disasters.

- HR 1444 creates a congressional commission on whether a mandatory service requirement can be developed for American young people.
- HR 1388 establishes a new civilian National Service Reserve Corps, among many other provisions.

"It is dangerous when Congress feels it has power to order private citizens to 'volunteer' in any government program," said Karen England, Executive Director of Capitol Resource Institute.

Many Americans are asking if President Barack Obama is taking early steps toward a campaign promise:

"We cannot continue to rely only on our military in order to achieve the national security objectives that we've set. **We've got to have a civilian national security force that's just as powerful, just as strong, just as well funded,**" he said last July.

Take action against these critical bills, by scrolling to the bottom of this email, or keep reading for more information.

The Commission on Civic Service Act

The Congressional Commission on Civic Service Act, HR 1444, creates a commission to analyze "whether a workable, fair, and reasonable mandatory service requirement for all able young people could be developed."

HR 1444 would encourage civilian volunteer work, for the purpose of enhancing "our Nation and the global community," and train youth to be tomorrow's leaders in the public sector. By gathering together people with different backgrounds, it also aims to strengthen America's "social fabric."

"Citizenship is not an entitlement program," Rahm Emanuel said in an August 2008 interview, where he discussed a universal training requirement. He is now White House Chief of Staff.

"The goal here is understanding the challenges of the war on terror," he said, at one point calling the program "universal civil defense training."

"We were saying somewhere between the ages of 18 to 25, you will do three months of training," he said. Americans are asking how far HR 1444 opens the door for that goal.

The Congressional Commission on Civic Service would also explore whether a public service academy is needed. This four year undergraduate institution would be aimed at youth, in addition to recruiting on regular college campuses. Nor are other generations left out: the commission would be responsible to pursue volunteerism among baby boomers and senior citizens.

"Americans volunteered 8.1 billion hours of service in 2007," England said. "That represents nearly 61 million Americans, who freely gave services worth over \$158 billion."

"It is the job of American parents and communities to train children about volunteerism," she said. "We are already creating the leaders of tomorrow -- for work in public and private spheres, not just the government sector, where HR 1444 is focused."

America's military proudly serves to keep this nation safe. Congress has no business spending time and tax money on "mandatory volunteering," even if this is currently at the idea stage, and not ready for implementation. The commission itself is an affront to Americans' personal liberty.

The GIVE Act

The Generations Invigorating Volunteerism and Education (GIVE) Act, HR 1388, is a sweeping reform of AmeriCorps that includes a \$6 billion price tag. AmeriCorps, established in 1993, has recruited over 540,000 American volunteers so far. HR 1388 addresses a wide range of social issues, by using multigenerational American volunteers and/or providing federal grants.

"Volunteering is a cost effective way of working to solve the challenges facing our nation. That is why the passage of the GIVE Act is necessary," Rep. Carolyn McCarthy told the House of Representatives.

This legislation creates the National Service Reserve Corps, a voluntary civilian corps for disaster and emergency situations. At least 10 hours of service, plus training, are required yearly.

Like HR 1444, the GIVE Act emphasizes youth education. Beginning in elementary school, it creates volunteerism education programs for students, which are supported by federal grants. It also authorizes a Social Innovation Fund that would cover issues including "reductions in poverty," "healthcare education," "individual or community energy efficiency," and more.

"This bill is more than a sweeping reform of AmeriCorps. It is a sweeping declaration of government's interest in using citizen volunteers to accomplish its policy goals," England said.

A pro-family organization based near Washington, D.C., points out that the Senate rejected an amendment blocking HR 1388 from funding ACORN and pro-abortion organizations. Yet the bill explicitly bans civil service participants from engaging in religious activities.

The GIVE Act establishes a reserve corps that fits well with a service mandate for youth, while serving as an expensive grant for liberal projects. It assumes Congress is responsible to meet a wide range of needs for the American people. Yet freedom and independence mean that Americans are responsible to care for themselves -- without federal control over their lives.

Call your elected officials soon

Rahm Emanuel said it wasn't until "after World War II, [when] we had some sense of universal service that was in the military, that Americans' march on civil rights began."

Americans civilians today have a national sense of true volunteerism, which is based on their decision to serve. It is time for Congress to hear its constituents' view of civil rights.

Members of the House of Representatives can be [located online](#) by entering your zip code.

Tell your representative to vote NO on HR 1388 and to oppose HR 1444. These bills are currently awaiting votes on the House floor (HR 1388) and in a House committee (HR 1444).

Both California senators voted for HR 1388 last Thursday. You can express your view to Sen. Dianne Feinstein's office at (202) 224-3841. Sen. Barbara Boxer's number is (202) 224-3553.

"Citizens in every state should be calling Congress and reminding elected officials to defend our pursuit of liberty," England said. "As a free people, we are not interested in giving the government this level of control over our children and ourselves."

Capitol Resource Family Impact is the lobbying arm of CRI, California's pro-family organization. Your support allows us to continue to be your voice for faith and family at the state Capitol.

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