

State of Play and Top Line Talking Points

State of Play

On Thursday, March 16 the White House released its “skinny budget” which proposes elimination of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) – including AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps represents the largest federal investment in full-time paid service year programs, providing full- or partial-funding for about 50,000 positions and higher education benefits for those who serve.

AmeriCorps is essential to Service Year Alliance’s shared goal of universal national service. The federal dollars invested in AmeriCorps leverage private and other funding 2:1. AmeriCorps supports programs with strong evidence-based outcomes that we hope to scale – not eliminate – including City Year, Teach For America, and Habitat for Humanity. Additionally, the National Service Trust run by CNCS provides meaningful education benefits for AmeriCorps members, including service years funded by private philanthropy and other federal agencies.

Top Line Talking Points

- **AmeriCorps has strong bipartisan support. There is significant support for national service** – 78% of Republicans support it; 84% of Independents support it; and 80% of Millennials want to do it.
- **This program touches a lot of people** – it’s the power behind Habitat for Humanity, puts inner-city youth on the path to employment, and is core to hundreds of charter schools. More than one million Americans have served in this program. They will mobilize if this elimination proposal goes forward.
- **AmeriCorps is actually designed in a way that Republicans should and do like** – Every dollar leverages more than a dollar of private support. It saves money by activating citizens to fill roles and reduces over-reliance on professionals. It leverages volunteers – most AmeriCorps members recruit and supervise a dozen or more citizen volunteers. It provides student aid to the middle class in return for their service. It’s not a free ride or a hand out, but AmeriCorps members receive an education award that can be used to pay for college or pay off student loans.
- **We should be expanding AmeriCorps, not eliminating it.**