



October 13, 2020

Dear President Trump and Vice President Biden,

We write as Americans committed to our country's national security to share our support for dramatically expanding national service in an effort to strengthen American democracy.

Each of us has served — on the front lines of battle in uniform or as civilians, representing our nation at embassies and missions across the world, analyzing critical intelligence, staffing our national security agencies, or passing laws and overseeing this critical work. In our most difficult moments, we did not ask those who served with us who they voted for or what they believed. Instead, we had each other's backs in support of our nation and our shared ideals.

We are deeply troubled by the mounting challenges facing our nation at home and abroad. The global pandemic and unprecedented levels of unemployment threaten the health of our citizens and our economic prosperity. Our children and families are navigating uncertain waters during a school year fraught with challenges that will inevitably leave many behind. Our country is facing a moment of reckoning on racial and social justice. And the hyper-polarization threatening our civic fabric is increasingly becoming a national security issue that is leaving America's leadership role in question around the world.

No one knows better than us that if we are to maintain the strength and security of this nation, we must invest in our democracy and in each other. We must invest in tangible solutions that allow us to put our differences aside and bring citizens together to tackle our biggest challenges while building the respect, empathy, and understanding among their fellow Americans. Our own service teaches us that national service must play a critical role in healing divisions in times of crisis. Serving alongside someone with a shared goal — both in and out of uniform — has the power to bond Americans from different backgrounds together in common purpose. It can create a generation of leaders invested in our country, in their communities, and in one another.

That's why we are calling on you to commit to expanding national service. One of you will be tasked with confronting the health, economic, and educational crises we are facing come January. Fortunately, young people are already on the ground serving in communities across the country and helping to address these issues. They're supporting public health workers in hospitals and clinics, mentoring and tutoring students while providing teachers with extra support in their virtual classrooms, and staffing food banks to combat food insecurity — all while building skills and experience that put them on a pathway to employment.

Expanding national service so every young person in America has the opportunity to serve — to put their differences aside and be part of the solution to these issues — is the first step towards rebuilding our frayed and polarized society. Empowering young people with the chance to turn their idealism into action will not only strengthen our democracy but build a safer, more equitable,

and more resilient America in which everyone feels a sense of responsibility for keeping our country strong.

We encourage you to build and sustain the most equitable and impactful system of national service possible so that young people of all backgrounds are able to serve at home or abroad. The Serve America Together campaign's [policy platform](#) includes helpful recommendations for making national service — including civilian, military, and public service — a common expectation and opportunity for every young American.

We call on both of you to commit to prioritizing a significant expansion of national service in an effort to build a more secure American future should you be elected to serve as President.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mary L. Alexander  
Lieutenant Colonel (Retired), USAF And Retired Administrator, Mississippi State University

Omar Al-Nidawi  
Fellow, Truman National Security Project

Edward T. Allard III  
Former Deputy Director, United States Selective Service System

The Honorable Michael A. Arcuri  
Former Member of Congress

Steve Barney  
Former Commissioner, National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service

Alexandra Bell  
Former State Department Senior Advisor  
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer

Olga Belogolova  
Fellow, Truman National Security Project

Glenn Blumhorst  
President & CEO, National Peace Corps Association

Barrett Y. Bogue  
President & Founder, Evocati

Michael Breen  
President & CEO, Human Rights First

Erik Brine  
Truman National Security Project Defense Council

Mary Beth Bruggeman  
President, The Mission Continues  
United States Navy Veteran

Jeremy Butler  
CEO, IAVA

David W. Callaway, MD, MPA  
Chief Medical Officer, Team Rubicon

The Honorable Christopher Carney  
Former Member of Congress

Charlotte Clymer

Jesse Colvin  
CEO, Service Year Alliance  
United States Army Veteran

Adam Coretz  
AmeriCorps Alum

Susan Corke  
German Marshall Fund

Christopher P. Costa  
Former Special Assistant to the President for Counterterrorism

Adom M. Cooper  
Fellow, Truman National Security Project

Betty Cremmins  
AmeriCorps\*National Direct 2007

R.B. Dalton, III  
Former Senate Military Legislative Assistant

Richard Danzig  
Former Secretary of the United States Navy

The Honorable Dr. Janine Davidson  
Former Under Secretary of the United States Navy

Isaac Eagan  
United States Army Veteran  
Frontline Civilian

Mark Eutsler, Ph.D., Ed.D.  
Chair, Serve Indiana Commission

Teresa Fazio

Leah Fiddler  
Former National Security Council Staff

Eric Gardiner  
United States Navy Veteran

Jack Gardner  
Lieutenant General (Retired), United States Army

Bishop Garrison  
Director, National Security Outreach, Human Rights First

Robert Gates  
Former United States Secretary of Defense

Dan Glickman  
Former United States Secretary of Agriculture  
Vice President and Executive Director Aspen Institute Congressional Program

Kristofer Goldsmith  
Founder and President of High Ground Veterans Advocacy

Robert L. Gordon III  
Former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense

Sherry Hakimi  
Fellow, Truman National Security Project  
Executive Director, genEquality

Ken Harbaugh  
United States Navy Veteran  
Host, Evergreen Podcasts

Jason M. Hatch  
Retired Military Officer  
Intelligence Community Professional

Hon. Dr. Joseph Heck  
Former Chairman, National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service

Elie Jacobs  
Partner, Truman National Security Project

Carrie Kagawa  
Former Obama Administration  
Returned Peace Corps Response Volunteer

Olivier Kamanda  
Former Presidential Innovation Fellow  
Erica Kaster  
Former Deputy Team Leader, USAID/Office of Transition Initiatives

Andy Kopp  
Truman National Security Project Defense Council

Tyna Korcz  
Truman National Security Project Defense Council

Laura J. Kupe  
Former Department of Homeland Security presidential appointee, Obama Administration

Todd Larson  
Senior LGBT Coordinator, Obama Administration  
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer

Stephen Lassiter  
Foreign Policy Director, O'Malley for President (2016)

Karlo Marcelo  
Member, Truman National Security Project

Joshua J. Marcuse  
Former United States Department of Defense Official

Jon Margolick  
Executive Vice President, Truman National Security Project

Stan McChrystal  
General (Retired), United States Army

Justin McFarlin  
United States Army Veteran

Ryan K. McGill  
Partner, Truman National Security Project

Jorge I. Montalvo  
Chief Operating Officer, Physician Affiliate Group of New York  
Founder of the New York State Office for New Americans

Michael Montelongo  
Former Assistant Secretary of the United States Air Force  
President and Chief Executive Officer, GRC Advisory Services, LLC

The Honorable Patrick A. Murphy  
Former Under Secretary of the United States Army

John Oldfield  
Principal, Global Water 2020

Leon E. Panetta  
Former United States Secretary of Defense  
Former Director, Central Intelligence Agency  
Veteran, United States Army

Steven Parker  
Colonel (Ret.), United States Army

Minh-Thu Pham  
Co-founder, New American Voices

Jalina Porter  
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer

Nicholas Rasmussen  
Former Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC)

Danny Rogers  
CTO of the Global Disinformation Index

Justin S. Rubin  
Former Director of the Deputy Under Secretary of the Army's Strategy and Integration Office

Patrick Ryan  
County Executive, Ulster County, NY

Jimmy Santos  
Veteran, United States Air Force

Reid Sawyer  
Veteran, United States Army

Lucas F. Schleusener  
President & Co-Founder, Out in National Security

The Honorable Heath Schuler  
Former Member of Congress

Laurel M. Schwartz  
Teach for America NYC 2007 Alumni

Ali Scotten  
Fellow, Truman National Security Project  
Executive Director, genEquality

George Selim  
Former DHS and NSC Official in Bush, Obama, and Trump Administrations

Dr. Margaret Seymour  
Veteran, United States Marine Corps  
AmeriCorps VISTA Alumna

Joseph Simons  
Veteran, United States Navy

Shawn Skelly  
Former Commissioner, National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service

Kathryn L. Smith  
Veteran, United States Air Force

Casey Sweeney  
Service Year Alum

Lourdes Tiglao  
Veteran, United States Air Force

Yelena Udler  
Former member, AmeriCorps

Matt Vallone  
Director of Research & Analysis

Joseph L. Votel  
General (Ret.) United States Army  
President and CEO, Business Executives for National Security

Debra S. Wada  
Former Commissioner, National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service

Alex Wagner  
Former Chief of Staff to the Secretary of the Army

Roslyn Warren  
Fellow, Truman National Security Project

Stephen Mark Werner  
Owner of Werner Consulting

Olivia Zetter

Former Foreign Affairs Officer, United States Department of State