

March 17, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
H-232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Boehner
H-204 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Boehner:

We, the undersigned Mayors, support expanding community and national service opportunities for Americans of all ages. In this difficult time for our country, service remains an enduring American value that brings people together and reminds us of the strength of our common bond.

As mayors, we have seen first hand how important community and national service can be to help us address pressing challenges in our cities and towns. Service members are helping schoolchildren build greater academic skills. They are mentoring young people, improving our public parks, assisting the elderly, strengthening access to community health projects, fighting poverty, and acting as role models for us all.

Service also strengthens our democracy. Americans of all ages, from youth to baby-boomers, are volunteering to serve in record numbers. As mayors, we want to capitalize on this new undercurrent of civic engagement, and inspire Americans to stay involved by serving their communities.

Strengthening community and national service during this economic crisis makes great sense. With unemployment soaring among young and older Americans alike, these efforts can put people in productive work and provide skills relevant to re-entering the workforce at low cost to governments and with no new bureaucracy.

We strongly embrace the effort to expand national and community service opportunities as proposed by President Obama and a bi-partisan group of congressional leaders led by Representatives Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY), George Miller (D-CA) and Howard McKeon (R-CA). Cities—home to the some of the nation's most vexing problems—will be partners with states in the promotion of service and the recruitment and deployment of America's volunteers. We urge the Congress to promptly pass and fully fund the bi-partisan Generations Invigorating Volunteerism and Education (GIVE) Act – H.R. 1388.

The time is now to come together through service.

Sincerely,

Manuel A. Diaz
City of Miami, Florida

Michael R. Bloomberg
City of New York, New York

Gavin Newsom
City of San Francisco, California

Mark Mallory
City of Cincinnati, Ohio

Thomas M. Menino
City of Boston, Massachusetts

Adrian M. Fenty
District of Columbia

Richard M. Daley
City of Chicago, Illinois

Raul G. Salinas
City of Laredo, Texas

Greg Nickels
City of Seattle, Washington

Ron Dellums
City of Oakland, California

Douglas H. Palmer
City of Trenton, New Jersey

Francis G. Slay
City of Saint Louis, Missouri

Bill Bogaard
City of Pasadena, California

Wayne H. Dougherty
City of Havre de Grace, Maryland

Robert D. Coble
City of Columbia, South Carolina

Stephen J. Luecke
City of South Bend, Indiana

Samuel L. Jones
City of Mobile, Alabama

Kevin C. Foy
City of Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Jerry E. Abramson
City of Louisville, Kentucky

Scott Smith
City of Mesa, Arizona

Lois J. Frankel
City of West Palm Beach, Florida

Michael Nutter
City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

R.T. Rybak
City of Minneapolis, Minnesota

Antonio R. Villaraigosa
City of Los Angeles, California

Sheila Dixon
City of Baltimore, Maryland

R. Keith Summey
City of North Charleston, South Carolina

Shirley Franklin
City of Atlanta, Georgia

Luke Ravenstahl
City of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

John Peyton
City of Jacksonville, Florida

Robert J. Duffy
City of Rochester, New York

Byron W. Brown
City of Buffalo, New York

Jerry Sanders
City of San Diego, California

Frank G. Jackson
City of Cleveland, Ohio

John W. Hickenlooper
City of Denver, Colorado

Jerramiah T. Healy
City of Jersey City, New Jersey

Christopher B. Coleman
City of Saint Paul, Minnesota

Juan Carlos Bermudez
City of Doral, Florida

Joy F. Cooper
City of Hallandale Beach, Florida

Morgan McPherson
City of Key West, Florida

Kenneth V. Cockrel, Jr.
City of Detroit, Michigan

Chuck Reed
City of San Jose, California

David N. Cicilline
City of Providence, Rhode Island

Karl F. Dean
City of Nashville, Tennessee

cc:
Representative George Miller
Representative Howard McKeon
Representative Carolyn McCarthy
Representative Todd Platts