

Remarks of Congresswoman Susan Davis
**HEWD Subcommittee Hearing: “Examining the Corporation for National and Community Service
and Its Failed Oversight of Taxpayer Dollars”**
2175 Rayburn House Office Building
Tuesday, March 28, 2017 / 10:00 am

Good morning and thank you, Chairman Guthrie. I would also like to thank our witnesses for being here.

Last year, 325,000 Americans serving through AmeriCorps and Senior Corps invested 155 million hours of service to their communities at more than 50,000 locations across the nation. The Majority called this hearing today because of ten total service hours performed by six AmeriCorps members. That’s 10 hours out of the 155 million hours of service performed last year. CNCS funding last year was \$1.01 billion, which means taxpayers gave CNCS \$6.51 per hour of service performed. So, the Majority is holding a hearing because THEY believe \$65.10 was mismanaged.

It is also important to remember the President’s budget as the backdrop to the conversation we’re having today. President Trump’s “skinny” budget would

completely do away with the funding for the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record this letter signed by 65 current and former Republican officials expressing strong support for funding CNCS in this year's appropriations bill. I want to point out that this list includes Republicans like former Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour, former Congressman Chris Gibson, and Ron Kaufman, who served as President George H. W. Bush's political director.

Since its founding, CNCS has engaged millions of volunteers in national and community service. These volunteers have taught students, been mentors, helped local communities recover from natural disasters, and helped our nation's veterans adjust to civilian life.

Beyond that, CNCS has taught generations of Americans about the importance of national service. National service is the only way to ensure an informed, empathetic citizenry and healthy nation. And that is exactly what

these volunteers do. In fact, the local partnerships that CNCS supports are so successful that they leverage 15 private dollars for every 10 federal dollars that we invest.

Such success means CNCS and its members are there during the times Americans are most in need:

- During the Flint Water Crisis, CNCS deployed an AmeriCorps team to Flint, Michigan, to support state and local efforts to protect the public health of residents facing challenges from increased lead levels in the Flint water supply.
- When Hurricane Katrina devastated the South, CNCS deployed an AmeriCorps team to the region.
- When tornadoes wreaked havoc in Oklahoma, AmeriCorps volunteers were there.

- In my own district, AmeriCorps VISTA members collaborate with veterans' service providers to create the most comprehensive and seamless transition process for all military members and veterans. They connect veterans and military families to housing, financial literacy, and employment resources throughout our district.

The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, signed into law by President Obama in 2009, reauthorized and expanded the national service programs administered by CNCS. Passed with strong bipartisan support, the Act showed how much America values national service by expanding service programs so over four million Americans could engage in results-driven service each year.

With regard to last year's AmeriCorps incident, CNCS discovered and resolved these issues with deliberate action. I can't help but think that if what happened was related to anything other than women's health CNCS would not be called in front of us here today. For the second time. About the same incident.

As we proceed with this hearing, I hope that we remain focused on the vital importance of service to our nation. I've had many conversations with my colleagues across the aisle who agree that service is a crucial part of engaging Americans in their communities. CNCS gives us the vehicle to invest in our national service infrastructure. While we should value and uphold oversight and enforcement, we must also remember that CNCS engages over a million volunteers who assist local communities across America, communities represented on both sides of the aisle.

I look forward to hearing more about how we can improve and strengthen national service programs that are so important to our nation's success.

Thank you.