



101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Suite 600 West, Washington, DC 20001

January 23, 2009

Arizona State University

California State University –
13 Member Schools

City University of New York –
City College

Florida International University

Georgia State University

Indiana University-Purdue
University Indianapolis

Morgan State University

North Carolina State University

Ohio State University

Portland State University

Temple University

Tennessee State University

University of Akron

University of Alabama -
Birmingham

University of Central Florida

University of Cincinnati

University of Colorado – Denver

University of Houston

University of Illinois at Chicago

University of Louisville

University of Memphis

University of Minnesota

University of Missouri –
Kansas City

University of New Mexico

University of New Orleans

Virginia Commonwealth
University

Wichita State University

The Hon. Edward M. Kennedy
U. S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Hon. Orrin Hatch
U. S. Senate
104 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kennedy and Senator Hatch:

On behalf of the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities (USU), we thank you for sponsoring the “Serve America Act” (S. 277) and are pleased to support this landmark legislation.

USU is a network of public urban research universities that represents every region of our country. University presidents created USU to leverage the intellectual capital and economic power of urban universities, thereby improving urban life and America's competitiveness in the global economy. To this end, USU is focused on three major issues -- creating a competitive workforce, building strong communities, and improving the health of a diverse population.

As anchors for our nation's cities, USU institutions are engaged in partnerships and outreach within our local communities and metropolitan areas, including community service and service learning. Many of our members are nationally recognized by the Carnegie classification for campus engagement as well as the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.

USU's legislative agenda supports national service in urban areas for K-12 education, health, housing, and economic opportunity. We are appreciative that the Serve America Act acknowledges these important areas of service throughout its various provisions. USU particularly endorses the bill's intent to create Youth Engagement Zones to Strengthen Communities, Campuses of Service, and additional corps programs. Attached are USU's legislative recommendations to specific sections of the Serve America Act. These recommendations will further strengthen the true intent of the bill.

Again, we thank you for being champions of community service and recognizing the important role of universities on this issue. USU is anxious to work with you and members of the committee in seeking quick passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy L. Zimpher", written in a cursive style.

Nancy L. Zimpher
Chair, Coalition of Urban Serving Universities
President, University of Cincinnati



USU Comments Regarding the Serve America Act

Youth Engagement Zones to Strengthen Communities

p. 11 line 14

Insert “and include an institution of higher education that enrolls a high percentage of students from schools in the local educational agency” after “students”.

A key purpose of the program is to increase high school graduate rates and college-going rates. Thus, a key partner of the partnership should be feeder colleges and universities, those that enroll a high number of students from the local educational agency.

Campuses of Service

p. 19 line 9

Insert “if feasible, designate a geographically diverse set of eligible institutions, including institutions that serve urban and rural communities.

This criterion is similarly used as a factor for consideration under the Youth Engagement Zones to Strengthen Communities (p. 11 lines 21-25).

Insert a priority section that gives priority designation to those institutions that demonstrate exemplary service in improving education in public schools for economically disadvantaged students; expanding and improving access to health care in underserved rural and urban areas; improving clear energy indicators; improving economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals; or improving disaster preparedness and response.

Adding this priority will align this program with the pressing national challenges highlighted under the Serve America Corps and the Serve America Fellowships.

Serve America Fellowships

p. 113 line 16

Insert “urban or rural” after “an”.

p.113 line 22

Insert “in underserved rural and urban areas” after “care”.

p. 120 line 18

Insert “in which the individual agrees to conduct their service in the surrounding area where their Campus of Service or their institution of higher education is located.