

Corporation for National and Community Service

Eliminate the Corporation for National and Community Service

RECOMMENDATION

Congress should eliminate the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).

RATIONALE

The CNCS is a federal agency that aims to promote public service and support civil society institutions. The CNCS operates four main programs—(1) AmeriCorps, (2) Senior Corps, (3) the Social Innovation Fund, and the (4) Volunteer Generation Fund—as well as other public-service-oriented programs. These programs are funded by federal dollars, in-kind donations, and public-private partnerships. Civil society is critical to a strong and prosperous United States. Yet, it is outside the proper scope of the federal government to fund activities in this sector.

Americans give to charity and volunteer their time, generously. According to the Charities Aid Foundation *World Giving Index*, in 2016, 63 percent of Americans donated money to charity, and 44 percent spent time volunteering.¹ It is neither necessary nor prudent for the federal government to “mobilize Americans into service.”²

Volunteering time and donating money to moral causes is a long and well-established tradition in

America. Most Americans, when given the choice, give time and money to causes they support. The CNCS uses taxpayer dollars to subsidize particular charities, chosen by the government. Participants in national community service programs receive compensation in the form of wages, stipends for living expenses, training, and subsidies for health insurance and child care.³ Using taxpayer dollars for what are fundamentally voluntary contributions in civil society warps the value and meaning of service and charity, and can undermine the powerful forces that enable the genuine building of character that comes with showing generosity to others.⁴

Funding for the CNCS should be eliminated. If the hand-picked charities included in the CNCS provide valuable charitable services that Americans deem worthy of their time and money, those charities will have the opportunity to maintain their operations through private donations—the same way that other charitable organizations receive their funds.

ADDITIONAL READING

- Arthur Milikh, “Should We Compel Volunteerism?” *Heritage Foundation Commentary*, October 8, 2015.

ENDNOTES

1. Charities Aid Foundation, *2016 Annual Report*, <https://www.cafonline.org/about-us/publications/2016-publications/caf-world-giving-index-2016> (accessed May 9, 2017).
2. Corporation for National and Community Service, "Legislation," <https://www.nationalservice.gov/about/legislation> (accessed on May 9, 2017).
3. Congressional Budget Office, "Options for Reducing the Deficit: 2017 to 2026—Option 19. Eliminate Federal Funding for National Community Service," December 8, 2016, <https://www.cbo.gov/budget-options/2016/52216> (accessed May 9, 2017).