

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8479

To establish an Interagency Council on Service to promote and strengthen opportunities for military service, national service, and public service for all people of the United States, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 21, 2024

Ms. HOULAHAN (for herself, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. BERGMAN, and Mr. WALTZ) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Armed Services, Foreign Affairs, and Oversight and Accountability, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To establish an Interagency Council on Service to promote and strengthen opportunities for military service, national service, and public service for all people of the United States, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Unity through Service
5 Act of 2024”.

1 **SEC. 2. INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON SERVICE.**

2 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is established an
4 Interagency Council on Service (in this section re-
5 ferred to as the “Council”).

6 (2) FUNCTIONS.—The Council shall—

7 (A) advise the President with respect to
8 promoting, strengthening, and expanding oppor-
9 tunities for military service, national service,
10 and public service for all people of the United
11 States; and

12 (B) review, assess, and coordinate holistic
13 recruitment strategies and initiatives of the ex-
14 ecutive branch to foster an increased sense of
15 service and civic responsibility among all people
16 of the United States and to explore ways of en-
17 hancing connectivity of interested applicants to
18 national service programs and opportunities.

19 (b) COMPOSITION.—

20 (1) MEMBERSHIP.—The Council shall be com-
21 posed of members who are representatives of—

22 (A) the Secretary of State;

23 (B) the Secretary of Defense;

24 (C) the Attorney General;

25 (D) the Secretary of the Interior;

26 (E) the Secretary of Commerce;

1 (F) the Secretary of Labor;

2 (G) the Secretary of Health and Human
3 Services;

4 (H) the Secretary of Education;

5 (I) the Secretary of Veterans Affairs;

6 (J) the Secretary of Homeland Security;

7 (K) the Director of the Office of Manage-
8 ment and Budget;

9 (L) the Director of National Intelligence;

10 (M) the Director of the Office of Personnel
11 Management;

12 (N) the Director of the Peace Corps;

13 (O) the Director of the Selective Service
14 System;

15 (P) the Chief Executive Officer of the Cor-
16 poration for National and Community Service;
17 and

18 (Q) such other officers as the President
19 may designate.

20 (2) CHAIR.—The President shall annually des-
21 ignate to serve as the Chair of the Council a member
22 of the Council under paragraph (1), the appointment
23 of whom as an officer or employee of the Federal
24 Government was made by the President by and with
25 the advice and consent of the Senate.

1 (3) MEETINGS.—The Council shall meet on a
2 quarterly basis or more frequently as the Chair of
3 the Council may direct.

4 (c) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL.—The
5 Council shall—

6 (1) assist and advise the President in the estab-
7 lishment of strategies, goals, objectives, and prior-
8 ities to promote service and civic responsibility
9 among all people of the United States;

10 (2) develop and recommend to the President
11 common recruitment strategies and outreach oppor-
12 tunities for increasing the participation, and propen-
13 sity of people of the United States to participate, in
14 military service, national service, and public service
15 in order to address national security and domestic
16 investment;

17 (3) serve as a forum for Federal officials re-
18 sponsible for military service, national service, and
19 public service programs to, as feasible and prac-
20 ticable—

21 (A) coordinate and share best practices for
22 service recruitment; and

23 (B) develop common interagency, cross-
24 service initiatives and pilots for service recruit-
25 ment;

1 (4) lead a strategic, interagency coordinated ef-
2 fort on behalf of the Federal Government to develop
3 joint awareness and recruitment, retention, and mar-
4 keting initiatives involving military service, national
5 service, and public service;

6 (5) consider approaches for assessing impacts
7 of service on the needs of the United States and in-
8 dividuals participating in and benefitting from such
9 service;

10 (6) consult, as the Council considers advisable,
11 with representatives of non-Federal entities, includ-
12 ing State, local, and Tribal governments, State and
13 local educational agencies, State Service Commis-
14 sions, institutions of higher education, nonprofit or-
15 ganizations, faith-based organizations, philanthropic
16 organizations, and the private sector, in order to
17 promote and develop initiatives to foster and reward
18 military service, national service, and public service;

19 (7) not later than 2 years after the date of en-
20 actment of this Act, and quadrennially thereafter,
21 prepare and submit to the President and Congress
22 a Service Strategy, which shall set forth—

23 (A) a review of programs and initiatives of
24 the Federal Government relating to the man-
25 date of the Council;

1 (B) a review of Federal Government online
2 content relating to the mandate of the Council,
3 including user experience with such content;

4 (C) current and foreseeable trends for
5 service to address the needs of the United
6 States;

7 (D) recommended service recruitment
8 strategies and branding opportunities to ad-
9 dress outreach and communication deficiencies
10 identified by the Council; and

11 (E) to the extent practical, a joint service
12 messaging strategy for military service, national
13 service, and public service;

14 (8) identify any notable initiatives by State,
15 local, and Tribal governments and by public and
16 nongovernmental entities to increase awareness of
17 and participation in national service programs; and

18 (9) perform such other functions as the Presi-
19 dent may direct.

20 **SEC. 3. JOINT MARKET RESEARCH TO ADVANCE MILITARY**
21 **AND NATIONAL SERVICE.**

22 (a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of De-
23 fense, the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for
24 National and Community Service, and the Director of the
25 Peace Corps may carry out a joint market research, mar-

ket studies, recruiting, and advertising programs to complement the existing programs of the military departments, the national service programs administered by the Corporation, and the Peace Corps.

(b) INFORMATION SHARING PERMITTED.—Section 503 of title 10, United States Code, shall not be construed to prohibit sharing of information among, or joint marketing efforts of, the Department of Defense, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and the Peace Corps to carry out this section.

**SEC. 4. TRANSITION OPPORTUNITIES FOR MILITARY
SERVICEMEMBERS AND NATIONAL SERVICE
PARTICIPANTS.**

(a) EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE.—Section 1143(c)(1) of title 10, United States Code, is amended by inserting “the Corporation for National and Community Service,” after “State employment agencies,”.

(b) EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE, JOB TRAINING ASSISTANCE, AND OTHER TRANSITIONAL SERVICES: DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.—Section 1144 of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by adding at the end the following:

“(11) Provide information on public service opportunities, training on public service job recruiting,

1 and the advantages of careers with the Federal Gov-
2 ernment.”; and

3 (2) in subsection (f)(1)(D)—

4 (A) by redesignating clause (v) as clause
5 (vi); and

6 (B) by inserting after clause (iv) the fol-
7 lowing new clause:

8 “(v) National and community service,
9 taught in conjunction with the Chief Executive
10 Officer of the Corporation for National and
11 Community Service.”.

12 (c) AUTHORITIES AND DUTIES OF THE CHIEF EXEC-
13 UTIVE OFFICER.—Section 193A(b) of the National and
14 Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12651d(b))
15 is amended—

16 (1) in paragraph (24), by striking “and” at the
17 end;

18 (2) in paragraph (25), by striking the period at
19 the end and inserting “; and”; and

20 (3) by adding at the end the following new
21 paragraph:

22 “(26) ensure that individuals completing a par-
23 tial or full term of service in a program under sub-
24 title C or E or part A of title I of the Domestic Vol-
25 unteer Service Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4951 et seq.)

1 receive information about military and public service
2 opportunities for which they may qualify or in which
3 they may be interested.”.

4 **SEC. 5. JOINT REPORT TO CONGRESS ON INITIATIVES TO**
5 **INTEGRATE MILITARY AND NATIONAL SERV-**
6 **ICE.**

7 (a) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 4
8 years after the date of enactment of this Act and quadren-
9 nially thereafter, the Chair of the Interagency Council on
10 Service, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, the
11 Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National
12 and Community Service, and the Director of the Peace
13 Corps, shall submit a joint report on cross-service mar-
14 keting, research, and promotion, including recommenda-
15 tions for increasing joint advertising and recruitment ini-
16 tiatives for the Armed Forces, programs administered by
17 the Corporation for National and Community Service, and
18 the Peace Corps, to the following congressional commit-
19 tees:

20 (1) The Committee on Homeland Security and
21 Governmental Affairs of the Senate.

22 (2) The Committee on Homeland Security of
23 the House of Representatives.

24 (3) The Committee on Oversight and Account-
25 ability of the House of Representatives.

1 (4) The Committee on Armed Services of the
2 Senate.

3 (5) The Committee on Armed Services of the
4 House of Representatives.

5 (6) The Committee on Foreign Relations of the
6 Senate.

7 (7) The Committee on Foreign Affairs of the
8 House of Representatives.

9 (8) The Committee on Health, Education,
10 Labor, and Pensions of the Senate.

11 (9) The Committee on Education and the
12 Workforce of the House of Representatives.

13 (b) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—Each report under sub-
14 section (a) shall include the following:

15 (1) The number of Peace Corps volunteers and
16 participants in national service programs adminis-
17 tered by the Corporation for National and Commu-
18 nity Service, who previously served as a member of
19 the Armed Forces.

20 (2) The number of members of the Armed
21 Forces who previously served in the Peace Corps or
22 in a program administered by the Corporation for
23 National and Community Service.

24 (3) An assessment of existing (as of the date of
25 the report submission) joint recruitment and adver-

1 tising initiatives undertaken by the Department of
2 Defense, the Peace Corps, or the Corporation for
3 National and Community Service.

4 (4) An assessment of the feasibility and cost of
5 expanding such existing initiatives.

6 (5) An assessment of ways to improve the abil-
7 ity of the reporting agencies to recruit individuals
8 from the other reporting agencies.

9 (6) A description of the information and data
10 used to develop any initiative or campaign intended
11 to advance military service or national service, in-
12 cluding with respect to any activity carried out
13 under section 3.

14 (c) CONSULTATION.—The Chair of the Interagency
15 Council on Service, the Secretary of Defense, the Chief
16 Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and
17 Community Service, and the Director of the Peace Corps
18 shall undertake studies of recruiting efforts that are nec-
19 essary to carry out the provisions of this section. Such
20 studies may be conducted using any funds appropriated
21 to those entities under Federal law other than this Act.

22 **SEC. 6. REPORTS TO CONGRESS ON LESSONS LEARNED RE-**
23 **GARDING RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT.**

24 The Chair of the Interagency Council on Service
25 shall—

1 (1) conduct a study on—

2 (A) the effectiveness of past advertising
3 campaigns for military service, national service,
4 and public service; and

5 (B) the role of vaccine requirements on the
6 retention and recruitment of individuals for
7 military service, national service, and public
8 service; and

9 (2) not later than 270 days after the date of
10 enactment of this Act, submit a report on the find-
11 ings of and lessons learned from the study under
12 paragraph (1) to—

13 (A) the Committee on Homeland Security
14 and Governmental Affairs of the Senate; and

15 (B) the Committee on Homeland Security
16 of the House of Representatives.

17 **SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.**

18 In this Act:

19 (1) INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON SERVICE.—The
20 term “Interagency Council on Service” means the
21 Interagency Council on Service established by sec-
22 tion 2(a).

23 (2) MILITARY DEPARTMENT.—The term “mili-
24 tary department” means each of the military depart-

1 ments listed in section 102 of title 5, United States
2 Code.

3 (3) MILITARY SERVICE.—The term “military
4 service” means active service (as defined in sub-
5 section (d)(3) of section 101 of title 10, United
6 States Code) or active status (as defined in sub-
7 section (d)(4) of such section) in one of the Armed
8 Forces (as defined in subsection (a)(4) of such sec-
9 tion).

10 (4) NATIONAL SERVICE.—The term “national
11 service” means participation, other than military
12 service or public service, in a program that—

13 (A) is designed to enhance the common
14 good and meet the needs of communities, the
15 States, or the United States;

16 (B) is funded or facilitated by—

17 (i) an institution of higher education
18 as defined in section 101 of the Higher
19 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001);
20 or

21 (ii) the Federal Government or a
22 State, Tribal, or local government; and

23 (C) is a program authorized in—

24 (i) the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C.
25 2501 et seq.);

1 (ii) section 171 of the Workforce In-
2 novation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C.
3 3226) relating to the YouthBuild Program;
4 (iii) the Domestic Volunteer Service
5 Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4950 et seq.); or
6 (iv) the National and Community
7 Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12501 et
8 seq.).

9 (5) PUBLIC SERVICE.—The term “public serv-
10 ice” means civilian employment in the Federal Gov-
11 ernment or a State, Tribal, or local government.

12 (6) SERVICE.—The term “service” means a
13 personal commitment of time, energy, and talent to
14 a mission that contributes to the public good by pro-
15 tecting the Nation and the citizens of the United
16 States, strengthening communities, States, or the
17 United States, or promoting the general social wel-
18 fare.

19 (7) STATE SERVICE COMMISSION.—The term
20 “State Service Commission” means a State Commis-
21 sion on National and Community Service maintained
22 by a State pursuant to section 178 of the National
23 and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C.
24 12638).

1 **SEC. 8. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS.**

2 No additional funds are authorized to be appro-
3 priated for the purpose of carrying out this Act.

4 **SEC. 9. GAO REPORT.**

5 Not later than 30 months after the date of enactment
6 of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States
7 shall report to Congress on the effectiveness of this Act
8 and the amendments made by this Act.

