

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent that my entire Washington staff, as well as Tracie Spingarn, an interpreter for the learning impaired, be granted floor privileges for the duration of my remarks this morning.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

—————

AMENDING THE PEACE CORPS ACT TO PROMOTE GLOBAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. 12 introduced earlier today by Senator DODD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will state the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows: A bill (S. 12) to amend the Peace Corps Act to promote global acceptance of the principles of international peace.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the measure be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 12) was read the third time and passed, as follows:

S. 12

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Peace Corps Charter for the 21st Century Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The Peace Corps was established in 1961 to promote world peace and friendship through the service of American volunteers abroad.

(2) The three goals codified in the Peace Corps Act which have guided the Peace Corps and its volunteers over the years, can work in concert to promote global acceptance of the principles of international peace and nonviolent coexistence among peoples of diverse cultures and systems of government.

(3) The Peace Corps has operated in 135 countries with 165,000 Peace Corps volunteers since its establishment.

(4) The Peace Corps has sought to fulfill three goals, as follows: to help people in developing nations meet basic needs, to promote understanding of America's values and ideals abroad, and to promote an understanding of other peoples by Americans.

(5) After more than 40 years of operation, the Peace Corps remains the world's premier international service organization dedicated to promoting grassroots development.

(6) The Peace Corps remains committed to sending well trained and well supported Peace Corps volunteers overseas to promote peace, friendship, and international understanding.

(7) The Peace Corps is an independent agency, and therefore no Peace Corps personnel or volunteers should be used to accomplish any other goal than the goals established by the Peace Corps Act.

(8) The Crisis Corps has been an effective tool in harnessing the skills and talents for returned Peace Corps volunteers and should be expanded to utilize to the maximum extent the talent pool of returned Peace Corps volunteers.

(9) The Peace Corps is currently operating with an annual budget of \$275,000,000 in 70 countries with 7,000 Peace Corps volunteers.

(10) There is deep misunderstanding and misinformation about American values and ideals in many parts of the world, particularly those with substantial Muslim populations, and a greater Peace Corps presence in such places could foster greater understanding and tolerance.

(11) Congress has declared that the Peace Corps should be expanded to sponsor a minimum of 10,000 Peace Corps volunteers.

(12) President George W. Bush has called for the doubling of the number of Peace Corps volunteers in service.

(13) Any expansion of the Peace Corps shall not jeopardize the quality of the Peace Corps volunteer experience, and therefore can only be accomplished by an appropriate increase in field and headquarters support staff.

(14) In order to ensure that proposed expansion of the Peace Corps preserves the integrity of the program and the security of volunteers, the integrated Planning and Budget System supported by the Office of Planning and Policy Analysis should continue its focus on strategic planning.

(15) A streamlined, bipartisan National Peace Corps Advisory Council composed of distinguished returned Peace Corps volunteers and other individuals, with diverse backgrounds and expertise, can be a source of ideas and suggestions that may be useful to the Director of the Peace Corps as he discharges his duties and responsibilities as head of the agency.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives.

(2) DIRECTOR.—The term "Director" means the Director of the Peace Corps.

(3) PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER.—The term "Peace Corps volunteer" means a volunteer or a volunteer leader under the Peace Corps Act.

(4) RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER.—The term "returned Peace Corps volunteer" means a person who has been certified by the Director as having served satisfactorily as a Peace Corps volunteer.

SEC. 4. RESTATEMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OF THE PEACE CORPS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2A of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2501-1) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: "As an independent agency, all recruiting of volunteers shall be undertaken primarily by the Peace Corps."

(b) DETAILS AND ASSIGNMENTS.—Section 5(g) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2504(g)) is amended by inserting after "Provided, That" the following: "such detail or assignment does not contradict the standing of Peace Corps volunteers as being independent: *Provided further, That*".

SEC. 5. REPORTS AND CONSULTATIONS.

(a) ANNUAL REPORTS; CONSULTATIONS ON NEW INITIATIVES.—Section 11 of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2510) is amended by striking the section heading and the text of section 11 and inserting the following:

"SEC. 11. ANNUAL REPORTS; CONSULTATIONS ON NEW INITIATIVES.

"(a) ANNUAL REPORTS.—The Director shall transmit to Congress, at least once in each

fiscal year, a report on operations under this Act. Each report shall contain information—

"(1) describing efforts undertaken to improve coordination of activities of the Peace Corps with activities of international voluntary service organizations, such as the United Nations volunteer program, and of host country voluntary service organizations, including—

"(A) a description of the purpose and scope of any development project which the Peace Corps undertook during the preceding fiscal year as a joint venture with any such international or host country voluntary service organizations; and

"(B) recommendations for improving coordination of development projects between the Peace Corps and any such international or host country voluntary service organizations;

"(2) describing—

"(A) any major new initiatives that the Peace Corps has under review for the upcoming fiscal year, and any major initiatives that were undertaken in the previous fiscal year that were not included in prior reports to the Congress;

"(B) the rationale for undertaking such new initiatives;

"(C) an estimate of the cost of such initiatives; and

"(D) the impact on the safety of volunteers;

"(3) describing in detail the Peace Corp's plans for doubling the number of volunteers from 2002 levels, including a five-year budget plan for reaching that goal; and

"(4) describing standard security procedures for any country in which the Peace Corps operates programs or is considering doing so, as well as any special security procedures contemplated because of changed circumstances in specific countries, and assessing whether security conditions would be enhanced—

"(A) by collocating volunteers with international or local nongovernmental organizations; or

"(B) with the placement of multiple volunteers in one location.

"(b) CONSULTATIONS ON NEW INITIATIVES.—The Director of the Peace Corps should consult with the appropriate congressional committees with respect to any major new initiatives not previously discussed in the latest annual report submitted to Congress under subsection (a) or in budget presentations. Wherever possible, such consultations should take place prior to the initiation of such initiatives, but in any event as soon as practicable thereafter."

(b) ONE TIME REPORT ON STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAMS.—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report—

(1) describing the student loan forgiveness programs currently available to Peace Corps volunteers upon completion of their service; and

(2) comparing such programs with other Government-sponsored student loan forgiveness programs; and

(3) recommending any additional student loan forgiveness programs which could attract more applicants from more low and middle income applicants facing high student loan obligations.

SEC. 6. SPECIAL VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND PLACEMENT FOR COUNTRIES WHOSE GOVERNMENTS ARE SEEKING TO FOSTER GREATER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THEIR CITIZENS AND THE UNITED STATES.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall submit a report to the appropriate