



**U.S. CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING ON
GLOBAL SERVICE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM ACT (S.1464)
MAY 24TH, 2007**

Remarks by Dr. Lael Brainard, Brookings Institution, Vice President and Director of Global Economy and Development Program:

I want to applaud Senator Feingold and Senator Coleman for their service as they introduce this exciting legislative initiative, the Global Service Fellowship. I also would like to say that I have never seen an initiative move so quickly from concept to legislation. I think that is partly due to the activism and energy of everyone involved with this initiative, but I also think it is also due to the efforts of the volunteer organizations involved. These organizations are able to energize effective people to champion their cause. It goes to show that when volunteer organizations set their mind to something they can move it forward. I know that David Caprara and Harris Wofford have been working to take the Global Service Fellowship to a whole different level.

We are living in a moment when the world wants to see, and Americans want to present, a different face; a face of compassion, a face that is cooperative. What better way to do that than to send forth all of those people that want to learn about other cultures, and who want to share what they know with these cultures. We see that the Peace Corps is the jewel in the crown of U.S. foreign aid. I think that Harris Wofford had something to do with the creation of that phenomenal organization, and we should expand it as President Bush has called for. But, our efforts should not stop there. There are so many exciting actors working in this space from faith-based groups to universities and NGOs. We have to support those organizations because they have many great ideas and a great deal of energy. They also have a diverse array of models for getting people out and into the field. That is why I think the Global Service Fellowship is perfect for this time in our country's history.

Remarks by David Caprara, Non-Resident Fellow and Director of Brookings International Volunteering & Service Initiative:

The Global Service Fellowship proposal would empower 10,000 Americans like Kimberly Priebe to represent the best of America's good will as citizen ambassadors of service.

International service brings long-term dividends to America and the countries served. According to Freedom from Terror polls, US humanitarian relief and citizen service in Pakistan and Indonesia boosted positive perceptions of America to 75% and 60% respectively, and lasted beyond the period of disaster assistance. Likewise, according to the Abt Associates study of AmeriCorps, civic service engenders a long-term impact among service participants in terms of increased habits of civic engagement and lifelong contributions to society.

Global Service Fellows under the proposed legislation would serve annually through voluntary service NGOs, faith-based groups, and university service learning programs. Fellows would apply

through qualified programs registered with the Secretary of State, and be nominated by Members of Congress. Upon acceptance, Fellows would serve abroad from several weeks to one year. Fellowship awards averaging \$5,000 would be redeemed through the sponsor organization to support program costs, travel and minimal living stipends. This is a fraction of the cost of supporting a Peace Corps or AmeriCorps volunteer for one year, and fellowships can be an effective “on ramp” to extended Peace Corps service.

Participating volunteer programs would collaborate with host country organizations in developing programs for volunteer skill transfer, capacity building, and cross-cultural service in impact areas such as ---

1. Eradicating extreme poverty;
2. Achieving universal primary education;
3. Effectively combating malaria and other infectious disease; and
4. Developing global partnerships for asset development, technology dissemination, and conflict resolution.

Under the proposal, Fellows must be American citizens registered with US-based service organizations. Applicants from lower-income backgrounds would be given added consideration along with those with prior service experience or unique skills. Applicants who demonstrate strong plans to share their volunteer experience upon return to their U.S. communities would also be given priority.

Organizations such as the Institute of International Education and the International Volunteer Programs Association would be consulted by the State Department in developing standards of performance and accountability. The program will have built in evaluation procedures to measure impacts and effectiveness, reported to Congress.

As outlined in S. 1424, the program would be authorized at \$50 million annually for three years and includes an offset.

I want to thank the Senators for elevating international volunteering and service to its rightful position. As Colin Powell stated in our launch at Brookings last June, “One way not to sell us short is to take that which we still have as a valuable commodity, who we are and what we are, and send it overseas in the form of volunteers.”

Remarks by Dr. Amanda Moore McBride, Assistant Professor and Research Director, Center for Social Development, Brown School of Social Work, Washington University in St. Louis:

I am honored to present on inclusion and effectiveness in international volunteering and service. Drawing on research about international service conducted in the United States as well as around the world, my statement addresses a few of the findings from an overview of what is known about the status and impacts of international service. More details are in the supporting research brief, which we have made available to you (McBride, Sherraden, & Lough, 2007). I have five key points.

First, we know that the infrastructure for international service is in civil society, through America's nonprofit and faith-based organizations. The Global Service Fellowship bill supports this infrastructure, expanding the capacity of the nonprofit sector to channel citizen effort overseas.

Second, research suggests that the opportunity to serve overseas may exist for only some Americans. Based on findings from the 2005 Current Population Survey, US-volunteers serving overseas tend to be male, younger, White, married with no dependents, college educated, and employed full-time with higher incomes (Lough & McBride, forthcoming). The bill expands this American tradition by increasing access to international service, and meeting the desire of the full citizenry to be a positive force in the world (Caprara et al., 2007).

Third, international service has multiple benefits. In addition to positive effects for beneficiaries, communities, and countries in which the Global Service Fellows serve, these US volunteers will be changed. Volunteers will increase their understanding of other cultures, learn new languages, and build new skills. A survey of 516 managers and 100 returned volunteers found that 94 percent of employers agree that international service broadens skills and experiences, and 67 percent believe that international volunteers obtain increased confidence, breadth of experience, and an ability to manage diversity (Cook & Jackson, 2006).

Fourth, much like national service, international service appears to create a "virtuous circle" of civic engagement. Volunteers participating in any type of intensive civic service are more likely to participate in other volunteer experiences both at home and abroad (IVR, 2002; Jastrzab et al., 2006; Manitsas, 2000; Rockliffe, 2005). In a study of 118 international volunteers, 69 percent report previous volunteer experience, compared to only 37 percent of non-volunteer young adults (Rehberg, 2005). Building on recent research by the Corporation for National and Community Service (Spring et al., 2007), these effects may be particularly strong for those volunteers from disadvantaged or low-income backgrounds. In these ways, the Global Service Fellows will return to the United States better prepared to function in and contribute to their own communities, the nation, and the world.

Fifth, rigorous, systematic research can identify the most effective international service arrangements and volunteer activities. A demonstration evaluation of the Global Service Fellowship program should be funded. Of particular importance are longitudinal impacts on the volunteers and the host communities as well as the effectiveness of efforts to promote inclusion across all groups—gender, age, racial, ethnic, religious, educational, and economic. And it is important to continue to invest in the U.S. government's Current Population Survey, which includes an annual volunteer supplement that is a valuable benchmark on international service.

In summary, in our global world, crossing borders in service to humanity is both increasingly possible and desirable. Research on international service suggests positive impacts from a Global Service Fellowship. Legislation providing \$50 million annually for 10,000 Global Service Fellows each year would be a positive investment in our nation's and the world's future.



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