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§ 12501. Findings and purpose

(a) Findings

The Congress finds the following:

- (1) Throughout the United States, there are pressing unmet human, educational, environmental, and public safety needs.
- (2) Americans desire to affirm common responsibilities and shared values, and join together in positive experiences, that transcend race, religion, gender, age, disability, region, income, and education.
- (3) The rising costs of postsecondary education are putting higher education out of reach for an increasing number of citizens.

(4) Americans of all ages can improve their communities and become better citizens through service to the United States.

(5) Nonprofit organizations, local governments, States, and the Federal Government are already supporting a wide variety of national service programs that deliver needed services in a cost-effective manner.

(6) Residents of low-income communities, especially youth and young adults, can be empowered through their service, and can help provide future community leadership.

(b) Purpose

It is the purpose of this chapter to—

(1) meet the unmet human, educational, environmental, and public safety needs of the United States, without displacing existing workers;

(2) renew the ethic of civic responsibility and the spirit of community and service throughout the varied and diverse communities of the United States;

(3) expand educational opportunity by rewarding individuals who participate in national service with an increased ability to pursue higher education or job training;

(4) encourage citizens of the United States, regardless of age, income, geographic location, or disability, to engage in full-time or part-time national service;

(5) reinvent government to eliminate duplication, support locally established initiatives, require measurable goals for performance, and offer flexibility in meeting those goals;

(6) expand and strengthen existing national service programs with demonstrated experience in providing structured service opportunities with visible benefits to the participants and community;

(7) build on the existing organizational service infrastructure of Federal, State, and local programs, agencies, and communities to expand full-time and part-time service opportunities for all citizens;

(8) provide tangible benefits to the communities in which national service is performed;

(9) expand and strengthen service-learning programs through year-round opportunities, including opportunities during the summer months, to improve the education of children and youth and to maximize the benefits of national and community service, in order to renew the ethic of civic responsibility and the spirit of community for children and youth throughout the United States;

(10) assist in coordinating and strengthening Federal and other service opportunities, including opportunities for participation in emergency and disaster preparedness, relief, and recovery;

(11) increase service opportunities for the Nation's retiring professionals, including such opportunities for those retiring from the science, technical, engineering, and mathematics professions, to improve the education of the Nation's youth and keep America competitive in the global knowledge economy, and to further utilize the experience, knowledge, and skills of older individuals;

(12) encourage the continued service of the alumni of the national service programs, including service in times of national need;