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wondering what everyone thinks about this - posted by wind_blow, on: 2009/3/18 12:00

Hey

In light of recent threads a SI I was wondering what everyone thought about the passage of this bill.

House Readies Passage of Volunteerism Bill Critics Call Pricey, Forced Service

WASHINGTON -- The House of Representatives is expected to pass a measure Wednesday that supporters are calling the most sweeping reform of nationally-backed volunteer programs since AmeriCorps. But some opponents are strongly criticizing the legislation, calling it expensive indoctrination and forced advocacy.

The Generations Invigorating Volunteerism and Education Act, known as the GIVE Act -- sponsored by Reps. Carolyn McCahey, D-N.Y., and George Miller, D-Calif. -- was approved by a 34-3 vote in the House Education and Labor Committee last week.

The legislation would create 175,000 "new service opportunities" under AmeriCorps, bringing the number of participants in the national volunteer program to 250,000. It would also create additional "corps" to expand the reach of volunteerism into new sectors, including a Clean Energy Corps, Education Corps, Healthy Futures Corps and Veterans Service Corps, and it expands the National Civilian Community Corps to focus on additional areas like disaster relief and energy conservation.

It is the first time the AmeriCorps program, which was created by President Clinton in 1993, will be reauthorized, and supporters say it will have additional funding to match the renewed interest in national service since President Obama's election and the acute need for volunteerism and charity in tough economic times.

"National and community service can help make Americans a part of the solution to get our country through this economic crisis. I hope the House and Senate will join us in moving as quickly as possible to help President Obama sign this critical bill into law," Miller, chairman of the education committee, said after the bill was passed.

But the bill's opponents -- and there are only a few in Congress -- say it could cram ideology down the throats of young "volunteers," many of whom could be forced into service since the bill creates a "Congressional Commission on Civic Service."

The bipartisan commission will be tasked with exploring a number of topics, including "whether a workable, fair and reasonable mandatory service requirement for all able young people could be developed and how such a requirement could be implemented in a manner that would strengthen the social fabric of the nation."

"We contribute our time and money under no government coercion on a scale the rest of the world doesn't emulate and probably can't imagine," said Luke Sheahan, contributing editor for the Family Security Foundation. "The idea that government should order its people to perform acts of charity is contrary to the idea of charity and it removes the responsibility for charity from the people to the government, destroying private initiative."

Others say they are concerned that the increased funding will be used to promote one ideology over another.

"It's allowing taxpayer funding of the left-wing organizations," said Larry Hart, director of government relations for the American Conservative Union.

"I think this is a problem that is rife throughout the federal government. When you dramatically expand the program, then you dramatically expand the ability for these left-wing advocacy organizations to get more funding. I don't see a lot of attention being paid to that, even from those who are critical. That's where the focus should be. Republicans tend to say it's not that they oppose the program, they just want to spend less money. It's the program that's bad."

South Carolina Rep. Joe Wilson was one of three Republicans to oppose the legislation in committee. Wilson questioned the utility of the cash-strapped federal government making such huge investments in what he says should be communi

ty-inspired projects and programs.

"Volunteerism is part of the American spirit of generosity, and we all stand in support of those who will share their time," said Wilson, who was voted against the bill with Minnesota Rep. John Kline and California Rep. Tom McClintock.

"However, while our economy and our government is in financial trouble, it is not the best use of taxpayer dollars to spend the level of money on new and existing programs included in this bill."

Aides to Miller say they are awaiting estimates from the Congressional Budget Office on how much the GIVE Act would ultimately cost. In addition to all of the funding that goes to organizations in the forms of grants and administrative costs, AmeriCorps volunteers typically receive stipends and college scholarships when they complete one of the several available programs.

For example, a participant in the National Civilian Community Corps, which is a 10-month residential commitment, now receives \$4,000 in living expenses and a \$4,475 in money toward school. That conceivably would increase under the new legislation.

But regardless of the budget estimate, the financial benefits outweigh the cost, Miller's spokeswoman said.

"The millions of Americans who volunteered in 2007 generated benefits worth \$158 billion," Rachel Racusen said in a statement to FOXNews.com. "A cost-benefit analysis of AmeriCorps, for example, shows that every dollar invested in the programs yields almost \$4 in direct, measurable benefits. Investing in service helps low-income students achieve in school, prepares future workers for green jobs, provides assistance to veterans returning from war, and rebuilds homes and communities after disasters."

Many of the provisions in the GIVE Act can be found in Obama's 2010 fiscal year budget blueprint issued in February. The administration proposes \$1.3 billion for the Corporation for National and Community Service, which administers AmeriCorps. CNCS received an estimated \$260 million in fiscal 2009.

But some critics on the right suggest that the president's push for national service goes too far, and the recent congressional steps toward expanding the federal role in volunteerism and "civilian service" smack of a larger agenda. They point to a campaign speech the president made last July in which he suggested national security could be entrusted to a civilian force.

"We cannot continue to rely on our military in order to achieve the national security objectives we've set. We've got to have a civilian national security force that is just as powerful, just as strong, just as well funded," Obama, who worked as a community organizer in Chicago early in his career, said during a Colorado Springs rally.

At the time, Obama was discussing expanding the USA Freedom Corps -- created by President George W. Bush in 2002 -- Peace Corps and AmeriCorps, as well as beefing up the cadre of foreign service officers abroad and programs in which veterans help veterans back home.

"This will empower more Americans to craft their own service agenda and make their own change from the bottom up," Obama said in the speech.

"Senator Obama aims to tap into the already active volunteerism of millions of Americans and recruit them to become cogs in a gigantic government machine grinding out his social re-engineering agenda," Lee Cary of the conservative American Thinker wrote at the time about Obama's remarks.

"(His words) were about turning America into one, giant, community organizer's sandbox at enormous cost to taxpayers," Cary wrote.

The Senate is mulling over a similar piece of legislation, the "Serve America Act," sponsored by Sens. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, and Ted Kennedy, D-Mass. It was given a special endorsement by the president in his address before Congress on Feb. 24.

House committee staff insist the GIVE Act will not change the voluntary nature of service. Supporters add that the critics are a minority who prefer to agitate than assist.

"Resistance to expanded public service programs can be expected from the ideologically sclerotic, those who occupy the negative ground between government as the problem and government as our enemy," former Democratic Colorado Sen. Gary Hart wrote in a recent op-ed on the Huffington Post Web site.

I did not post the link because I was not sure if that was ok by the rules but the story was on Fox news I think. It was shared with me, some I know are concerned that this is just another way for the government to have more control over the young people in this country. To basically brain wash them with their ideology. If it passes and is mandatory how do some of you feel about sending your teenager away for 10 months to a government group that for the most part is hostile to anything to do with Jesus.

Interesting to me how many bills like this and others have been passed over the past few weeks and have gotten little attention because the press and gov is always talking up the economy so much. Kind of reminds me of the magician trick, while we are all focused on the one hand, a lot of other bad stuff is being signed into law with the other hand????

Your sis in Him
Elizabeth

Re: wondering what everyone thinks about this - posted by White_Stone (), on: 2009/3/18 12:48

Personally, I do not think this is a good thing. If it were not for my Faith in Jesus and God's will being fulfilled this bill could fill me with terror.

History repeats itself and this looks like Hitler's Brownshirts & his youth movement. Look what came from that. . . .

You are right about Bills being passed and people looking the other way. Again, in my opinion, The Bible says the people will have a strong delusion, it looks like this is so.

None of the people in office are in control, Almighty God puts them there to accomplish His Purpose. His will be done.

white stone