

House Clears Landmark Volunteer Bill for President's Signature

Tuesday, March 31 2009

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congressman Mike Michaud praised House action on H.R. 1388, the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, H.R. 1388. The bill would increase the number of volunteers to 250,000, and increase the education reward they receive to \$5,350 for next year, the same as the maximum Pell Grant scholarship award. The education award would also be linked to match future boosts in the Pell Grant scholarship in order to keep up with rising college costs. Passage in the House clears the bill for the President's signature.

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According to the Corporation for National and Community Service, more than 9,200 people are helping to meet local needs, strengthen communities, and increase civic engagement through 28 national service projects across Maine. This year, the Corporation for National and Community Service will commit more than \$5,900,000 to support Maine communities through national service initiatives.

"This legislation will improve current programs and promote a stronger sense of service in our communities," said Michaud. "I am not surprised that so many in our state are involved and willing to step up and do this valuable work. Passing this bill into law will help encourage more people to serve their communities."

According to the House Education and Labor Committee, the legislation will more than triple the number of volunteers serving in this country from 75,000 to 250,000 and establish four new service corps: a Clean Energy Corps to increase energy efficiency and conservation, an Education Corps to help increase student engagement, achievement and graduation, a Healthy Futures Corps to help improve health care access, and a Veterans Service Corps to enhance services for veterans. These 175,000 new volunteer opportunities will expand current AmeriCorps programs and provide members for these four new service corps.

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