

Washington, D.C. – Today, Representatives David Price (D-NC) and Doris Matsui (D-CA), Co-Chairs of the Congressional National Service Caucus, joined students and service program alumni on Capitol Hill in calling on House Republican leaders to save funding for national service programs like AmeriCorps. The Republican majority's Fiscal Year 2012 House bill to fund Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and related agencies cuts funding for all national service programs by 75 percent and calls for shutting down the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) at a time when demand for opportunities to serve through national service programs has never been higher.

"In this time of high unemployment and growing poverty levels, AmeriCorps members are a crucial force in meeting community needs," Rep. Matsui said. If we are going to truly help our economy recover, this Congress must focus federal investments on these type of cost-effective programs that produce the highest returns. Now is not the time to cut programs that not only provide young adults with jobs and job training, but also carry out projects that tackle the nation's needs."

"Over the last fifty years, these programs have experienced broad, bipartisan support because they are essential to providing citizens an active role in addressing the nation's challenges and keeping us strong, and making service at all levels by all ages a key component of what it means to be an American" Rep. Price said. "This effort to choke-off funding for cost-effective, job creating national service programs is another sad reflection of how polarized and beholden to its most extreme elements the Republican Party has become."

Reps. Price and Matsui released a letter to Subcommittee Chair Denny Rehberg (R-MT) and ranking member Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), co-signed by 73 other House members, urging the subcommittee to protect service programs that provide vital services in communities across the country. The representatives are urging House Republicans to adopt the Senate bill's provision providing \$1.09 billion for service programs in conference committee.

"Many of our service efforts have been under continual threat of elimination in this current Congress-- I could not disagree with these cuts more. Particularly in this economy, they move our country in the wrong direction," said Congresswoman DeLauro. "We should be creating opportunities for every American to get more involved in the life of his or her community. These services represent the fundamental moral obligations we have to each other, and that government has to the least fortunate. They are why we have government in the first place. I will keep fighting against these cuts, and will keep working with Voices for National Service to

save our critical national service programs."

The student and service program alumni Rally to "Fight the Zero" for National Service staged gatherings at several locations on Capitol Hill on Thursday morning. Over 100 joined the rally and subsequent speaking program in Rayburn House Office Building where Reps. Matsui and DeLauro spoke about the need to preserve service programs which have been supported by Democratic and Republican Presidents and were recently reauthorized in 2009 with broad bipartisan support in both the House and Senate.

Save Service in America's Campaign Director AnnMaura Connolly said: "These young people and AmeriCorps alums making the case for service to our nation's policymakers is further evidence of the desire Americans have to serve. Our nation should be investing in service to create jobs and help our local communities, not threatening to shut down effective, innovative, and fiscally efficient initiatives that account for over 100,000 jobs and provide vital services to communities in need across the nation. The tens of thousands of Americans engaged in the Save Service initiative stand in solidarity with these young people rallying to protect opportunities to serve their country. We will continue working to ensure policymakers see the great economic benefit to keeping open pathways for Americans to give back to their country."

In their letter to the subcommittee, the members wrote:

"Doing away with our national and community service programs would strike a devastating blow to communities, nonprofits, and millions of vulnerable citizens at a time when social needs are growing, unemployment is high, and American are eager to serve. Across the country, state and local governments are facing significant budget shortfalls, creating a gap between the services citizens require and the support services state and local governments are able to provide . . . we believe the investment in CNCS will pay off many times over—preserving jobs, strengthening our economy, improving communities nationwide and making service at all levels, but all age groups, a key component of what it means to be an American."

###