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**SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR/HHS/EDUCATION/RELATED AGENCIES
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS (FY 2007)**

Corporation for National and Community Service

We are pleased to testify in support of fiscal year 2007 Appropriations for the Senior Companion Program (SCP), part of the National Senior Service Corps (NSSC) authorized by the Domestic Volunteer Service Act and administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The National Directors Association is a membership-supported professional organizations whose roster include the majority of more than 227 directors who administer Senior Companion projects across the nation, as well as local sponsoring agencies and others who value and support the work of NSSC programs.

We laud President Bush on his proposal to expand volunteer opportunities for all Americans, and particularly for the nation's senior population. Consistent with his proposal, we support a FY 2007 funding level consistent with the goal of eventually enrolling one million older Americans in the Senior Corps. **In pursuit of this goal, we support increasing appropriations for the Senior Companion Program (SCP) by \$5.04 million to \$52 million for FY 2007.**

For the Senior Companion Program, the National Association of Senior Companion Project Directors supports a \$5.04 million increase in the program's funding level to be allocated as follows: a 3% administrative cost increase to support program infrastructure to meet the new grant requirements of Programming for Impact (roughly \$1.4 million); one-third of the increase (\$2.0 million) dedicated to Programs of National Significance as required by law to expand the capacity of existing grantees and enroll more seniors wishing to volunteer and new programs in unserved areas (\$0.6 million).

In addition, we endorse the Administration's request that the Subcommittee eliminate

restrictions in current appropriations law which limits the flexibility of the Corporation for National and Community Service to utilize innovative and creative approaches to engage America's retiring baby boomers. This change would in no way alter the income-eligibility requirements of the means-tested volunteer programs at CNCS. Income guidelines for the Senior Companion Program and Foster Grandparent Program would remain as in current law.

Infrastructure funding will also go far toward supporting the national goal of making it easier for more Americans to serve. At this unique time in our nation's history with the rebirth of patriotism and rekindling of the national spirit of citizen responsibility, we know the desire is there and we must rise to tap those critical resources for the nation.

The current status of the federal budget even more critically dictates that we be cost-conscious with our tax dollars -- drawing the best return on our investments in Federal programs. Since 1965, Senior Corps programs have represented the best in the Federal partnership with local communities, with federal dollars flowing directly to local sponsoring agencies, which in turn determine how the funds are used. Statistics show that SCPs focus their resources where they will have the largest impact on in-home assignments with frail older people at risk of institutionalization.

We appreciate the goals of the Subcommittee in exercising its best judgment to effect the best use of scarce Federal resources, and as American taxpayers, we endorse your efforts to ensure that tax dollars yield significant impact. We have much evidence that SCP produce results: the Corporation's studies as well as numerous anecdotal stories of lives changed, dollars saved, and lasting good works accomplished in communities across the country.

This evidence is compelling, but we believe that much more is necessary to show that investing federal dollars in SCP volunteers produces quantifiable, concrete results that significantly impact communities in measurable ways. That is why project directors nationwide, in cooperation with NSSC staff from the Corporation for National and Community Service and with the wholehearted support of the three national Directors Associations, have moved to outcome-based

activity: Programming for Impact (PFI).

Through PFI, projects and sites where volunteers serve are cooperating to collect and report data to support the impact our volunteers are having in addressing pressing local community needs. We hope that you will agree that the impact data now coming in truly does document the incredible effect our volunteers are having on communities, and supports your current federal investment in our programs as well as our request for increased funds for FY 2007.

As baby boomers age, the “graying of America” is progressing at a phenomenal rate. Yet, only 5% of those over 65 years of age live in institutions, and a full 81% of the non-institutionalized 65+ population has no limitation in their activities of daily living. According to a U.S. Administration on Aging/Marriott Senior Living Services volunteerism survey, over 41% (15.1 million) of the 37.7 million Americans 60 years of age and older performed some sort of volunteer work in the previous year. An additional 37.5% (14 million) indicated they would volunteer if they were asked. The message is clear: in spite of the general public’s conception of older people as frail and dependent, the aging process is, for most people, a time of wellness when they have both the time and the desire to serve others.

We need increased funding to engage more seniors in meeting the pressing needs being expressed by our communities. Your enhanced investment in all three senior volunteer programs now will pay off in the short and long term -- savings realized by the value of service rendered to communities across America by senior volunteers; savings realized as additional avenues are provided for more older Americans to be involved in meaningful service opportunities; and savings realized as that involvement keeps older people healthy and independent. Our goal is to expand the Senior Companion Program so that they can provide the opportunity for one million Americans to serve by the turn of the century.

Please help us to tap the nation's fastest growing natural resource -- our seniors, by supporting a fiscal year 2007 funding level of \$52 million for the Senior Companion Program, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) at \$65 million (an increase of \$5.315 million) and the Foster Grandparent Program at \$115.929 million (an increase of \$4.992 million) to sustain program operations and generate opportunities for more senior volunteers.

Additional Data:

- Someone in the U.S. turns 60 years old every 8 seconds.
- According to a 2006 survey of project directors conducted by NASCPD, 80% of Senior Companion Programs have extensive waiting lists of clients as well as prospective volunteers. Many clients have died or were placed prematurely in nursing homes before a volunteer was available.
- Assisted Living Federation of America: 6.5 million older people need assistance with daily living activities. As the number of older Americans continues to increase, that number is expected to double by 2020. It is projected that the 65 years and older population which numbered 35 million in 2000, will more than double in size to about 70 million in the next 25 years.
- National Family Caregivers Association: 44 million family caregivers who provide significant time and effort in caring for a loved one, especially spousal caregivers, do not get consistent help from other family members. One study has shown that as many as three fourths of these caregivers are "going it alone." Approximately 80% of home care services are provided by family caregivers. A recent study calculated that American businesses loses between \$11 billion and \$29 billion each year due to employees' need to care for loved ones 50 years of age and older. Most expensive were the replacement of lost workers (at least \$4.9 billion a year), workday interruptions (\$3.7 billion) and absenteeism (\$885 million). The employees lose salary, Social Security and pension benefits as

a result of refusing promotions, switching to part-time work or retiring early.

- Alzheimer's Association: We should initiate a national dialogue immediately to reach consensus on a viable solution to the long-term care financing problem. Simple caregiver interventions such as respite and supportive services can have a major impact on healthcare costs by delaying nursing home placement.
- National Retirement Planning Coalition: Tens of millions of Americans are seriously underprepared to meet their financial needs in retirement. As many as 40 percent of Americans have saved almost nothing for retirement. Only one in four Americans can afford nursing home care for one year.
- National Council on Aging: Too many frail older Americans should be able to remain independent in their homes but are prematurely admitted into expensive nursing homes. Too many family caregivers are burning out under growing financial, emotional and physical burnout. We are not taking full advantage of experienced, able-bodied seniors volunteers who want to give back to their communities. Over 70 percent of health care spending on seniors is directly related to problems associated with chronic disease – problems that can be effectively addressed through less expensive non-medical interventions such as physical activity, falls prevention, dietary modification and support for behavior change. We must develop new models of civic engagement to make effective use of the incredible resource that these seniors can offer to society. The net result would be billions of tax dollars saved because of forethought and planning.” (Howard Bedlin).