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"Inspiring Universal Voluntary Service Among American Youth"

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Introduction

Chairman Heck, Vice Chair Gearan, Vice Chair Wada, and distinguished members of the

National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to you today as our country faces an urgent need to turnaround historic declines in service and overall civic life. Just a few months ago, our Do Good Institute released research emphasizing that the percentage of Americans volunteering and giving is at the lowest point in approximately fifteen years. These negative trends are widespread across our nation: 31 states have experienced a significant decline in volunteering since the post 9/11 years while not one state in our union has experienced a significant increase in volunteering over that time period. The importance of recognizing and addressing Americans' declining participation in their communities and country cannot be overstated.

As the Director of the Do Good Institute and the Levenson Family Chair in Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership in the School of Public Policy and at the University of Maryland, I have the honor of leading an effort that is countering these negative national trends by equipping and empowering a new generation of young people to apply their passions and ideas to transform our world for the better. We are working to create a new model for higher education called the Do Good Campus, with an ambitious goal of engaging all University of Maryland students from orientation to graduation and beyond in multiple, high quality service experiences that will lead them to do good and serve their country and world for a lifetime.

After describing the troubling trends facing our nation and underscoring the importance of your work, I appreciate the opportunity to outline our experiences implementing the University of Maryland's Do Good Campus strategy, a model that could be adapted and replicated in schools and universities across the United States.

I will close my testimony with policy ideas that could inspire a movement towards *universal voluntary service* in the United States.¹ I had the great privilege of serving in the federal government from 2002 to 2010 and ultimately worked on many of the Commission’s core policy issues as the Senior Counselor to the CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) as well as its Director of Research and Policy Development during the administrations of President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama. The federal government will need to play an important role in advancing new, innovative models of service to address our current challenges.

Americans Are Participating in Their Communities at Historically Low Levels Today

In November 2018, my co-author Dr. Nathan Dietz and I published a research report, [*Where are America’s Volunteers?*](#), that underscores the challenges of inspiring universal service across the United States today.² We pointed out that volunteering surged in the years following 9/11. Afterward, the national rate of American volunteering declined and continued to slide before it bottomed out at an all-time low of 24.9 percent in 2015. This decline in the national volunteer rate substantially decreased the number of Americans volunteering annually: if the volunteer rate had not declined at all between 2004 and 2015, for example, over 9.8 million more Americans would have volunteered in 2015. Similarly, the percentage of Americans giving to charity annually declined from 66.8 percent in 2000 to 55.5 percent in 2014 according to recent research by the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University.³

Our nation and its residents lose a lot when large portions of the population are not regularly engaged in serving their community and country. Volunteering and service generates indirect positive benefits for communities and for volunteers themselves. Studies⁴ have shown that regular volunteering promotes strong emotional, mental, and even physical health; encourages other types of civic participation; discourages antisocial behavior; and promotes socioeconomic achievement, especially by encouraging educational advancement among high school and college students. Volunteer service also helps to strengthen communities by encouraging people to work together to solve pressing problems. The term “social capital” is frequently used to describe the resource that people generate through positive interactions that helps to keep communities and societies prosperous and productive. Social capital includes the occurrence of interactions between individuals – especially how, and how often, they engage in civic and social

¹ I greatly appreciated the ideas and support of Charles Cummings and Nathan Dietz during the development of this testimony. Any errors or omissions are my responsibility. They are both wonderful colleagues at the University of Maryland.

² Grimm, Robert T., Jr., and Dietz, Nathan. 2018. “Where Are America’s Volunteers? A Look at America’s Widespread Decline in Volunteering in Cities and States.” Research Brief: Do Good Institute, University of Maryland.

³ Osili, Una, and Sasha Zarins (2018). “Fewer Americans are giving money to charity but total donations are at record levels anyway.” *The Conversation*, July 3. Available at <https://theconversation.com/fewer-americans-are-giving-money-to-charity-but-total-donations-are-at-record-levels-anyway-98291>.

⁴ Wilson, John. “Volunteering.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26, no. 1 (2000): 215-240. See also <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/unexpected-benefits-of-volunteering-4132453>

affairs. Social capital networks give rise to group norms that can facilitate action, cooperation, trust, and reciprocity with others; norms that lead to positive ties among individuals and groups and stimulate more pro-civic actions including military service and public service.

Unfortunately, we are facing a landscape where more and more communities are losing substantial reservoirs of pro-service attitudes and behaviors. Illustrating this trend, rural and suburban areas – which traditionally exhibit much higher rates of social capital versus urban areas – experienced the most significant declines in volunteering over the last two decades. Rural volunteering declined to an all-time low of 25.2 percent in 2015, while suburban volunteering declined to an all-time low of 25.3 percent in 2015. These findings are consistent with our March 2018 research report, *Good Intentions, Gap in Action*, in which Dr. Dietz and I found that high school and college student volunteerism rates have declined since the early 2000s, and have been stagnant for the last decade.⁵ We were surprised to learn that college students volunteer less frequently than high school students. This finding is striking, given that the under-25 college student population is older, better educated, and from more affluent households – all factors that are associated with higher volunteering rates – than the population of high school students.

The Do Good Campus: Catalyzing High-Impact Service Among College Students

Given how important it is for individuals to serve their community and country as well as the dire state of service and civic life in America today, we need a revolution of service innovations to turn the tide. The University of Maryland's Do Good Campus is one new model that is bucking the national trends.

Perhaps the best way to explain our Do Good Campus is tell you about a group of our early students who, while leaving a campus dining hall after dinner in fall 2011, noticed piles of good food being thrown away. They came up with an idea to collect and donate the leftover dining hall food to local food banks surrounding the College Park campus. Within a short time, the students transformed their original campus student group into a multi-campus, student volunteer-run nonprofit called the Food Recovery Network (FRN) and recovered thousands of pounds of uneaten food that would have otherwise been thrown away. Today, FRN is an award-winning nonprofit with chapters on 230 college campuses, its volunteers have recovered over 3 million pounds of food,⁶ and its model sparked the first government-sponsored food recovery program in the United States in Maryland's Montgomery County.

How did these students studying Government, Anthropology, Biology and International Development have the tools, resources and opportunities to quickly become the country's largest

⁵ Grimm, Robert T., Jr., and Nathan Dietz. 2018. "Good Intentions, Gap in Action: The Challenge of Translating Youth's High Interest in Doing Good into Civic Engagement." Research Brief: Do Good Institute, University of Maryland. Available at https://publicpolicy.umd.edu/sites/default/files/Good%20Intentions,%20Gap%20in%20Action_Do%20Good%20Institute%20Research%20Brief.pdf.

⁶ <https://www.foodrecoverynetwork.org/ourimpact/>

student movement against food waste? The ability of this student group to have such an enormous impact in so little time was largely due to a campus-wide, social impact ecosystem that disrupts the traditional way higher education is deployed. The co-founders and other students involved in the group were able to take our hands-on social impact courses, which are open to students of all majors and which allowed these students to accelerate FRN's potential. They were able to compete in an inclusive, campus-wide social action prize competition – the Do Good Challenge – and win funding and in-kind support. After the Do Good Challenge, they received strategic guidance and support from a diverse group of faculty and external partners. For example, Dr. Robert Sheehan, the Academic Director of our Executive MBA Program at our Smith School of Business, devoted considerable time supporting the development of FRN's strategic plan. Meanwhile, I agreed to serve as the first Chair (2012-2016) of FRN's Board of Directors. We also provided free workspace on campus and helped FRN obtain pro bono legal support from Beveridge & Diamond, an environmental-focused law firm.

The Food Recovery Network's explosive, student volunteer-led growth was made possible by our new model for higher education. FRN's impact is notable but not unique for our Do Good Campus.

Many University of Maryland students and alumni are leveraging the Do Good Institute's experiential education model to create technological innovations, raise substantial funds for important causes, and found and lead high-impact nonprofits, companies, and projects that are driving innovations in our state and around the world. Two different alums of our Do Good Challenge program have made the *Forbes* Top 30 Social Entrepreneurs Under 30 list. Recently an alumnus was named Argentina's 2017 Ernst and Young Social Entrepreneur of the Year. Last fall, another alum was named a finalist for the 2018 Pritzker Emerging Environmental Genius Award for his work creating the world's first stormwater credit market through his Nature Conservancy position and company District Stormwater, located right here in Washington, D.C.

Our success at catalyzing student-led social impact inside and outside the classroom has earned the support of our president, regents, trustees, deans, faculty, state government leaders, and the engagement of students from all of our schools and colleges. Higher education leaders have recently endorsed our model too. An association of over 300 universities from around the world (Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration) awarded the Do Good Institute the 2017 Voinovich Public Innovation Prize and the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities' awarded Maryland the 2017 Place Award for the Do Good Campus.

In 2010, we started what ultimately became the Do Good Campus model with a modest seed gift, a campus-wide aspiration, one faculty member, and no social impact course offerings. Today, our campus-wide programs are growing rapidly and engaging significantly more students in ongoing service experiences each year. In 2019, thousands of students will participate in our robust academic courses and co-curricular social impact programs.

Even with these numbers, almost every one of our courses has a waiting list. The truth is, we are struggling to keep up with student demand for our hands-on educational programs. As such, we could make good use of a properly-designed federal program to expand service opportunities for students at educational institutions such as ours.

The Do Good Campus: Strategies to Generate a Renewal of National and Public Service

The Do Good Campus model and early successes could be adapted and replicated at many other universities and even K-12 educational institutions. The federal government – along with philanthropy and state and local governments – could generate an explosion of campus-wide efforts across the United States that are similar to the University of Maryland’s Do Good Campus model and advance the Commission’s effort to make voluntary service universal.

Let me highlight three Do Good Campus approaches that could be adapted as strategies for building 21st century social impact campuses:

1. Deploy high quality, hands-on learning that taps students’ passions and empowers them to make an impact today.
2. Launch a wide-reaching prize competition, and do it with a splash.
3. Create a pipeline of experiences that build upon one another.

1. Deploy high quality, hands-on learning that taps students’ passions and empowers them to make an impact today. With partners across the University of Maryland, we developed academic programs that emphasize hands-on learning, leadership, innovation, and the opportunity to make a social impact during each class and on an issue the students cared about.

Our initial offerings included classes that focused on students researching an issue, creating an investment fund, and awarding actual money to a local organization. We also developed courses for students to pilot an innovative project or venture idea and then, for their final exam, make a pitch to a panel of judges to earn coaching and modest seed funding to advance it. These early courses produced student waitlists, college administrators who offered new funding to bring our courses into their colleges, and support for new campus-wide academic programs.

2. Launch a wide-reaching prize competition, and do it with a splash. Our student reach expanded dramatically when we launched the Do Good Challenge, a campus-wide prize competition in which students are challenged to make the biggest impact they can for a cause they care about.

During the Do Good Challenge, students team up to mobilize volunteers, fundraise, develop advocacy campaigns, or start or advance a social venture that could become a nonprofit or business. The Challenge awards top prizes (\$5,000) for the best project that benefits an existing cause or issue (a recent finalist raised more than one million dollars for an existing nonprofit) and the best venture (a recent finalist developed a new emergency fall detection prototype to reduce the number of geriatric falls).

The Challenge is intentionally broad about how students can do good, allowing for for-profit and nonprofit ventures, *as well as* projects that build on or support existing community organizations. Our inclusion of Do Good projects is rather unique. In reviewing about 40 social innovation competitions hosted by academic and non-academic institutions, Arizona State University's Changemaker Challenge and our Do Good Challenge were the two competitions that encouraged students to enter by creating *a project for an existing cause or organization*.⁷

In the first year of the Do Good Challenge (2012), we partnered with the actor Kevin Bacon who created buzz for the new effort. We aired a video during a North Carolina versus Maryland home basketball game where Bacon announced the Challenge. During the Finals, Bacon and prominent university alums judged the projects during an event that is a cross between *American Idol* and *Shark Tank*. With over a thousand students involved through 100 diverse teams and a packed finals event more akin to a sporting event (with groups loudly cheering for their favorite finalists), we sparked strong campus-wide momentum.

Following this early success, we kept the momentum going by providing additional support for the most promising Challenge groups such as the FRN. We also grew our impact by incorporating Challenge projects into numerous academic programs and creating a year-long program of coaching and seed funds to enhance the quality of students' efforts.

Today, the Do Good Challenge has become a Maryland institution. Recent finalists include:

- Press Uncuffed - which focuses on journalists unjustly imprisoned around the world - developed partnerships with the Newseum, the *New York Times* and HBO and is credited with helping free multiple journalists around the world;
- Terps Against Hunger packaged more than 2 million meals for nearly 50,000 people;
- The James Hollister Wellness Foundation has recovered and provided medications for over 17,000 individuals from low-income backgrounds in South America.

3. Create a pipeline of experiences that build upon one another. Universities and secondary schools across the United States have the opportunity to create a web of experiences that spark ever deeper social actions by their students. Let's take a hypothetical Do Good Campus student who has their interest in social impact piqued during orientation. Where does she go to learn more and make a difference?

- First, we offer that student some general education course options for learning about and practicing how to address social issues in innovative and measurable ways.
- Then, we incorporate a broad and exciting prize competition, the Do Good Challenge, that aligns with other course offerings so that participation is part of the student's academic experience rather than one more extracurricular activity to juggle.

⁷ Egan, T., Grimm, R, and Meissinger, K., Contest Mode: Exploring 40 University Social Sector Competitions and Related Provocative Pedagogy. NASPAA Annual Conference, Columbus, Ohio, October 2016.

- As the student builds knowledge and experience, we offer her the option to enroll in academic programs focused on social innovation and leadership, as well as the opportunity to apply for seed funds and coaching to advance her efforts.
- We now have a Do Good Accelerator summer program where the student can receive coaching and get paid to work all summer on her Do Good project or venture.
- After graduation, we will continue to provide support for her efforts and invite her to share her experiences with students who are in an earlier stage of the pipeline.

Our Do Good Campus reaches students who would not normally imagine themselves as social innovators, volunteers, and future public service professionals. Universities have a natural gravity that often encourages individuals to work exclusively in their discipline or college. It is important to resist that pull in order to harness the full power and potential of a university (or a secondary school). Today, we have versions of our Do Good curriculum growing in such diverse colleges as the Arts and Humanities and Engineering. Exhibiting the flexibility of these courses, an engineering approach to doing good might include the role of drones while an arts version might focus on a traveling theater troupe performing productions with an advocacy message.

Our campus-wide aspiration to reach all students ultimately derives from our recognition that a small percentage of students will become entrepreneurs who start their own organizations, a significant but still minority of students will go to work in public service (nonprofit and government sector), but all students have the capacity to positively impact the world in a meaningful, effective and efficient way, regardless of their career path.

The long-term impact of campus-wide strategies that promote universal voluntary service

Our extensive support for student projects (rare among higher educational institutions) creates an environment where numerous projects eventually evolve into or inspire students to start nonprofit or for-profit ventures that are engines of economic development, new jobs, and innovation.

The initial experience of developing a plan for a scalable project helps more students build the skills, knowledge and confidence to enter the social innovation world of nonprofit or for-profit ventures. FRN won our first Do Good Challenge as a new campus student group (what we term a project) but evolved into a nonprofit. It also spawned multiple award-winning companies focused on fighting food waste and hunger while simultaneously creating thousands of new jobs and making a profit by selling what is termed “ugly produce” (such as a u-shaped carrot that tastes the same as a straight carrot). In fact, Do Good alumni-led companies Imperfect Produce and Hungry Harvest have already saved over 40 million pounds and 12 million pounds of produce, respectively, that did not live up to “the cosmetic standards of grocery stores.”⁸ Other students led a project that raised over \$100,000, built multiple schools and developed a long-term partnership between our university and communities in Honduras. Today, these alumni have

⁸ See <https://www.imperfectproduce.com/> and <https://www.hungryharvest.net/eliminating-food-waste/>

launched a social enterprise to expand their work in Honduras and connect young professionals through an organization called One Thousand Schools.⁹

Our country desperately needs more educational experiences that produce similar outcomes. The strategies described in my testimony can be adapted and replicated broadly in university as well as secondary school contexts. For this to happen, we need to re-imagine service and civic education at the high school and college level. We need to develop fresh, analogous, hands-on curriculum where teenagers and well as young adults have the opportunity to make an impact today on an issue they care about through high-quality and regular service experiences that are closely connected to the learning goals of their core academic classes.

**The Desire to Serve is There Even if the Action is Not:
Opportunities and Challenges of Engaging All Americans in Service**

I will close my testimony with ideas for how the federal government can work with higher education institutions, K-12 schools, and nonprofits to make service more accessible and more attractive to all youth. First, I want to emphasize that there is great, untapped interest by youth to serve their country today.

The Do Good Institute analyzes invaluable, gold-standard federal datasets on volunteering and civic behaviors that were collected annually from 2002 to 2015 by the Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics through Volunteer Supplements and Social Capital Supplements to the Current Population Survey (CPS) and through funding by CNCS. Unfortunately, CNCS decided to not fund a data collection in 2016 and then funded a data collection in 2017 with changes and issues that made it impossible to compare the data to fifteen years of prior data. I cannot overstate how important it is for CNCS to fix the 2019 supplement so future data is high quality and comparable to past federal data collections (2002 to 2015). I also urge the Commission to ensure that the federal government collects and reports annually on the trends in service and civic life. Otherwise, the government, states, cities, and leaders across the spectrum will never be able to benchmark and know if our efforts are changing civic life in America for the better.

We published two widely-circulated research reports using the 2002 to 2015 CPS data last year, including *Good Intentions, Gap in Action*. I have already shared with you the bad news from that report. Fortunately, the report includes some good news about the road ahead, information that is encouraging for the Commission and others with the power to lead a movement towards universal voluntary service. The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) has been surveying entering college students for over fifty years and recently reported that the percentage of first-year college students who said that “helping others who are in difficulty” was a very important or essential personal objective reached a 51-year high. The percentage of entering college students’ interest in becoming a community leader was at an all-time high as well.¹⁰

⁹ See <http://onethousandsschools.com/>

¹⁰ Eagan, K., Stolzenberg, E.B., Zimmerman, H.B., Aragon, M.C., Sayson, H.W., & Rios-Aguilar, C. (2017). *The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2016*. Higher Education Research Institute, University of California,

The desire to serve is there, even if the action is not. We cannot miss the opportunity to translate this generation’s interest into action. We need to develop more quality service opportunities throughout our country. Volunteering and service has been shown to promote positive personal outcomes, including developing social connections and soft skills that smooth the transition to adulthood, job readiness and work motivation, and encouraging lifelong community engagement. Similarly, volunteering has been shown to reduce the likelihood of negative outcomes such as drug use, unplanned pregnancy, and dropping out of school.¹¹

Youth’s historically high interest in doing good will not automatically translate into action without the right opportunities

We must leverage youth’s historically high interest in service and desire to become community leaders to stem the troubling trends outlined in my testimony. Research shows that education experiences that get young people involved in opportunities to be problem-solvers and innovators in their community will impact their behaviors as adults.¹² But to take advantage of the opportunity, we need to teach young people differently when it comes to service and civics education. As the [Commission’s January 2019 Interim Report](#) stated, “Studies show that a robust civic education improves civic health in many ways—by increasing voter participation, reducing dropout rates, and encouraging constructive community engagement—yet many young people are not receiving effective civic education.”¹³

Further, we must engage high schoolers as well as college students in multiple, hands-on, high quality service experiences. Not every young person goes to college, but every adult will have an important role to play in their communities. Positive service experiences before a youth is college age will make one more likely to become an adult who serves for a lifetime in a variety of ways, including military service, public service, national service, volunteering, and voting.

Policy Ideas for Making Service Universally Accessible and Attractive to Youth

1. Promote the expansion of 21st century hands-on, service-based education

At the University of Maryland, we have translated college students’ service interest into action through the design of our hands-on courses and co-curricular programs, and this has not occurred by accident. The Do Good Campus is designed to incorporate and innovate on the best practices and research insights of what might be termed *21st century hands-on, service-based education*.¹⁴

Los Angeles Graduate School of Education and Information, 3005 Moore Hall, Mailbox 951521, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1521. Available at <https://www.heri.ucla.edu/monographs/TheAmericanFreshman2016.pdf>.

¹¹ “Indicators on Children and Youth: Volunteering,” Child Trends Databank, updated December 2015. Washington, DC: Child Trends. Available at https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/20_Volunteering.pdf.

¹² Michelsen, E., Zaff, J. F., & Hair, E. (2002). *Civic engagement programs and youth development: A synthesis*. Washington, DC: Child Trends. Available at <https://www.issuelab.org/resources/7042/7042.pdf>.

¹³ <https://www.inspire2serve.gov/FINAL%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>.

¹⁴ Some of these practices were cited by Myung J. Lee and Marc A. Ott, executive directors of Cities of Service and ICMA respectively, in an opinion piece written for *The Hill* that was summarized in a *Nonprofit Quarterly* article that also mentioned the Commission on Military, National and Community Service.

We aspire to create a campus with the norm of “universal voluntary service.” In particular, we are designing educational experiences that:

- tap each person’s passion;
- provide training in leadership, innovation, and other important skills core to the educational institution’s curriculum and mission;
- prepare and empower an individual to make an impact today; and
- engage an individual in multiple service experiences that increase the likelihood the individual will be committed to serve (in a variety of ways) for a lifetime.

Currently, the Do Good Institute carries out its programming without any direct support from federal agencies.

Previous and current federal programs have demonstrated that the government has the capacity, and the willingness, to boost service education and support public service leadership. The ideal government program to support Do Good-style initiatives would need to strike the appropriate balance between decentralized input (to promote innovation and direct support to projects that meet local needs), centralized administration, and significant funding. The previously-funded CNCS program Learn and Serve America (LSA) awarded grants to both K-12 schools and higher education institutions to promote service learning. LSA was hampered by several disadvantages, including low funding levels; operating exclusively through traditional government grant-making that included subgrantees and sub, subgrantees; expectations that were not feasible with the funding levels; and lacking the ability to exhibit compelling outcomes. Many schools, nonprofits, and colleges supported by LSA lacked the capacity to design and deliver high-quality service experiences to participants because they did not have proper capacity or funding - a deficiency faced by most organizations in the K-12 education space and nonprofit sector today.

2. Sponsor wide-reaching social action prize competitions

To promote a culture of service, Presidential administrations have periodically issued nationwide “calls to service,” most notably in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks. I am skeptical that a general national service or public service campaign would be worth the effort today. Instead, I would encourage you to explore developing something along the lines of an exciting national Do Good Challenge program and campaign or some version of national and state service prize competitions where those competition programs are deeply incorporated into the curriculum of colleges and secondary schools.¹⁵ Following the University of Maryland’s experience, this type of effort could spark a civic renewal in our country.

¹⁵ Today, government agencies support a variety of programs similarly designed to “crowdsource” innovative ideas from the general public. The General Services Administration (GSA) brings representatives from these programs into a Challenges and Prizes Community of Practice (<https://digital.gov/communities/challenges-prizes/>), whose members meet quarterly to share ideas.

By funding new “service” prize competitions, you would ultimately have the federal government paying for innovative outcomes and accelerating the best service ideas and groups. The federal government would also need to roll out funding to support the incorporation of the competitions into secondary and college curriculum. If designed right, those major investments could be viewed as building a 21st century educational engine and infrastructure that taps the high interest of young people and puts us on the path of universal voluntary service.

3. Consider requiring youth to engage in multiple, high-quality service experiences

Given how important it is to engage all young people in service, I would further encourage the Commission to explore the development of federal, state or local high-quality, multiple-year civic and service requirements in secondary schools that incorporate design-thinking, the opportunity to make an impact today, prize competitions connected to the curriculum, and other hands-on curriculum experiences that will empower youth to get into the practice of improving their community. I also encourage the Commission to examine burgeoning efforts to allow 16-year-olds to vote in local elections (multiple jurisdictions in the State of Maryland have approved such a change) and examine how these policy changes (and others) could be combined with exciting hands-on curriculum changes in the classroom to unleash a new generation that is not only passionate about being engaged in all forms of service to their country but has been deeply involved in the practice of service from a young age.

After we have sparked a new Service Generation around the country through these initiatives, today’s youth will hunger for career pipelines into military service, national service, and the myriad of other public service careers in the government and nonprofit sector. Innovative strategies that provide employment and leadership development opportunities in both the public and nonprofit sectors can channel the ambitions of public-minded young people into jobs where they can do good and also do well. Along with the government sector, the nonprofit industry is an exciting and large public service career opportunity for young people. As of 2016,¹⁶ the nonprofit sector employed 12.3 million paid workers (10.2 percent of the private labor force), making it the third largest segment of the labor force - almost the size of the manufacturing sector. More importantly, employees of nonprofits earned \$638 billion in wages, behind only the manufacturing and professional services sectors of the private labor force.

4. Make a home for the nonprofit sector in the federal government

The nonprofit sector has many close ties with government at every level - federal, state and local. Nonprofit organizations help governmental agencies deliver needed services, support citizens as they advocate for policy reforms, produce research that helps governments improve the effectiveness of their programs, and help build social capital that strengthens civil society.¹⁷

¹⁶ Salamon, Lester M., and Chelsea L. Newhouse, with S. Wojciech Sokolowski (2019). “The 2019 Nonprofit Employment Report.” Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Society Studies. Available at http://ccss.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2019/01/2019-NP-Employment-Report_FINAL_1.8.2019.pdf.

¹⁷ Boris, Elizabeth T., Brice McKeever, and Beatrice Leydier (2016). “Introduction: Roles and Responsibilities of Nonprofit Organizations in a Democracy.” Chapter 1 of *Nonprofits and Government: Collaboration and Conflict*, eds. Elizabeth T. Boris and C. Eugene Steuerle. Lanham, CO: Rowman & Littlefield.

Moreover, the people who work in the nonprofit sector are public-minded and motivated by the desire to help others, much like those who work in government.¹⁸

However, no federal agency or department is presently equipped and designated to serve as the champion for the nonprofit sector. While many agencies have sustained, close relationships with nonprofit organizations - particularly the ones that help to implement national policies by providing needed services - no single part of government is tasked with serving the needs and building the capacity of the nonprofit sector.

5. Create a Presidential Management Fellows program for nonprofits

As one effort to build the capacity of the nonprofit sector, I would encourage you to explore developing a program where interested organizations (nonprofit and government) are competing for high-quality applicants for what might be called a *21st Century Public Service Fellows* program. The program could borrow features from the Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) program, the prestigious program operated by the federal Office of Personnel Management (OPM) that places promising young employees in positions at government agencies. Models also exist within the nonprofit sector. For instance, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation recently announced that 80 community leaders were selected to serve in the Community Leadership Network.¹⁹ This 18-month fellowship program offers hands-on training, personalized coaching, community-based support and practical project experience. Both the PMF program and Community Leadership Network aspire not just to train future sector leaders, but to transform the leadership of the entire nonprofit and public sectors so that our young leaders can have maximum impact.

Given how closely the public and nonprofit sectors work together, it would also be valuable to grow a pipeline of leaders who have strong experiences and inclinations to devote their career to either sector - or, eventually, to both sectors. Perhaps, PMF applicants could signal their openness to serve in government or the nonprofit sector, and worthy candidates could be placed in positions in either sector. That approach would support the idea that both sectors offer potential leaders attractive opportunities. This approach would also help to cultivate a group of nonprofits that have the capacity to manage PMF-style leadership candidates. Although the government has demonstrated the capacity to support such a program, an agency would need to be identified to handle the recruitment and matchmaking process, much like OPM does with the PMF program, and to publicize it to potential applicants (both people and organizations).

Conclusion

The time is now to leverage youth's high interest in serving and leading their communities and turn this interest into action. Both the federal workforce and the volunteer workforce are

¹⁸ Word, J., & Carpenter, H. (2013). "The new public service? Applying the public service motivation model to nonprofit employees." *Public Personnel Management*, 42(3), 315-336. Available at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0091026013495773>.

¹⁹ <https://www.wkkf.org/what-we-do/community-and-civic-engagement/wkkf-community-leadership-network>.

thinning out due to the aging of the current generation of leaders,²⁰ so the need for action is at a critical stage. To engage all youth in service defined broadly, we need to reimagine service education and the types of opportunities we offer young people. We must further re-imagine a suite of federal policies and programs that empower Americans to spark innovations that solve today's as well as tomorrow's challenges. When service is made accessible and attractive to youth, they will participate in ongoing, high impact ways that will make our country even more prosperous.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify to this Commission.

²⁰ Dietz and Grimm, "How Agencies Can Tap a Rising Generation's Impulse to Do Good," Government Executive, April 25, 2018. Available at <https://www.govexec.com/excellence/promising-practices/2018/04/how-agencies-can-tap-rising-generations-impulse-do-good/147734/>.