

Inspire to Serve Act of 2020 Summary

The bill contains legislative proposals developed by the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service as was required under section 555(e)(1) of the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114-328). The proposals are presented in the form of a consolidated bill, and cover all of the issues under the Commission's mandate, including improvements to the military selective service process and methods to increase participation in military, national, and public service in order to address the needs of the Nation. The bill, along with section-by-section analysis and redlines against existing law, are available on the Commission's website, www.inspire2serve.gov.

Title I – Prioritization of Civic Education and Service Learning

The five proposals in this title will help to **revitalize civic engagement and citizenship** by prioritizing civic education and service learning as essential components of K-12 education to ensure young people have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to participate in civic life and understand the importance of service. The proposals include placing civics on the same level as math and reading in the Nation's Report Card, creating an Excellence in Civics award for educators and students, and distributing educational materials from the Library of Congress and National Archives. Additionally, the title will:

- **Establish a Civic Education Fund** at the Department of Education to provide **up to \$200 million** of grants for teacher development and the development of civic education, applied civics, and service-learning programs; eligible entities include State and local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, and nonprofit organizations.
- **Establish a Service-Learning Fund** within the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to issue **\$250 million in grants** annually, with 20% for K-college service-learning programs; 40% for grades 6-12 Summer of Service programs; and 40% for grades 9-12 Semester of Service programs.

Title II – Elevation and Integration of All Forms of Service

Recognizing that service is vital to our nation's health and well-being, the bold steps in this title will **unlock the full, transformational potential of service in all forms**. Several proposals will expand interagency cooperation on recruiting efforts, market research, and information sharing, especially for individuals as they apply for or transition out of service opportunities. The title will also:

- **Create a Council within the Executive Office of the President** to coordinate initiatives across the federal government that will benefit recruiting and retention for military, national, and public service, spearheading initiatives to promote an ethos of service in the Nation, and preparing an overarching service strategy for the Federal government.
- Create a new **online platform providing a one-stop shop** for individuals to learn about and connect to service organizations and potential opportunities and for service organizations to assist in recruiting individuals for permanent and temporary needs.

Title III – Advancement of Military, National, and Public Service

The proposals in this title will provide critical awareness of service opportunities to all Americans and ensure that they have the access and ability to serve the Nation and their communities in the military, in national service, or through civilian government service.

Subtitle A – Advancement of Military Service

The defense of the Nation depends on the continued success of the Nation’s military. The proposals in this subtitle aim to ensure the military is strong, resilient, and capable of meeting new and emerging threats by narrowing the civil-military divide and building a more sustainable military. The subtitle will:

- Expand the **Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps** to 6,000 programs by the end of 2031.
- Authorize DoD to provide **tuition grants** in exchange for enlisted service commitments to individuals so they can obtain civilian certifications and professional degrees in areas of critical need to the military.
- Create a pilot program for one military department to partner with up to three community colleges to help servicemembers and military recruits to obtain **professional certifications and technical degrees** in areas of critical need to the military.
- Authorize **multiyear appropriations for recruiting marketing** campaigns.
- Create a new **personnel management structure for critical skillsets**—such as science, technology, cybersecurity, and engineering—by drawing on successful models for other specialties, such as medical workers and attorneys.

Subtitle B – Advancement of National Service

The subtitle significantly expands national service opportunities and makes those opportunities more accessible to Americans of all backgrounds. These proposals will:

- Authorize **adjustments to the living allowance** for AmeriCorps State and National members and to permit dedicated funding for wraparound support services.
- **Increase the Senior Corps stipend**, which has not been adjusted since 1973.
- Increase the size, transferability, and potential **uses of the education award**.
- **Create a new CNCS service fellowships program** that allows selected individual to choose where they will undertake a 1,700-hour fellowship with an initial cohort of 25,000 fellows and increasing annually until reaching a goal of 250,000 fellows per year. Positions will be split by
 - 80% allocated on a formula basis within congressional districts; and
 - 20% distributed to certified sponsor organizations, with a process that ensures representation by disadvantaged youth and tribal youth.
- **Double the number of national service positions** available at YouthBuild, Youth Conservation Corps, and the National Guard ChalleNGe.

Finally, the subtitle includes proposals to ensure more Americans know about the opportunities to serve. Proposals would:

- Mandate a **public awareness campaign** on national service;
- Create a **non-momentary award for private sector contributions**;
- Authorize **demonstration projects**; and
- Provide national service alumni with **non-competitive eligibility for Federal employment**.

Subtitle C – Advancement of Public Service: Modernizing Federal Personnel Systems

The subtitle offers a comprehensive approach to **fix the broken hiring system** in the Federal government, addressing outdated rules and practices that make it difficult for the Federal government to hire and keep the best talent. These proposals will:

- Give agencies access to **advanced assessment tools**.
- Streamline determinations about **eligibility for special hiring options**.
- Extend **noncompetitive eligibility** to high-performing civilian employees.
- Increase flexibility for **temporary and term appointments**.
- Improve **direct hire** flexibility when there is a shortage of highly qualified candidates.

One key step to fixing this system is a comprehensive **enhancement of veterans' preference** and noncompetitive hiring authorities for recently discharged veterans. The proposals will:

- Make veterans' preference a **tiebreaker** between equally qualified candidates.
- Focus on **recently discharged veterans** transitioning to civilian employment.
- **Expand Veterans Recruitment Authority (VRA)** from three to ten years after discharge.

The subtitle also authorizes programs that will empower agencies to **attract and retain the most qualified applicants to public service**, such as establishing a cafeteria plan for supplemental benefits, piloting a new benefits option of equal value at three agencies that focuses on fully portable retirement benefits, and increasing OPM's flexibility in its demonstration projects.

Subtitle D – Advancement of Public Service: Students, Recent Graduates, Critical Skills

Public servants are vital to the security and well-being of the nation. This subtitle focuses on bringing the **next generation into public service** and expanding the talent pipeline, by offering bold ideas to ensure that individuals consider public service as a career option. The subtitle will:

- Create a **Federal Fellowship and Scholarship Center** to facilitate federal scholarship programs by hosting a single Internet platform and developing a standardized application.
- Create a **Public Service Corps**, similar to ROTC, providing scholarships to university students in exchange for a 4-year commitment to work in civil service employment.
- Create a new grant program to support the **development of public service academies**, programs at institutions of higher education that help train students to be public servants.
- **Improve existing internship and recent graduate programs** by requiring compensation for Federal interns, expanding direct hire authority, and setting goals of 30,000 hires per year by 2026 and 50,000 by 2031.

The subtitle also empowers agencies to **recruit and retain individuals with critical skills**—such as those in STEM fields or healthcare—through proposals that permit individuals that complete Federal reskilling programs to transfer to different jobs at the same grade, authorize all agencies to use DHS's Cyber Talent Management System, test a new personnel system for agencies with many STEM employees, and improve the portability of health care licenses for Federal employees. The subtitle will also:

- Pilot a **civilian cybersecurity reserve program** at DHS and NSA that would permit agencies to quickly expand the civilian workforce with needed technical expertise and appropriate clearances when facing a crisis.
- Require development of a **comprehensive personnel system for Veterans Health Administration employees**.

Title IV – Strengthening of National Mobilization

The United States must ensure that its national mobilization framework is maintained and **ready to meet future national security needs**, including in the event of a national emergency. The proposals in this title are designed to achieve that objective by improving the current procedures and identifying new leadership and tools. The title will:

- Require the National Security Council and the Department of Defense to have designated leads to **coordinate national mobilization efforts**.
- Require **regular, periodic exercises** of military draft mobilization processes.
- Ensure the U.S. military maintains up-to-date information on **critical skill needs**.
- Create an **Individual Ready Reserve of personnel with critical skills** to augment military strength during a full mobilization.

The title will also **modernize the Selective Service System** to ensure the military has access to the most qualified and capable people needed to maintain national security in an emergency. It will:

- **Require all Americans, regardless of sex or gender, to register for selective service**, which will enhance the Nation's ability to respond to a national emergency requiring a draft, provide our national security efforts with a more diverse set of talents, and further American's collective obligation to provide for the common defense.
- Amend the Military Selective Service Act to **clarify the purpose of selective service**.
- Institute measures to ensure registrants understand the **solemnity of the obligation** they are undertaking.
- Permit individuals who have been denied a Federal benefit due to nonregistration the **opportunity to register belatedly**.
- Require the Executive Branch to conduct a **comprehensive review of existing exemptions and deferments** and report to Congress how they should be amended.