



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on April 22, 2009

Obama Signs Sweeping National Service Bill

Of course, if anyone can do it, then you don't need a multibillion dollar federal program to "bring change to other people's lives." The bill authorizes what President [Obama ominously calls](#) an "army of 250,000 Corps members" who would serve in paid positions of national service, more than triple the 75,000 now in AmeriCorps. The [Congressional Budget Office estimates](#) that the bill would cost \$1.2 billion in 2010 and significantly more in subsequent years.



The law would, in the [words of the New York Times](#), constitute the "largest expansion of government-sponsored service programs since President John F. Kennedy first called for the creation of a national community service corps in 1963."

Despite the multibillion dollar aspects of this costly program, [Obama claimed](#) at his signing speech that "We're doing this because I've always believed that the answers to our challenges cannot come from government alone." He believes the federal government can do just about everything, though:

Our government can help to rebuild our economy and lift up our schools and reform health care systems and make sure our soldiers and veterans have everything they need — but we need Americans willing to mentor our eager young children, or care for the sick, or ease the strains of deployment on our military families.... A week from tomorrow marks the 100th day of my administration. In those next eight days, I ask every American to make an enduring commitment to serving your community and your country in whatever way you can.

In Obama-speak, government can't do national service "alone," as it can with most other things in this world. Government needs to be in the driver's seat on national service, of course, but Americans are free to choose their servitude to the Brave New World's "community." Of course, that national service is decided by the Obama administration's financial incentives.

Obama called the bill "just the beginning of a sustained, collaborative and focused effort to involve our greatest resource — our citizens — in the work of remaking this nation." And he intends to remake the nation in the image of his political agenda:

Programs like these are a force multiplier; they leverage small numbers of members into thousands of volunteers. And we will focus their service toward solving today's most pressing challenges: clean energy, energy efficiency, health care, education, economic opportunity, veterans and military families.

Not coincidentally, these "challenges" mirror Obama's political agenda. In other words, the national service bill would help increase the "army" ([Obama's word](#)) helping to bring Obama's political goals to reality.



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National service programs would also bring churches and traditional charitable organizations under the heel of government, Obama [says](#): "this bill includes a new Social Innovation Fund that will bring nonprofits and foundations and faith-based organizations and the private sector to the table with government so that we can learn from one another's success stories. We'll invest in ideas that work, leverage private-sector dollars to encourage innovation, expand successful programs to scale and make them work in cities across America."

Paid volunteerism seems like an oxymoron, but the political namesake for the legislation argues that without multibillion dollar federal efforts Americans won't be able to serve their communities. "This legislation will enable many more Americans to do something for their country to meet the many challenges facing us," the bill's namesake, Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy, [told the New York Times](#).

"Enables" Americans to do more for their country? It's almost a powerful enough quote to make you wonder how Americans managed to serve in their communities before the federal government began paying people to do it ... if you were born yesterday. Nothing's stopping anyone from serving in their community right now, without this law. The House of Representatives passed the final version of the legislation on March 31 by the lopsided vote of 275-149 (the Senate had approved it even more overwhelmingly by a 79-19 vote on March 27).

President Barack Obama sounded like Kennedy in his praise of the measure: "Because of this legislation, millions of Americans at all stages of their lives will have new opportunities to serve their country." By "serve their country," Obama means "servitude to government." Americans already had all the same opportunities to serve their communities and nation before the bill was enacted as they'll have after its signing.

This bill is not about volunteerism, as Congressman Ron Paul (R-Texas) explained on the House floor March 18:

"Participation in the program is not voluntary for the taxpayers. Second, nothing in the bill prevents federal taxpayer dollars from being used to support state and local programs that force children to perform "community service" as a condition of graduating from high school. Because an increasing number of schools across the nation are forcing children to provide "service" as a condition of graduating, it is quite likely that the funds authorized by this bill will be used to support mandatory service."

The text of the bill makes numerous references to "local education agencies" as the key to fascist-style public-private "partnerships" under the legislation.

National service, national servitude. Whatever. It's only a couple of letters difference. It's only a couple of letters difference, that is, unless you count the approximately 200 pages of new rules and regulations that are contained in the bill.

The general argument for public service is based upon the absurd twin assumptions that government is the seat of all morality in the nation and that it can more economically and efficiently pinch pennies than churches and civic organizations.

In [House debate](#) on the measure, Ron Paul explained to House members that this unconstitutional bill (H.R. 1388) would "take money from one group of citizens and use that money to bribe other citizens into performing 'national service'" and that it "violates the basic moral principles of individual liberty that this country was founded upon."



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Paul cited Ronald Reagan from *Human Events* in 1979 to explain the principles underlying national service: "It [national service and conscription] rests on the assumption that your kids belong to the state. If we buy that assumption then it is for the state — not for parents, the community, the religious institutions or teachers — to decide who shall have what values and who shall do what work, when, where and how in our society. That assumption isn't a new one. The Nazis thought it was a great idea."

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