

~ United States Senate ~

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 18, 2009

CONTACT: Rachel MacKnight, Mikulski, 202-228-1122
Melissa Wagoner, Kennedy, 202-224-2633
Mark Eddington, Hatch, 202-224-5251
Craig Orfield, Enzi, 202-224-6770

NATIONAL SERVICE LEGISLATION HEADED TO SENATE FLOOR

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.), Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.), all members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP) today applauded Committee passage of the Serve America Act (S. 277), legislation that greatly expands domestic service opportunities for all Americans. Continuing the bipartisan tradition of national service legislation, the Serve America Act was written by HELP Committee Chairman Kennedy and Senator Hatch. Senators Enzi and Mikulski were also integral in crafting the bill. This legislation enjoys broad, bipartisan support in Congress and from President Obama, and its quick passage out of Committee moves it one step closer to becoming law. Senator Mikulski presided over today's Committee markup.

“I want to thank Senator Kennedy, Senator Hatch and Senator Enzi for their hard work crafting this legislation. Many of us present here today have participated in service in our lifetimes and, in giving back, we all got back more than we ever gave. This bill is not about programs, it's about American values – the spirit of volunteerism and neighbor helping neighbor. By creating opportunities for Americans to participate in their society, this bill will make a major contribution to our country,” Senator Mikulski said.

“This legislation represents the best of America's ideals – offering a helping hand to our neighbors and to our country. Today's action brings us closer to our goal of giving Americans of all ages greater opportunities to serve their communities and their nation. I commend Senator Mikulski, Senator Hatch and Senator Enzi for their effective bipartisan leadership in moving this important measure forward,” Senator Kennedy said.

“Volunteer service is the lifeblood of our nation. It brings out the best in our people and strengthens our communities. That is why the Serve America Act is so important. This historic legislation will inspire civic-minded Americans across the nation to raise the bar of service and meet every challenge,” Senator Hatch said.

“A comprehensive reauthorization of our national service statutes is long overdue. Working across the aisle and with the House, we have found areas where we can make improvements, eliminate waste, and expand our efforts responsibly. This bill is not perfect, but I

am pleased with a number of the agreements we have been able to reach. I'm particularly pleased with the improvements we have made to expand access to national service programs in small and rural communities," Senator Enzi said.

The Serve America Act builds on the lessons learned from the National and Community Service Act of 1990, which created a program that evolved into what is now AmeriCorps. In addition to strengthening key AmeriCorps components, the Serve America Act also adds new service opportunities for Americans from elementary school children to retirees. The bill provides \$5 billion over 5 years with the goal of funding 250,000 volunteers engaged in targeted service in areas of national need, such as: energy conservation, healthcare and education. For a summary of the Serve America Act, go to:

http://mikulski.senate.gov/_pdfs/Press/TheServeAmericaActSummary.pdf

The House of Representatives is scheduled to vote on the Serve America Act today. The Senate will vote on the bill next week.

###