

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5682

To expand the financial, health care, and educational benefits received by Peace Corps and AmeriCorps volunteers, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 22, 2023

Mr. KIM of New Jersey introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Education and the Workforce, Foreign Affairs, and Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To expand the financial, health care, and educational benefits received by Peace Corps and AmeriCorps volunteers, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “A Chance To Serve
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. EXPANDED BENEFITS FOR CURRENT AND FORMER**
2 **PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS.**

3 (a) **EXTENDED NON-COMPETITIVE ELIGIBILITY.**—
4 The President shall revise Executive Order 11103 (28
5 Fed. Reg. 3571; relating to providing for the appointment
6 of former Peace Corps volunteers to the civilian career
7 services) to extend to three years the period during which
8 any appointment under the authority of such Executive
9 Order may be made.

10 (b) **NON-DISCRIMINATION BASED ON CERTAIN IMMI-**
11 **GRATION STATUSES.**—Section 5(a) of the Peace Corps Act
12 (22 U.S.C. 2504(a)) is amended—

13 (1) in the first sentence, by striking “citizens
14 and nationals of the United States” and inserting
15 “citizens, nationals, and lawful permanent residents
16 of the United States”; and

17 (2) in the fourth sentence, by striking “or
18 color.” and inserting “color, or status as a refugee,
19 asylee, or other lawfully admitted alien.”.

20 (c) **REGULARITY OF PAYMENTS OF MONTHLY STI-**
21 **PENDS.**—The Director of the Peace Corps shall take such
22 steps as may be necessary to ensure that Peace Corps vol-
23 unteers receive stipends on a regular and predictable basis
24 (and, to the maximum extent practicable, on the same nu-
25 merical day of each month), including in the event of a
26 temporary partial or complete government shutdown.

1 (d) EXTENDED HEALTH CARE.—

2 (1) 1-YEAR ELIGIBILITY FOR HEALTH BENE-
3 FITS.—Subchapter VIII of title 38, United States
4 Code, is amended by adding at the end the following
5 new section:

6 **“§ 1789A. Former Peace Corps volunteers**

7 “During the one-year period beginning on the day
8 after the final day of the service of a Peace Corps volun-
9 teer, the Secretary shall provide such former volunteer
10 such hospital care or medical services as the former volun-
11 teer may elect to receive at a medical facility of the De-
12 partment of Veterans Affairs. The cost of any care or serv-
13 ices furnished under this section to such former volunteer
14 shall be reimbursed at such rates as may be agreed upon
15 by the Secretary and the Director of the Peace Corps,
16 based on the cost of the care or service furnished and in
17 accordance with health care otherwise provided to volun-
18 teers under section 5(e) of the Peace Corps Act.”.

19 (2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 5(e)
20 of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2504(e)) is
21 amended—

22 (A) by inserting after the first sentence the
23 following new sentence: “Former volunteers
24 shall also be entitled to such hospital care and
25 medical services as may be provided in accord-

1 ance with section 1789A of title 38, United
2 States Code.”; and

3 (B) in the second sentence, by inserting
4 “(other than health care provided in accordance
5 with such section 1789A)” after “such health
6 care”.

7 (3) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
8 tions for chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code,
9 is amended by adding after the item relating to sec-
10 tion 1789 the following new item:

“1789A. Former Peace Corps volunteers.”.

11 (e) READJUSTMENT ALLOWANCES FOR VOLUNTEERS
12 AND VOLUNTEER LEADERS.—Section 5 of the Peace
13 Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2504) is amended—

14 (1) in subsection (b), by striking “insure their
15 health” and inserting “ensure their safety, their
16 health, and”;

17 (2) in subsection (c)—

18 (A) by striking “\$125” and inserting
19 “\$375”;

20 (B) by striking “his” each place such term
21 appears and inserting “the volunteer’s”; and

22 (C) by striking “he” and inserting “the
23 volunteer”;

24 (3) by redesignating subsection (e), as amended
25 by subsection (b)(2) of this Act as subsection (d);

1 (4) by inserting after subsection (d), as so
2 amended and redesignated, the following:

3 “(e) The Director shall consult with health experts
4 outside of the Peace Corps, including experts licensed in
5 the field of mental health, and follow guidance by the Cen-
6 ters for Disease Control and Prevention regarding the pre-
7 scription of medications to volunteers.”;

8 (5) in subsection (h), by striking “he” and in-
9 serting “the President”;

10 (6) in subsection (n)(2)—

11 (A) by striking “subsection (e)” each place
12 such term appears and inserting “subsection
13 (d)”;

14 (B) by striking “he” and inserting “the
15 President”;

16 (7) in subsection (o), by striking “his” each
17 place such term appears and inserting “the volun-
18 teer’s”;

19 (8) by adding at the end the following new sub-
20 section:

21 “(q) SUSPENSION OF PAYMENTS AND ACCRUAL OF
22 INTEREST ON FEDERAL LOANS DURING SERVICE.—

23 “(1) IN GENERAL.—If a volunteer receives a
24 loan made under part D of title IV of the Higher

1 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087a et seq.)
2 before commencing service in the Peace Corps—

3 “(A) all payments due for such loans shall
4 be suspended; and

5 “(B) interest shall not accrue on such loan
6 for the duration of such service.

7 “(2) DEFERMENT OR FORBEARANCE.—Not-
8 withstanding any other provision of the Higher Edu-
9 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.), the
10 Secretary of Education shall deem each month for
11 which a loan payment was—

12 “(A) suspended under this subsection; or

13 “(B) subject to a deferment or forbearance
14 under the Higher Education Act of 1965, as if
15 the borrower of the loan had made a payment
16 for the purpose of any loan forgiveness program
17 or loan rehabilitation program authorized under
18 part B or D of title IV of the Higher Education
19 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1071 et seq. and 1087a
20 et seq.) for which the borrower would have oth-
21 erwise qualified.”.

22 (f) NONTAXABLE STATUS FOR READJUSTMENT AL-
23 LOWANCES.—Notwithstanding any other provision of the
24 Internal Revenue Code of 1986, a readjustment allowance
25 received pursuant to section 5(c) of the Peace Corps Act

1 (22 U.S.C. 2504(c)), as amended by subsection (e)(2) of
2 this section, shall not be subject to taxation under chapter
3 1 of such Code.

4 **SEC. 3. EXPANDED BENEFITS FOR AMERICORPS VOLUN-**
5 **TEERS.**

6 (a) INCREASE IN NATIONAL SERVICE POSITIONS.—
7 Notwithstanding any provision of the national service
8 laws, on or after the date of enactment of this Act, not
9 fewer than 500,000 national service positions shall be
10 available under the national service programs authorized
11 under such laws.

12 (b) INCREASE IN LIVING ALLOWANCE.—Notwith-
13 standing section 140 of the National and Community
14 Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12594) or any other provi-
15 sion of the national service laws, any individual serving
16 in a national service program authorized under a national
17 service law shall receive a living allowance that is not less
18 than 200 percent of the poverty line (as defined in section
19 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42
20 U.S.C. 9902(2)) and adjusted by the Corporation for Na-
21 tional and Community Service in the manner described in
22 such section.

23 (c) EXTENDED NON-COMPETITIVE ELIGIBILITY.—
24 Notwithstanding any other law, rule, or regulation, the
25 head of any agency in the Executive branch may non-

1 competitively appoint, to a competitive service position at
2 such agency, any individual who is certified by the Cor-
3 poration for National and Community Service as having
4 satisfactorily completed service in a national service pro-
5 gram authorized under a national service law. Such an in-
6 dividual may not be appointed under the authority pro-
7 vided under this section after the date that is 3 years after
8 the date such individual so completes such service.

9 (d) 1-YEAR ELIGIBILITY FOR HEALTH BENEFITS.—
10 Notwithstanding section 140 of the National and Commu-
11 nity Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12594) or any other
12 provision of the national service laws, during the one-year
13 period beginning on the day after the final day of a partic-
14 ipant in a national service program authorized under a
15 national service law, the Corporation for National and
16 Community Service shall provide such former participant,
17 at no cost to such participant, with the health care policy
18 such participant received during the term of service in
19 such program.

20 (e) DOUBLING OF THE SEGAL AMERICORPS EDU-
21 CATION AWARD.—Section 147(a) of the National and
22 Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12603(a)) is
23 amended by inserting “twice” before “the maximum”.

24 (f) USE OF THE SEGAL AMERICORPS EDUCATION
25 AWARD.—Section 148(a)(4) of the National and Commu-

1 nity Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12604(a)(4)) is
2 amended by inserting before the semicolon at the end the
3 following: “, or for the purpose of obtaining a recognized
4 post-secondary credential (as defined in section 3 of the
5 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C.
6 3102))”.

7 (g) SUSPENSION OF PAYMENTS AND ACCRUAL OF IN-
8 TEREST ON FEDERAL LOANS DURING SERVICE.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any provi-
10 sion of a national service law, if an individual re-
11 ceives a loan made under part D of title IV of the
12 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087a et
13 seq.) before commencing service in a national service
14 program under a national service law—

15 (A) all payments due for such loans shall
16 be suspended; and

17 (B) interest shall not accrue on such loan
18 for the duration of such service.

19 (2) DEFERMENT OR FORBEARANCE.—Notwith-
20 standing any other provision of the Higher Edu-
21 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.), the
22 Secretary of Education shall deem each month for
23 which a loan payment was—

24 (A) suspended under this subsection; or

1 (B) subject to a deferment or forbearance
2 under the Higher Education Act of 1965, as if
3 the borrower of the loan had made a payment
4 for the purpose of any loan forgiveness program
5 or loan rehabilitation program authorized under
6 part B or D of title IV of the Higher Education
7 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1071 et seq. and 1087a
8 et seq.) for which the borrower would have oth-
9 erwise qualified.

10 (h) NON-DISCRIMINATION BASED ON CERTAIN IMMI-
11 GRATION STATUSES.—Notwithstanding any provision of a
12 national service law, a refugee, asylee, or other lawfully
13 admitted alien may not be prohibited from serving in a
14 national service program authorized under such a law, or
15 receiving an education benefit for such service, on the
16 basis of such status.

17 (i) PLANNING GRANTS FOR UNDERSERVED COMMU-
18 NITIES.—Notwithstanding any provision of a national
19 service law, the Corporation for National and Community
20 Service may award planning grants to underserved com-
21 munities to enable such communities to develop the capac-
22 ity to carry out national service programs under national
23 service laws. Any matching fund requirements under the
24 national service laws shall be waived for the first 2 years

1 during which any such community carries out such a na-
2 tional service program.

3 (j) NATIONAL SERVICE LAWS DEFINED.—In this
4 section, the term “national service laws” has the meaning
5 given such term in section 101 of the National and Com-
6 munity Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12511).

7 **SEC. 4. PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS.**

8 Section 455(m)(3)(B) of the Higher Education Act
9 of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087e(m)(3)(B)) is amended—

10 (1) by striking “or” at the end of clause (i);

11 (2) in clause (ii), by striking the period at the
12 end and inserting “; or” ; and

13 (3) by adding at the end the following:

14 “(iii) serving, on a full-time basis, in
15 a national service program authorized
16 under a national service law (as defined in
17 section 101 of the National and Commu-
18 nity Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C.
19 12511)) or as a Peace Corps volunteer.”.

20 **SEC. 5. EXCLUSION FROM GROSS INCOME OF CERTAIN PAY-**
21 **MENTS FOR NATIONAL SERVICE.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—Part II of subchapter B of chap-
23 ter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended
24 by inserting after section 139I the following new section:

1 **“SEC. 139J. CERTAIN PAYMENTS FOR NATIONAL SERVICE.**

2 “In the case of an individual, gross income shall not
3 include any amount received under a national service edu-
4 cational award under subtitle D of title I of the National
5 and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12601
6 et seq.) or any living allowance provided to such individual
7 during participation in a national service program author-
8 ized under a national service law (as defined in section
9 101 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990
10 (42 U.S.C. 12511)).”.

11 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
12 for part II of subchapter B of chapter 1 of such Code
13 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section
14 139I the following new item:

“Sec. 139J. Certain payments for national service.”.

15 (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
16 this section shall apply to taxable years ending after the
17 date of the enactment of this Act.

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