



Wednesday, June 18, 2008

Office of the CEO

New Law Makes AmeriCorps More Accessible to SSI Recipients

Dear Colleagues,

Yesterday President Bush signed into law H.R. 6081, the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax Act of 2008 ("the HEART Act"), making AmeriCorps more accessible to people with disabilities.

The HEART Act contains a provision we have been seeking that excludes AmeriCorps benefits from being counted as income for purposes of eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). This extends the long-time AmeriCorps VISTA income disregard for SSI to all AmeriCorps positions. An SSI recipient who enrolls in AmeriCorps will no longer risk the loss of SSI benefits or eligibility as a result of participating in AmeriCorps. While the law does not extend to Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), it removes a significant barrier to participation for SSI recipients.

We are working with the Social Security Administration on implementation of the new law. We will post information and resources on the Corporation's website at http://www.nationalservice.gov/home/site_information/accessibility.asp.

I would especially like to thank Lanny Taulbee, Disabilities Coordinator for the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service, and Bill Basl, Executive Director of the Washington Commission on National and Community Service, for their leadership in making national service more accessible to all Americans.

In Service,

David Eisner

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URL: http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/newsroom/statements_detail.asp?tbl_pr_id=1095