

July 17, 2003

Rosie Mauk
Director of Americorps
Corporation for National & Community Service
1201 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20525

Dear Ms. Mauk:

I am greatly distressed to learn of the Corporation for National Service's decision to discontinue funding for Teach for America (TFA). I have repeatedly gone on record over the last several weeks in support of a supplemental appropriation for the AmeriCorps program in order for Arkansas communities to continue benefiting from national service. *{Terry/Geri: I haven't followed Gov. H's actions to know if this is a fair statement. – I've been primarily focused on MS, and it is true for Musgrove}*. Teach for America is one of my main reasons for doing so.

Teach for America has been working to create opportunities for Arkansas's children since 1991. During that time, they have placed 168 highly qualified teachers in some of our hardest to staff Delta schools. First Lady Laura Bush recognized first-hand the impact TFA is having in our Delta communities when she visited the Delta region last September to meet with Arkansas and Mississippi corps members, students, and local district staff. The program has been so valuable to Arkansas that despite difficult budgetary constraints, I and the legislature continue to support and fund the Arkansas Department of Education's strategy to expand Teach For America's presence in the our Delta districts. State involvement has helped Teach For America expand from 22 teachers in 2000 to 56 teachers in Arkansas this fall. Our goal is to have and maintain an annual corps of at least 65 first-and second-year TFA teachers in Arkansas by 2004.

Simply put, this program's impact is both a sound short- and long-term investment and builds new educational leadership. This spring we funded and launched *Teach Arkansas*, a state initiative based on Teach For America's model that aggressively recruits, trains, and works to place outstanding Arkansans in classrooms in regions of Arkansas that TFA does not have the capacity to serve.

In Arkansas we have been holding students and schools accountable for performance since even before the federal No Child Left Behind Act. I have been a vocal supporter of President Bush's focus on research-based results when it comes to educating our children, and see educational reform as one my contribution and legacy to the state. The plain truth is, no other program is focused on documented results and high academic standards to the extent that TFA is.

While I realize there still is not clarity on whether or not AmeriCorps will receive the supplemental funding for next year, I continue to urge my fellow federal colleagues to move forward with that. At the same time, I strongly encourage you to reconsider Teach For America's proposal and make this their 10th year in AmeriCorps.

Sincerely,

Gov. Mike Huckabee

cc: President George Bush

Senator Bill Frist
Senator Tom Daschle
Speaker Dennis Hastert
Representative Tom Delay
Representative Nancy Pelosi
AR Congressional Delegation
John Bridgeland, USA Freedom Corps
James F. Manning, Corporation for National and community Service