

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION No. 11

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED JANUARY 29, 1996

By Senator **BENNETT**

- 1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** acknowledging the valuable contributions to
2 New Jersey communities and residents made by AmeriCorps
3 volunteers.
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- 5 **WHEREAS**, Americans and New Jerseyans of all ages and backgrounds
6 have always performed service to their community and nation in
7 many different ways, from military service to the Peace Corps to
8 teaching literacy at the local library; and
- 9 **WHEREAS**, The democratic ideals on which our nation was founded
10 are strengthened by acceptance of service to others as an obligation
11 of citizenship; and
- 12 **WHEREAS**, People can choose to serve in any way they deem
13 appropriate, from volunteering at the community hospital to
14 running errands for an elderly neighbor to involvement in more
15 formal programs of service; and
- 16 **WHEREAS**, One way people can perform service to others is by
17 becoming part of the AmeriCorps, the new national service program
18 created by Congress in 1993 and described as the "domestic Peace
19 Corps;" and
- 20 **WHEREAS**, AmeriCorps programs in New Jersey have accomplished
21 a great deal for the benefit of the people of New Jersey; and
- 22 **WHEREAS**, Over 600 New Jerseyans are participating in AmeriCorps.
23 It is a program that stresses the concept of reciprocal obligation,
24 that you must give something in order to get something. For a
25 rigorous year of service to others, participants receive a
26 minimum-wage living stipend, health benefits, and an education
27 award to pay for college costs; and
- 28 **WHEREAS**, Accomplishments to date include cleaning up urban
29 waterways, providing vital social services to vulnerable children and
30 adults, preventing incidences of child abuse and neglect, and
31 providing after-hours programming in urban school districts; and
- 32 **WHEREAS**, There is no cost to the State of New Jersey for all this
33 good work; the federal government pays 75% of the costs involved,
34 and local programs are responsible for raising the balance; and
- 35 **WHEREAS**, The future of AmeriCorps is uncertain because of difficult
36 decisions which Congress must make about the federal budget, and
37 it is possible that spending for even the most worthwhile programs

1 will be reduced or eliminated; and
2 **WHEREAS**, The debate over the program's future should not diminish
3 the achievements that current AmeriCorps volunteers have brought
4 about; whether or not the program continues, the selfless decision
5 of over 600 New Jerseyans to spend a year in the service of others
6 is to be commended and applauded; now, therefore,

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8 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
9 *of New Jersey:*

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11 1. The Governor and the New Jersey Legislature hereby recognize
12 and commend the hard work of the AmeriCorps volunteers throughout
13 the State and urge them to continue their commitment to helping
14 others in the future.

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16 2. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

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19 STATEMENT

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21 This Joint Resolution recognizes and commends the hard work of
22 AmeriCorps volunteers throughout the State and urges them to
23 continue in their commitment to helping others in the future.
24 AmeriCorps is a federally funded program, created in 1993 for the
25 purpose of encouraging national service through involvement in
26 community based initiatives designed to improve the quality of life for
27 all people. AmeriCorps has been referred to as the domestic Peace
28 Corps. The participants, who commit to up to two years of service
29 with AmeriCorps, are as diverse as the populations they serve, and
30 range in age from 17 to 65 years. New Jersey AmeriCorps volunteers
31 have engaged in such diverse projects as teaching the developmentally
32 disabled independent living skills in Essex County, counseling troubled
33 adolescents in group home situations in Bergen and Passaic Counties,
34 ensuring the safety and purity of water along various stretches of the
35 Passaic River, and staffing urban literacy programs in Paterson.

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40 Acknowledges valuable contributions made to New Jersey by
41 AmeriCorps volunteers.