



The Public Service Buck Stops Here

“America was not built on fear,” President Harry S Truman said. “America was built on courage, on imagination, and unbeatable determination to do the job at hand.”

From transnational terrorism to rising gas prices, our short-term fears have distracted us from the looming crisis in our public sector. A generation of public servants is about to retire and we simply do not have enough qualified people lined up to take their place. Serious shortages in education, health care, and law enforcement nationwide threaten to dismantle our public sector infrastructure.

But now is not the time for fear. Now is the time for new and bold ideas. Now is the time for a new way to develop future public sector leaders and attract our generation to public service: the U.S. Public Service Academy.

The U.S. Public Service Academy will serve as the civilian counterpart to the uniformed service academies. Students will get a federally subsidized, four-year college education in exchange for five years of mandatory service following graduation. Attracting dedicated and talented individuals, the Academy will require students to serve these five years in public institutions at the local, state, or federal levels.

We believe that the Academy is an initiative that both parties can support. Service is not a partisan issue. Service matters to us all. Youth today are more civically engaged than ever. Volunteer rates are at historic highs, youth voter participation is on the rise, and applications to service programs such as the Peace Corps, Teach For America, and City Year have skyrocketed. If we want to continue to engage youth at such high rates, we need to demonstrate that the federal government will take the next steps needed in the public service movement.

The prestige and financial opportunities at our nation’s five existing service academies attract the best and brightest youth into uniformed leadership. We must adopt a similar approach to public service, and fund an academy to teach our future superintendents of schools, police chiefs, federal agency heads, and other public leaders.

The Public Service Academy offers a means to harness the growing desire of young people to serve, raise the profile of public service in our country, and increase opportunities for youth to dedicate their lives working for a better country and a better world.

“You can always amend a big plan, but you can never expand a little one,” Truman said. “I don't believe in little plans. I believe in plans big enough to meet a situation, which we can't possibly foresee now.”

There are a number of changes necessary to improve our public sector, but we believe that the Public Service Academy stands alone with its potential for transformative change. The Academy is the answer to reinvigorating this country's dedication to public service. As Truman Scholars, committed to service, we know the value of creating this landmark institution and the time is now.

We the undersigned 2007 Truman Scholars urge you to strongly consider supporting S. 960/H.R. 1671, the U.S. Public Service Academy Act:

Adam Harbison (Alabama)	Jon Cardinal (New York)
Brett Keller (Arkansas)	Charlotta Chung (New York)
Max Bruner (California)	Alia Whitney-Johnson (North Carolina)
Meghan Desale (California)	Indra Sen (North Carolina)
Kesha Ram (California)	Caroline Dennis (Oregon)
<i>Candidate for Vermont State House</i>	David Parker (Pennsylvania)
Adam Kowalski (Colorado)	<i>U.S. Naval Academy '08</i>
Joseph O'Shea (Florida)	Katherine Otto (Rhode Island)
<i>2008 Rhodes Scholar</i>	Asma Jaber (South Carolina)
Deep Shaw (Georgia)	Paul Moinester (Tennessee)
<i>2008 Rhodes Scholar</i>	Kenneth Ike (Texas)
Kelsey Yamasaki (Hawaii)	Lauren Koehler (Texas)
Eagan Heath (Idaho)	Bryson Morgan (Utah)
JoAnna Smith (Indiana)	DeCarol A. Davis (Virginia)
Jenna Kennedy (Kansas)	<i>U.S. Coast Guard Academy '08 Valedictorian</i>
Scott Moore (Kentucky)	Mona Singh (Virginia)
<i>2008 Fulbright Scholar</i>	Andy Cunningham (Vermont)
Caitlin Whelan (Maine)	Alula Asfaw (Washington)
Marc Peters (Maryland)	Nazir Harb (Washington)
Salmah Y. Rizvi (Maryland)	Matthew Delligatti (West Virginia)
Ronald Towns (Michigan)	<i>Fairmont City Councilman</i>
Shad White (Mississippi)	
Arthur J. "A.J." Singletary (Missouri)	
Sheila Korth (Nebraska)	
Zachary Kaufman (New Hampshire)	
Christine Curella (New Jersey)	