



U.S. Public Service Academy

1225 I Street NW, Suite 600 • Washington, DC 20005 • 202-712-9121

www.uspublicserviceacademy.org

Let's Party!

Dear Public Service Academy friend,

Thank you for volunteering to host a letter-writing party for the Academy. You are part of an ever-growing group of Americans who share our vision to build the flagship institution for public leadership in our country. It's exciting – you are present at the creation of bold new college that will develop young leaders for generations to come.



Far be it for us to give “instructions” on how to throw a party – you probably have a much better sense of how to get down and have a good time than we do. But if you want some suggestions on ways to have a successful letter-writing get-together, we have a few ideas:



- 1) **Make it fun!** Sitting around and writing Congress may not be everyone's idea of a good time, so be sure to lighten the mood with some snacks, a bit of music, perhaps a beverage or two...
- 2) **Make it easy!** Be sure to provide anything that they will need to write a good, thoughtful, accurate letter. Your guests will need pens, paper, envelopes, stamps, fact sheets, and addresses. Included in this packet is information that they may find useful, including background information, quotes, and FAQs.
- 3) **Make it personal!** Folks in Congress are used to getting tons of form letters from interest groups, and they know how to spot an artificial letter that's just cut and pasted from a web site. That is why it is so important for people to handwrite the letters and to add personal touches to each one.

After folks finish their letters, you can collect them to make sure that they all get in the mail the next day (or you may fax them directly to the senator's or representative's office). Please let us know how things go – we would love to know how many letters you are able to get written and who will receive them.



If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call either of us on our cell phones, which are listed below.

Thanks again – and good luck,

Chris Myers Asch
662-207-4744

Shawn Raymond
713-899-9945

Letter Writing Tips

Here are some tips for how to write an effective letter urging your senator or representative to support the U.S. Public Service Academy Act.

- **Be personal & polite:** Explain who you are and why you are writing the letter. Make sure the representative knows that you are a voting constituent – include your name and address, and make references to your state or hometown in the body of your letter.
- **Be short & specific:** Clearly explain why you want the representative to support the U.S. Public Service Academy Act. Keep your letter relatively short. Pick two or three arguments that are important to you and emphasize those. Some arguments you might consider:
 - The U.S. Public Service Academy fills an important need in American society.
 - The Academy will help America attract its best and brightest into public service.
 - The Academy has broad bipartisan appeal – this is an American idea.
 - Young Americans deserve to have one federal service academy that gives them the opportunity to serve in areas outside the military.
 - The Academy is a worthwhile investment in our future public leadership.
- **Be neat & clear:** Write legibly and make sure you tell them *exactly* what you want them to do – they should vote for or co-sponsor the U.S. Public Service Academy Act (S. 960 in the Senate and H.R. 1671 in the House). If you want a personal response, make sure to ask for one.

Addressing Members of Congress

When addressing your letters, make sure to follow this pattern:

To Your Senator:

The Honorable (full name)
(Room #) (Name) Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

To Your Representative:

The Honorable (full name)
(Room #) (Name) House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

Sample Letter

The following is an example of the kind of letter you could write.

Please do not cut and paste – personal letters are much more effective.

DATE

The Honorable XXXXX
XXXXX Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator XXXXX:

As a STATE resident and voter, I am writing to encourage you to support the U.S. Public Service Academy Act, S. 960. This bill, which was introduced in March by Senators Clinton and Specter, authorizes the creation of the U.S. Public Service Academy. I think it is an important bill, and I urge you to become a co-sponsor.

America needs the U.S. Public Service Academy. Our country faces serious domestic and international problems in the twenty-first century, and we need more young people to go into public service as police officers, health care workers, foreign language specialists, civil servants, and other important public jobs. The Academy will provide a consistent flow of highly-qualified, service-oriented young leaders. We here in STATE could use these graduates, particularly in our poorer areas where it is hard to attract college graduates.

Young people want to serve our country, but many of them want to serve in a civilian capacity. The military academies are great, but not everyone wants to (or is physically able to) go to one. Many high school students, particularly girls, would leap at the chance to go to a U.S. Public Service Academy. It would be our first national college devoted to service outside of the military, and it would attract our best and brightest. Many STATE students enter college wanting to serve our country, but they cannot afford to pursue public service after graduation because they have accumulated too much debt. The Academy will give service-minded students the opportunity to serve our country without enduring financial hardship.

The U.S. Public Service Academy Act is an opportunity for you to be a leader in the movement to strengthen our nation's public leadership. I urge you to support the bill by becoming a co-sponsor of S. 960.

Sincerely,

Fact Sheet

The United States Public Service Academy Act of 2007 was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives (H.R. 1671) and Senate (S. 960) in March 2007. The bill will create the civilian counterpart to the military service academies. Its leading sponsors are **Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY)** and **Arlen Specter (R-PA)** and **Representatives James Moran (D-VA)** and **Christopher Shays (R-CT)**. Co-sponsors are:

Senate

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Hillary Clinton (NY) | Sherrod Brown (OH) | Blanche Lincoln (AR) |
| • Arlen Specter (PA) | Kay Bailey Hutchison (TX) | Barbara Mikulski (MD) |
| Joseph Biden (DE) | Edward Kennedy (MA) | Debbie Stabenow (MI) |
| Barbara Boxer (CA) | Mary Landrieu (LA) | |

House

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| • James Moran (VA) | Bob Filner (CA) | Carolyn McCarthy (NY) |
| • Christopher Shays (CT) | Charles Gonzales (TX) | Jim McDermott (WA) |
| Tammy Baldwin (WI) | Al Green (TX) | Michael McNulty (NY) |
| Sanford Bishop (GA) | Gene Green (TX) | Gregory Meeks (NY) |
| Tim Bishop (NY) | Phil Hare (IL) | Charles Melancon (LA) |
| Bruce Braley (IA) | Ruben Hinojosa (TX) | Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC) |
| Yvette Clarke (NY) | Mazie Hirono (HI) | Solomon Ortiz (TX) |
| John Conyers (MI) | Mike Honda (CA) | Ed Perlmutter (CO) |
| Danny K. Davis (IL) | Sheila Jackson-Lee (TX) | Nick Rahall (WV) |
| Tom Davis (VA) | Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX) | Steven Rothman (NJ) |
| Peter DeFazio (OR) | Hank Johnson (GA) | C.A. Ruppertsberger (MD) |
| William Delahunt (MA) | Nick Lampson (TX) | Bobby Rush (IL) |
| Diana Degette (CO) | Tom Lantos (CA) | Tim Ryan (OH) |
| Lloyd Doggett (TX) | John Lewis (GA) | Bennie Thompson (MS) |
| Eliot Engel (NY) | Zoe Lofgren (CA) | Diane Watson (CA) |
| Anna Eshoo (CA) | Carolyn Maloney (NY) | |
| Sam Farr (CA) | Doris Matsui (CA) | |

• **America faces a serious shortage of public servants.**

- The Partnership for Public Service warns of a looming “Federal brain drain” as more than 90% of the federal government’s leadership becomes eligible to retire in the next decade
- Eight in ten police agencies nationwide cannot find enough qualified candidates to fill empty positions, and the Border Patrol has difficulty retaining college-educated recruits
- The State Department struggles to find enough foreign language specialists in critically-needed languages such as Arabic, Korean, Chinese, and Pashtun.

• **Young Americans have a strong ethic of public service, but they are often priced out of public service.**

- More than 70% of the 2006 collegiate freshman class expressed a desire to serve others, according to the Higher Education Research Institute, the highest rate in a generation. But according to the Project on Student Debt, the average college student graduates \$20,000 in debt, which makes public service careers difficult to pursue. In the past 25 years, public policy programs such as Columbia University’s School of Public Affairs have seen a 50% drop in the percentage of graduates pursuing public service.

• **America does not offer a national civilian college for students interested in serving their nation in a civilian capacity.**

- Nearly 15,000 students attend the nation’s five federal military service academies. Fewer than 15 percent of these students are female, while women constitute a majority (57%) of college students nationwide. In service organizations, women are an even larger majority: 58% of Peace Corps, 61% of City Year, and 71% of Teach for America participants are women.
- The military service academies are among the nation’s most competitive colleges. They reject tens of thousands of applicants each year, often for medical or physical reasons.

U.S. Public Service Academy FAQs

In a nutshell, what is the U.S. Public Service Academy?

The U.S. Public Service Academy will be an undergraduate institution devoted to developing civilian leaders. Modeled on the military academies, the Academy will offer four years of tuition-free education in exchange for five years of civilian service following graduation.

How many students will it serve?

The Academy will serve roughly 5,100 high-achieving students from across the United States and the world.

How will students be admitted?

Spots for nearly 1,300 incoming freshmen will be allocated by state, following a congressional nomination process similar to that used for admission to the military academies. Nominees would compete against other nominees from their state, thus ensuring that each state will be proportionally represented on campus.

What kind of curriculum will Academy students follow?

The Academy's structured, academically rigorous program will focus on service and leadership. Its core curriculum will emphasize service-learning and international education, with challenging requirements for study abroad, public service internships, and summer leadership development. The combination of rigorous academic work with hands-on learning experiences will give our students the character, academic training, and leadership experience they need to serve the American people honorably and effectively.

What kinds of jobs would Academy graduates do during their five-year service requirement?

Academy graduates will spend five years serving our nation by working in education, health care, law enforcement, emergency management, and other critical public service fields at the local, state, and national levels. They will be placed in positions and geographic areas where they are needed most.

Where will the Academy be located?

That decision ultimately will be up to Congress, but one site that makes logical sense is Washington, D.C. Our nation's capital has tremendous opportunities for Academy students – internships where students would be able to get hands-on experience in public service; partnerships with government agencies that could provide speakers and visiting professors for Academy classes; easy access to research materials and subjects; and other concrete resources that would be hard to duplicate elsewhere. The city would be a magnet for top faculty.

How much money will it cost?

About 70 cents per American per year. For less than the cost of bus fare, we can build a lasting institution sends a clear message to our young people – public service matters, and it matters enough that we have built a national public university dedicated to it.

Who came up with the idea for a U.S. Public Service Academy?

The Academy is the brainchild of two Teach For America/AmeriCorps veterans, Chris Myers Asch and Shawn Raymond. After having taught in the Mississippi Delta in the mid 1990s, Asch and Raymond teamed up to create a non-profit educational organization for at-risk teenagers, the Sunflower County Freedom Project. Now, they have set their sights on helping America give its young people more opportunities to serve their country in a meaningful way.

Why do we need to do this now?

We need to build a Public Service Academy now for several reasons:

1) First, we face a critical and growing shortage of public servants – as baby boomers retire, we will need more teachers, more cops, more air traffic controllers, more everything.

2) Second, recent events have inspired a younger generation and imbued many young people with a sense of civic engagement not seen in decades. Unfortunately, many of these students are priced out of public service careers because they rack up so much debt while in school.

3) Finally, we currently have no national undergraduate institution dedicated to developing civilian leaders and meeting our nation's critical needs. We offer our young people outstanding, federally-funded opportunities to go to college and serve their country in the military, but none to serve as a civilian.

How will Academy graduates be different from public policy or government graduates from other universities?

No undergraduate institution offers a program as intense, practical, or service-oriented as what the Academy will provide. Four years at the Academy will be an education in service, an unparalleled experience that produces graduates with:

- **Stronger bonds:** Like cadets and midshipmen at the military academies, Academy graduates will form strong bonds during the course of four years of service-oriented training. The campus culture of service will unify graduates with a shared sense of mission that will span across graduating classes, creating an invaluable network of people who can share knowledge and experiences.
- **More experience:** The Academy's educational program will be designed to give students regular hands-on experience in the real world of public service. While some universities require an internship to give their government majors hands-on experience, the Academy will require internships, community service, study abroad, and foreign language mastery for all students.
- **Longer commitment:** The Academy will require five years of national service following graduation. There is no similar commitment from any other civilian institution.

Why not create a public service scholarship program that could be instituted at colleges around the country?

Creating a public service scholarship program is a worthy, but limited, idea. It ignores the symbolic importance of creating an institution that can raise the visibility of public service and transform how young people across the country perceive, prepare for, and pursue public service. As a prestigious, national institution, the Academy will capture the imagination of a new generation of young people and channel their energy into public service. It will send a powerful message about the value we place on public service in this country – much the way that refusing to create a Public Service Academy (while offering *five* military academies) sends the message to our young people that public service is somehow less important, less legitimate, or less patriotic than military service.

A scholarship program also would not be able to offer the intensive culture of service that a separate institution devoted to public service would instill in its students. Existing institutions have their own set of priorities and procedures; scholarship money would benefit individual students but would not necessarily alter the overarching mission of their institutions. Having a stand-alone campus is the only way to create a unique, unified campus culture that develops a strong *esprit du corps* around the public service mission. Like cadets at the military academies, Academy students would give up the traditional college life to focus on serving their nation. The result? Students gain a more intensive, more focused, more rewarding education, while the nation gains stronger, better-trained, more dedicated young leaders required to serve their country for five years.

How is this effort being funded?

This campaign is driven by the power of an idea, not the power of money. We have no lobbyists, no campaign staff, no high-priced office. We are funded by individual donors from across the nation, as well as grants from the Johnson Foundation, the Henry M. Jackson Foundation, the Kellogg Foundation, and the Echoing Green Foundation.

Official Endorsements

Organizations

- American Society for Public Administration
- American Youth Policy Forum
- AmeriCorps Alums
- Catholic Charities USA
- Catholic Network of Volunteer Service
- Community Health Association of Mountain/Plains States
- Citizen Schools
- City Year
- Do Something
- International Public Management Association for Human Resources
- Mississippi Teacher Corps
- National Peace Corps Association
- National Urban League
- NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
- Project Linus New Jersey
- Public Allies
- ServeNext
- Service Employees International Union
- Sojourners
- Youth Service America

Individuals

- Madeline Albright, former Secretary of State
- Carol Bellamy, President and CEO, World Learning; former Director of UNICEF and Peace Corps
- Daniel W. Christman, former Superintendent, U.S. Military Academy
- Thomas Daschle, former U.S. Senator from South Dakota
- Bill Lennox, former Superintendent, U.S. Military Academy
- Mike McCurry, former White House Press Secretary
- Leon Panetta, Director, Panetta Institute
- Bill White, Mayor of Houston

“Now, more than ever, it is imperative that our nation improve its capacity to groom future public servants. The Public Service Academy is an innovative way to strengthen and protect America.”

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, United States Senate

“The Public Service Academy has enormous appeal and is a terrific initiative.”

Lt. Gen. (ret.) Dan Christman, Former Superintendent, U.S. Military Academy

“We need a ‘West Point’ of public service, to encourage more young Americans to commit to a career in public service and the build the skills necessary to provide successful leadership in the public sector.”

Rep. Christopher Shays, United States House of Representatives

“The initiative to create a Public Service Academy could not be more timely.”

Wendy Kopp, Founder, Teach for America

“The Public Service Academy is not merely a startlingly innovative idea whose time has come; it is actually one whose existence and mission are long overdue.”

Hodding Carter, Former President, Knight Foundation

“The creation of the United States Public Service Academy is a stunning idea.”

William Sessions, Former Director, Federal Bureau of Investigations

“At a time when ‘patriotism-lite’ characterizes our country, the Public Service Academy would be a major step toward reinvigorating citizenship obligations.”

Charles Moskos, Northwestern University