

March 31, 2009

## **National Service Corps Set to Become Law**

By [\*David M. Herszenhorn – NY Times\*](#)

The House voted overwhelmingly to approve [a major expansion of national community service](#) programs, sending the measure to President Obama who has said that he will sign it.

The [vote was 275 to 149](#), with 26 Republicans joining 249 Democrats in favor of it.

[The bill](#) will expand the number of volunteer slots to 250,000 from 75,000, increasing the ranks of the existing AmeriCorps program, and establishing new cadres of volunteers focused on health care, education, renewable energy and veterans.

The legislation is also a major priority for First Lady Michelle Obama, who has said that promoting volunteerism will be a hallmark of her time in the White House.

When the Senate [approved the bill last week](#), lawmakers renamed it the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, in honor of the Massachusetts Democrat who was a main architect of the measure.

Mr. Kennedy, in a statement, praised final passage by the House. "Today's House vote again demonstrates the high priority Congress gives to encouraging citizens of all ages in all communities across America to participate in public service," Mr. Kennedy said. "This legislation will enable many more Americans to do something for their country to meet the many challenges facing us. I look forward to the president signing this bill into law so that a welcome new era of national and community service can begin."

The bill also establishes Sept. 11 as a national day of service.