

NLWJC - Kagan

DPC - Box 056 - Folder-006

Service - Points of Light

Service - Points of Light

and

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
11-3-97

Service - AmeriCorps

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 30, 1997

MR. PRESIDENT:

Harris Wofford, Director of the Corporation for National Service, has sent you two memos. The first seeks your approval on a strategy of moving forward with reauthorization of AmeriCorps this year. The second seeks your approval of a plan by Sen. Wofford to reinstate the "Daily Points of Light" award. Sen. Wofford has apparently already had extensive conversations with President Bush about this plan.

At my request, Bruce Reed has summarized the memos and presented you with recommendations; the underlying memos from Wofford follow Bruce's cover note.

There is no disagreement on the reauthorization issue -- your advisors agree that we should move forward this year. On the "Points of Light" award, Bruce presents a recommendation different than Harris' proposal. While none of your advisor's are thrilled about reinstating these awards, they agree that Bruce's suggestion makes the most sense. Resumption of the awards could be announced at your visit to the Bush Library next week.

Please see Bruce's memo for details.

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Reed
Silverman
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Phil Caplan

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

97 OCT 24 AM 11:33

October 24, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: BRUCE REED *BR*

CC: Steve Silverman

SUBJECT: Harris Wofford Memos

*Agree on both
but proceed
on the
trust
Wofford
memos*

Harris Wofford has written you two memos. The first recommends that you make reauthorization of AmeriCorps a high priority. The second recommends that you reinstate President Bush's "Daily Points of Light" awards. A discussion of each memo, along with my recommendations, follows.

I. Recommendation on Harris's Reauthorization Memo

Harris Wofford wrote you on October 3 urging that we make reauthorization of AmeriCorps a high priority. He argues that we should send the Corporation's reauthorization proposal to the Hill before adjournment this year, with the goal of getting AmeriCorps reauthorized by the first anniversary of the Presidents' service summit next April. AmeriCorps has never been reauthorized and is now operating without any authorization. Harris argues that we must seek to establish firmly AmeriCorps' existence, preferably beyond the end of your term, and that this is the best time to do it.

The Corporation has made strides, particularly since the service summit, in getting Congress to support or at least not attack AmeriCorps. This year, for the first time, Congress did not launch an effort to eliminate the core AmeriCorps programs during the appropriations process, and it appears we will secure funding at last year's levels plus an increment for America Reads, although a smaller one than we requested.

Agree

We recommend that we launch the reauthorization in a high-profile way as Harris requests, but wait until the final phase of this year's appropriations battle is complete. The VA-HUD appropriations bill that is coming to you for signature includes funding for core AmeriCorps programs as well as \$25 million for America Reads. However, we are still fighting to get more funds for AmeriCorps' portion of America Reads as part of the Labor-HHS appropriations bill, and we believe it would be prudent to wait until this is resolved. It is possible that Labor-HHS will not be settled until just before recess, which would frustrate Harris's goal of sending this proposal to the Hill prior to adjournment. Nevertheless it would be prudent to wait.

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One option is to launch the reauthorization in a radio address right before Thanksgiving, which would come just before Powell's summit update on November 25.

II. Recommendation on Harris's Points of Light Memo

Harris Wofford has written to urge that you resume former President Bush's "Daily Points of Light" awards. He proposes to rename the awards the "Presidents' Points of Light," with you and President Bush as co-sponsors. Rather than having the White House take responsibility for selecting and vetting the winners on a daily basis, as was the case under President Bush, Harris proposes that the Points of Light Foundation and the Corporation for National Service take on this responsibility. The Knights of Columbus have agreed to fund the costs of this program for one year.

One factor complicating the decision is that Harris has had extensive conversations with the Points of Light Foundation and with President Bush himself on this proposal. Apparently Harris has made it clear that he favors this idea and that the decision rests with the White House. Harris indicates that President Bush will be deeply disappointed if we decide not to resume the awards.

One other timing issue is that you are scheduled to attend the dedication of President Bush's library on November 6. If we decide to reinstate this program, that event would be an opportunity to announce it, especially given the former President's attachment to the Points of Light program.

Arguments For:

- Reinstating the awards is an easy way to keep the issue of service and volunteerism before the public on a daily basis. It would continue to repair the rift between the AmeriCorps concept of service and the more traditional volunteer sector, just as the Philadelphia summit did. Also, AmeriCorps members would be eligible for the awards.
- President Bush very much wants the Administration to do this. He will be very disappointed if we do not, and he will see it as the White House's decision because of Harris's conversations with him.

Arguments Against:

- The benefits of resuming the awards are minimal. Our efforts to reach out to the volunteer sector at the Philadelphia summit were so successful that it is not clear what this would add. In addition, some would react negatively to such a decision, since the original Points of Light program was derided by many as an empty gesture.
- Although theoretically we could assign responsibility for vetting the award winners to the Points of Light Foundation and the Corporation for National Service, from a practical

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standpoint we would probably still feel the need to do a legal and/or political check on award winners. The daily responsibility of selecting and vetting winners will be time-consuming for White House staff, and not worth the effort.

L1 Origo - we can let them handle the award + our creation of new thing down to point

Options:

#1 Resume the awards as Wofford proposes.

#2 Decline to resume the awards.

#3 Recommended Option: Reestablish these awards as the "Daily Points of Light" awards, rather than the "Presidents' Daily Points of Light" awards, to be administered by the Points of Light Foundation and the Corporation, with no formal connection to the President or the White House.

✓ Harris believes that this plan would be acceptable to former President Bush as long as we do not appear to be distancing ourselves from the awards. To that end, he suggests we announce this at the dedication of the Bush library, and advise former President Bush in advance of our action. He also suggests that we invite a group of the first winners to the White House during National Volunteer Week in April, along with former President Bush, and that we use inclusive language in talking about the awards, such as "We join former President Bush in congratulating the winners." Such actions seem like a reasonable compromise on this issue.

Option #1

Option #2

✓ Option #3 (recommended)

Discuss

↳ altus' (we are on options - might help us get to a point - if did would Bush publicly help us get to authorization?

Service - Points of Light



03:25:00-PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP

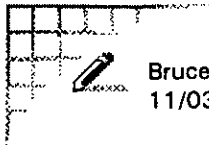
cc: Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP, Cathy R. Mays/OPD/EOP

Subject: President's comment on Points of Light memo

The President gave a green light to reinstating the Daily Points of Light. I just saw his comments. However, he says he would consider our "Option 1" (which was calling it the Presidents' Daily Points of Light and associating it more closely with the WH) if that would prompt Bush to help us on reauthorization. He asks us if it would help. I don't know the answer to that. Shall I pose the question to Harris, or would you like to handle this differently?

(Do you have an opinion on whether this news should be in the President's 5 minute speech at the library on Thursday? I had assumed it should be, but Waldman doesn't like the idea, and upon reflecting I'm not sure it's necessary. Gomperts doesn't think it matters too much.)

Senia - Points of Light



Bruce N. Reed
11/03/97 04:58:57 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Diana Fortuna/OPD/EOP

cc: Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP, Cathy R. Mays/OPD/EOP

Subject: Re: President's comment on Points of Light memo

Why don't you sound out Harris generally as to whether Bush will be helpful on reauthorization?
Don't tell Harris yet, but if the Pres is fine with Option 1, maybe we should do Option 1.