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August 5, 2009

The Honorable David Price
2162 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Castle
1233 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Price and Castle:

As former federal executives, we would like to collectively express our strong support for H.R. 3510, the *Roosevelt Scholars Act of 2009*. We commend you for introducing this important piece of legislation which, if enacted, will better enable the federal government to recruit a new generation of leaders to fill critical positions in federal service. Thank you for your leadership in this area. We believe the *Roosevelt Scholars* program will attract top students from our nation's leading universities to solve some of the most difficult challenges facing America and the world today. The benefits of this proposal are many:

- ***Roosevelt Scholars* will build upon a proven model of excellence from the military.** A combined two-fifths of U.S. military officers are products of the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) and receive federal support for education in exchange for their military service. The *Roosevelt Scholars* program brings a similar commitment to and investment in our civilian service.
- ***Roosevelt Scholars* will help government attract mission-critical talent.** The federal government's brain drain is underway. Roughly one-third of the government's top scientists, engineers, physicians, mathematicians, economists and other highly specialized professionals will be leaving in the next five years. The market for highly skilled workers continues to tighten, and the federal government increasingly needs to compete with other sectors for the same, limited talent pool.
- ***Roosevelt Scholars* will make government service possible for more Americans.** Rising education costs are pricing our best-schooled citizens out of public service jobs. Tuition assistance is perhaps the most straightforward, proven instrument in the government's recruiting toolbox.
- ***Roosevelt Scholars* will complement existing efforts and structures that encourage young people to consider public service.** *Roosevelt Scholars* builds on other existing agency scholarship programs by presenting economies of scale and an opportunity for cross-agency information sharing and collaboration to identify and target the skills areas of greatest need. Furthermore, like other highly successful and prestigious fellowship models including the Truman, Rhodes, Goldwater, Marshall, and Fulbright, the *Roosevelt Scholars* model would leverage one of our nation's greatest resources – our unparalleled network of colleges and universities.

- **Roosevelt Scholars will help re-brand government service.** Ultimately, the Roosevelt Scholarship and the efforts of the Roosevelt Scholars Foundation will serve as a keystone along with other important efforts on the part of federal agencies, institutions of higher education, and nonprofits to strengthen the government's pipeline of critical skills. Taken together, these efforts are important to drawing greater public attention to the importance of federal work and to restoring prestige to federal service.

Representatives Price and Castle, we applaud you for your leadership in introducing this legislation. We believe the *Roosevelt Scholars* initiative is an innovative program with exciting potential, and we urge Congress to promptly pass the *Roosevelt Scholars Act of 2009*.

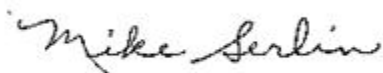
Sincerely,



Shirl Nelson
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary
Department of Commerce



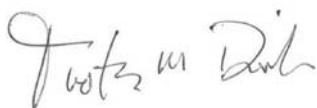
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