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SENS. VOINOVICH, GILLIBRAND INTRODUCE BILL TO ATTRACT STUDENTS TO PUBLIC SERVICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Last night, U.S. Senators George V. Voinovich (R-OH) and Kirsten E. Gillibrand (D-NY) introduced the Roosevelt Scholars Act, a bill to encourage outstanding undergraduate and graduate students in mission-critical fields of study to pursue a career in the federal government. Individuals possessing the specialized skill sets required by many mission-critical occupations – such as medicine, law, or information technology – are in short supply. As a result, the federal government is often unable to effectively compete with the more attractive salary and benefits packages available to such high-skilled individuals in the private sector. Yet the public sector hiring need is greater than ever. In fact, through September 2012, federal agencies will be required to fill 273,000 mission-critical positions.

The Roosevelt Scholars Act would help address this hiring challenge by establishing a scholarship program to provide tuition assistance and a small stipend to outstanding undergraduate and graduate students in mission-critical degree programs. In return, Roosevelt Scholars would fulfill three to five years of service with a federal agency in a mission-critical position.

“I have long been concerned about the ability of federal agencies to fulfill their assigned mission,” Sen. Voinovich said. “Too often, agencies lack the most important resource in getting the job done – the right people with the right skills. The Roosevelt Scholars Act would provide the federal government with another tool to use in competing with the private sector for the next generation of top-flight talent.”

“This act provides opportunities to help more young people, particularly those in mission-critical fields, enter public service,” Sen. Gillibrand said. “In this time of grave economic uncertainty, so many people feel the need to contribute to the greater good and work to help the most vulnerable among us. We must inspire our best and brightest to enter public service to help address the critical issues facing our economy and serve those most in need.”

Representatives David Price (D-NC) and Michael Castle (R-DE) have introduced similar legislation, H.R. 3510, in the House of Representatives.

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