

GENERAL LETTER OF SUPPORT

[Date]

Dear [Senator/Representative _____]:

I am writing to **encourage you to be an original cosponsor of the *Roosevelt Scholars Act* when it is introduced in the 111th Congress.** This important legislation was first introduced by Representatives David Price (D-NC) and Christopher Shays (R-CT) in May 2008, and Representative Price plans to reintroduce the bill in early 2009 when the new Congress convenes. The *Roosevelt Scholars Act* will better enable the federal government to recruit a new generation of leaders and fill mission-critical positions in areas such as engineering, the sciences, foreign languages, and public health.

As you know, our federal government faces an unprecedented workforce crisis as experienced workers begin to retire and the pipeline of talent available to replace them continues to thin. According to a study by the Partnership for Public Service, federal agencies will need to fill 193,000 mission-critical positions by the end of 2009. The labor needs of the federal government are becoming more professional and specialized than ever before and an insufficient number of citizens are pursuing graduate-level study in high-need areas. As a result, 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.

Additional Partnership research confirms that students are highly interested in making a difference in society, but know little about how to join the government workforce and are often priced out of federal service by high educational costs. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, individuals completing master's degrees average \$32,900 in debt. Individuals earning doctorates and MBAs average \$41,500 and \$41,700, respectively, in educational debt. Those studying to be lawyers incur an average debt of \$80,800, and those receiving medical degrees average a staggering \$125,800 in student loan debt. We must find new ways to strengthen the pipeline of talent into government by providing financial support and making it easier for a new generation to enter into public service.

The *Roosevelt Scholars Act* would create a scholarship program to fund graduate-level education in mission-critical fields in exchange for a federal service commitment. The Act would establish a small foundation to administer the scholarships of up to \$60,000 per year, for a maximum of five years, for students to complete an advanced degree in high-demand, high-need fields including engineering, information technology, foreign languages and public health. In return, these scholars will commit to three to five years of service in a federal government agency. The Roosevelt Scholars program would help restore prestige to federal service by raising awareness about federal opportunities and rebranding the government as a place where the best and brightest go to make a difference.

I strongly urge you to cosponsor this significant legislation. For more information about the *Roosevelt Scholars Act*, and to sign on as an original cosponsor in the 111th Congress, please contact **Kate Roetzer** with **Representative David Price** (kate.roetzer@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,

[XXXXXX]