



NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MILITARY, NATIONAL, AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Public Minutes of March 2018 Commission Meeting

The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service (the Commission) held a meeting on March 15-16, 2018, at the Commission's offices in Arlington, VA. The meeting concerned organizational and other pre-decisional and deliberative matters and was closed to the public pursuant to Public Law 114-328, section 554(b)(3).

Attendance

Commissioners present:

- Mr. Edward T. Allard III
- Mr. Steve Barney
- The Honorable Janine Davidson
- Ms. Avril Haines
- The Honorable Dr. Joseph Heck
- Ms. Jeanette James
- Mr. Alan Khazei
- Mr. Thomas Kilgannon
- Ms. Shawn Skelly
- The Honorable Debra Wada (except for 3/16 morning session)

Commissioners absent:

- The Honorable Mark Gearan

Others present:

- Kent Abernathy, Executive Director
- Jill Rough, Director of Research and Analysis
- Keri Lowry, Director of Governmental and Public Engagement (present for portions)
- Gregory Brinsfield, Director of Operations (present for portions)
- Paul Lekas, General Counsel
- Rachel Rikleen, Deputy General Counsel (present for portions)
- Yolanda Hands, Operations Program Manager (present for portions)
- Peter Morgan, Deputy Director of Operations (present for portions)

- Annie Rorem, Deputy Director of Research and Analysis
- Amy Schafer, Research Team Lead
- Judson Crane, Selective Service Research Team Lead
- John Lira, Policy Analyst (present for portions)
- Sandy Scott, on detail from the Corporation for National and Community Service (present for portions)
- Eleanor Vuono, incoming Senior Legal Counsel (3/15 only)

March 15, 2018

Executive Session

From 0900 to 1100, Commissioners convened an executive session at the Commission’s offices in Arlington, VA. The executive session was held without the presence of staff.

Meeting Preview

At approximately 1100, the Commission reconvened with staff present. The Chairman moved to close sessions on March 15-16 to the public because pre-decisional and organizational matters would be deliberated. All Commissioners present agreed.

Mr. Abernathy then briefed the Commission on the agenda for the two-day meeting.

Structured Deliberation on Mandatory National Service

The Commission held a structured deliberation on mandatory national service lasting from approximately 1115 until 1220.

Presentation by the Klein Brothers

The Commission received a presentation from Max and Jake Klein, twin brothers from New Jersey who founded the website “Kids That Do Good” (KTDG). They were accompanied by their mother and father. The briefing was followed by a question-and-answer session. The meeting with the Kleins began at 1255 and lasted until 1355, and the Kleins provided a PowerPoint presentation.

The Klein brothers discussed KTDG with the Commission. KTDG is an online aggregator of charities for parents and children to identify service opportunities for young people in communities around the country and to post ideas about how others can serve. It also contains service-related resources for teachers and educators. KTDG uses social media to communicate with users but the Klein brothers noted that they do not have or use social media in their personal capacities. Currently, KTDG identifies service opportunities in the top 80 U.S. markets. The Klein brothers hope to expand KTDG’s reach to the top 100 U.S. markets by the end of 2018. They said the youngest kids who have participated in service activities through KTDG are 7 or 8 years old.

The Klein brothers say their idea in founding KTDG was to help kids get involved at any age, and the website grew out of the Klein brothers’ own commitment to service. Their parents

guided the brothers from an early age to give back to their community. Starting at a young age, the brothers began a tradition of donating birthday money each year to causes in which they believed. They would ask family and friends for money instead of other types of gifts. Over the years, the brothers made donations of a jaws-of-life for their local fire department, bulletproof vests for their local police department, and computers for their local library, among others. They found that making donations like this was the easiest way they could give back at a young age. Over the years, they realized how difficult it was for kids to get involved in other ways because of their age.

Briefing on the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

The Commission received a briefing from two members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) relating to LDS' efforts to promote an ethos of service both within its ranks and in the broader community. Presenters included Elder Kevin Calderwood, member of the Sixth Quorum of the Seventy, and Sister Sydnee Calderwood, North America Northeast JustServe Specialist. The briefing was followed by a question-and-answer session. The meeting with the Calderwoods lasted from approximately 1355 to 1520. An account of this meeting is set forth in a separate MFR.

Research Update

Dr. Rough briefed the Commission on the status of research efforts. This session lasted from approximately 1545 to 1615.

Engagement Update

Ms. Lowry briefed the Commission on the status of engagement efforts. This session lasted from approximately 1615 to 1630.

Ethics Training

Ms. Rikleen provided the Commission with training on ethics issues that may arise in selecting locations, venues, and participants for Commission events. The ethics training lasted from approximately 1630 to 1700.

March 16, 2018 Session

Beginning at approximately 0800 on March 16, 2018, the Commission convened at its offices in Arlington, VA. The Chairman closed portions of the meeting to the public because pre-decisional and organizational matters would be deliberated.

Business Meeting

The Chairman moved to approve the minutes for the Commission's February 2018 meeting. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the February 2018 minutes with a nominal amendment from Ms. Skelly. Thereafter, the Commission deliberated matters related to the execution of public meetings and internal organization of the Commission for research purposes.

Presentation by the Department of Education

Representatives of the U.S. Department of Education briefed the Commission on various Department programs and issues related to public service, civics education, and other topics. Representatives from the Department included Maureen Dowling, Ed.D., Director of the Office of Non-Public Education and the Military Affairs Team in the Office of Innovation and Improvement; Carney McCullough, Director of the Policy Development Group in the Office of Postsecondary Education; and Elizabeth Norris, Confidential Assistant in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. An account of this meeting is set forth in a separate MFR.

Structured Discussion on Definitions

The Commission held a structured deliberation on definitions of key terms lasting from approximately 1005 until 1105. All Commissioners with the exception of Vice Chair Wada attended.

Presentation by MG Laich

Major General (MG) Dennis Laich (USA, Ret.) provided testimony to the Commission regarding the all-volunteer force and military conscription. MG Laich also provided a written copy of his testimony for the record, which will be posted on the Commission website. The session lasted from 1100 to 1215. An account of this meeting is set forth in a separate MFR.

Presentation by Dr. Nora Bensahel

Dr. Nora Bensahel provided testimony to the Commission regarding the all-volunteer force and the need to maintain the Selective Service System. Dr. Bensahel also provided written copy of her testimony for the record, which will be posted on the Commission website. The session lasted from 1235 to 1400. An account of this meeting is set forth in a separate MFR.

Presentation on the Conservation Corps and Forest Service

The Commission received a briefing on government-sponsored service activities involving conservation from Mary Ellen Sprenkel, Chief Executive Officer of The Corps Network, and M. Merlene Mazyck, Program Manager for the USDA Forest Service Volunteers & Service program. Ms. Sprenkel and Ms. Mazyck provided presentations to give background for the discussion; copies of those presentations will be posted to the Commission's website. In addition, Lashonte Moore, a veteran of the Conservation Corps who works with the Forest Service, attended to present a testimonial on her experience in the program. The presentation began at 1400 and lasted until 1500.

Ms. Sprenkel explained that the Conservation Corps began as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s. Three million young men participated in the CCC, each receiving \$30 per month from the federal government. This effort helped to prepare a generation of men for service in WWII. In contrast, the modern Conservation Corps program is a public-private partnership. Approximately 25,000 men and women participate each year. Each participant makes a one-year commitment to serve. The Corps Network represents 130 separate corps, operating in all U.S. states and territories. The median age range of participants is 16 to 24 years.

Ms. Mazyck then briefed the Commission on the Forest Service. The Forest Service operates one of the longest and most significant partnerships of the Conservation Corps. It was authorized pursuant to the Volunteers in the National Forests Act of 1972. The Conservation Corps was authorized around the same time. Currently, there are 175 forests under the Forest Service's jurisdiction. The Forest Service relies significantly on Conservation Corps volunteers to support the millions of acres under its purview. From 1972 to 2017, the Forest Service benefitted from 3 million volunteers devoting 131.2 million hours of work, representing a \$1.7 billion value. In 2017, volunteer service represented the equivalent of about 2,500 full-time employees, a \$111 million value.

Ms. Mazyck next discussed the four 21 Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) programs that work with the Forest Service. They include about 86,000 volunteers who receive no pay and have an average age in their 50s; the Youth Conservation Corps, which includes 15-18 year olds who receive minimum wage for a 3-6 week program during which they live and work on the land; partnerships; and Job Corps. Individuals in these categories may perform any Forest Service roles with the exception of union jobs and law enforcement. In addition, the Forest Service works with various veterans programs, including the Veterans Fire Corps.

When the Forest Service works with 21CSC partners, the Forest Service is responsible for outlining the scope of the projects and work needs and providing necessary resources. The partners are responsible for managing administrative requirements, supervising day-to-day opportunities, and providing minimum wage payment to participants.

Ms. Mazyck then discussed the Public Land Corps Act (PLCA), which is now a resource assistance program. The Act enables the Forest Service to hire people with specific skills who are ready to work in the Service. It allows the Forest Service access to non-competitive hiring. The Service is working to extend this, in part because it does not have direct hire authority. The PLCA is part of the 21CSC Act being considered now by Congress.

Ms. Sprenkel added to the discussion of hiring authority. The Conservation Corps has non-competitive hiring authority which is good for two years. This has helped to provide a career pathway to individuals participating in the Corps; for example, about 12% of National Park Service employees came from a Corps position. It also generates cost savings to the government: according to Ms. Sprenkel, the Corps represents a 65% cost savings versus in-house work, and an 80% cost savings versus contractors.

Ms. Sprenkel suggested that the Commission look at standardizing hiring authorities for service-related positions. Only some government national service programs have direct hire authority. AmeriCorps VISTA and Peace Corps do have direct hire authority. The Forest Service and other parts of AmeriCorps do not have direct hire authority. The Conservation Corps has had direct hiring authority since about 2005.

Ms. Sprenkel and Ms. Mazyck noted that there is a huge potential for growth across the resource management agencies. Currently, there is about \$19.3 billion in backlog maintenance – work that could be addressed through increasing the scope of the Corps.

The presenters recommended that the Commission review the September 5, 2012, report of the 21CSC Federal Advisory Committee, which was chaired by former Interior Secretary Ken Salazar.

They then briefed the Commission on key policy priorities in the resource management conservation space. Those include: 1) reestablishing a Civilian Conservation Corps; 2) creating a council to oversee the Corps; and 3) aligning service with needs and career pathways, including assisting in transitions for veterans (who now represent about 10% of the current Corps). A more discrete goal is to grow the current Corps program to 100,000 participants within five years. Ms. Sprenkel believes that goal is reachable because the Corps centers on public-private partnerships, not merely federally-funded work.

Ms. Moore talked about her own experience in the Corps. She came from Washington, D.C. She was a young mother with two kids and a high school dropout. She began working with the Earth Conservation Corps. This provided her with a living wage stipend and an education award. It enabled her to finance her education, develop job skills, and open opportunities to a career in the conservation field. She participated in two terms with the Corps, first in 2000 and then in 2003. From there, she was promoted to be a site supervisor and then a project coordinator. In her experience, a lot of Corps members come to the Corps because they have practical needs, such as a desire to complete their education and develop job skills. She has found that most leave with a lifelong commitment to conservation. Another benefit, according to Ms. Moore, is that Corps work requires adherence to rules and structures. Some people have trouble showing up ready to work and must leave the program. She has seen many who fail to stick to the rules and structures come back again for another chance, ready to work.

Executive Session

At approximately 1500, Commissioners convened an executive session outside the presence of staff.

Prepared by Paul Lekas, General Counsel

Adopted by the Commission on April __, 2018