

The 'Importance of Volunteerism' Resolutions

Title: Volunteers Are the Importance of Volunteerism

Resolution: Whereas individuals engaged in volunteer work are estimated to provide more than \$65,000,000,000 in services to the people and communities of the United States each year, in addition to services provided in foreign countries through the activities of the Peace Corps and similar efforts;

Whereas volunteer work provides opportunities to every citizen for personal growth, career exploration, and civic contribution;

Whereas the Federal government, State, and local governments, and charitable and service organizations increasingly recognize the value of individuals engaged in volunteer work in connection with the development and operation of programs to meet the needs of American citizens;

Whereas the number of individuals engaging in volunteer work and the variety of services provided through volunteer work increase each year; and

Whereas the United States Office of Personnel Management, together with a limited number of State and local governments, charitable and service organizations, and private employers, has provided for a listing and description of relevant volunteer work on employment application forms: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that experience in volunteer work should be taken into account by the Federal Government, State, and local governments, charitable and service organizations, and private employers in the consider-

ation of applicants for employment, and that provision should be made for a listing and description of volunteer work on employment application forms.

The above Concurrent Resolution was first submitted by Representative Augustus F. Hawkins in the House of Representatives in February 1986. Rep. Hawkins resubmitted the resolution (H. Con. Res. 61) to the 100th Congress on March 4, 1987, and Senators Charles E. Grassley and Dennis DeConcini submitted a similar resolution (S. Con. Res. 32) to the Senate on March 17.

"[The Concurrent Resolution] equates volunteer experience with work experience and gives it the full value it deserves," says Mike King, VOLUNTEER's executive vice president. "We want to encourage organizations and corporations to give full recognition to volunteer experience as it lends credibility to our field.

"Volunteer directors should write job descriptions for volunteers the same as they would for a part-time paid employee. It's good management practice."

It is very important that Congress pass these resolutions, says Ruth March, long an advocate of employment credit for volunteer experience. "It will give people leverage when encouraging corporations and organizations to take such action. It gives them a good reason for approaching employers, and it will validate their point."

Volunteers and volunteer administrators should encourage employers to write job announcements that include a statement showing they will recognize both paid and

nonpaid experience, March says. For example, an announcement for an accounting position should state "two years (paid or nonpaid) experience in accounting."

"It is the responsibility of the volunteer applying for the job, however, to document his or her volunteer experience," March stresses. "A resume is a good way to organize information about your experience, but we cannot count on job descriptions given on resumes."

March adds that volunteers and their agencies can help bring about this change by getting their board members to see if their own companies and organizations recognize volunteer experience. If they don't, volunteer groups should recommend that the job application be revised. And, of course, voluntary agencies themselves should adopt such policies.

Ninety percent of the jobs in this country require people to complete an application before consideration for a position, March says. Already approximately 40 states recognize volunteer experience under the "work experience" category on their applications for state government jobs.

March, who lives in Los Angeles, began her work in this area over 15 years ago, motivated by talks with friends whose laid-off space engineer husbands could not find jobs. Part of the reason was because no one would consider their volunteer experience.

In 1974, the City of Los Angeles became the first local government to revise its job application, and Wells Fargo Bank of San Francisco became the first corporation to give credit for volunteer experience.

Today, corporations and national associations who recognize the value of volun-

teers include TRW, United Airlines, Atlantic-Richfield Company, AT&T, Marriott Corporation, Coca-Cola USA, Levi Strauss & Company, National Association of Manufacturers, Avon Products, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Bell and Howell Company, Dart Industries.

What You Can Do

1. It is *very important* to write your Representative and Senators to support and co-sponsor this resolution. In the House, the resolution number is HCR 61. Address your letter to the Honorable (name of your Representative), U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515

In the Senate, the companion resolution is SCR 32. Address your letter to the Honorable (name of your Senators), U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510.

2. Also talk to appropriate city, county, and state government officials in your vicinity to see what they are doing. Encourage those who haven't yet done so to change their applications to allow room for documentation of relevant volunteer experience.

3. Talk to organizations you are involved with and ask them to adopt this policy. Request your local chamber of commerce to take the lead. Give them this sample wording that should be used on a job application:

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT: Begin with most recent employment, listing all employers. Include volunteer experience that relates to the position for which you are applying:

Dates Employed:

Name and Address of Employer:

Job Title:

Duties Performed:

Reason for Leaving:

4. Recognizing the important work that volunteers do for their organizations, volunteer administrators should keep accurate information concerning:

■ Job title

■ Description of skills needed and acquired skills, etc.

■ The job(s) the volunteer performed

■ How long they worked for the organization and how many hours (per day, week, or month) they contributed

■ Number and type of workers supervised

5. For a single copy of the brochure, "Some of the world's most talented people have never been paid a cent," which can be given to employers for information on volunteer credit, and for other information, write or call: Ruth March, PO Box 27095, Los Angeles, CA 90027-0095, (213) 467-6443. (She will return calls collect.)

REP. HAWKINS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEERISM RESOLUTION

Rep. Hawkins sent the following letter to colleagues last year to enlist their support for the volunteer resolution:

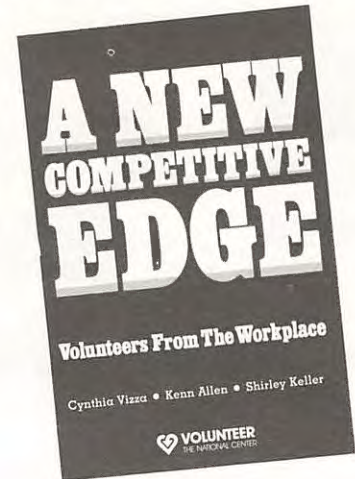
The significance of the volunteer movement in this country is indeed great. Thousands of men and women work tirelessly year round in the hope of bettering the lives of those in need. Individuals engaged in volunteer work are estimated to provide more than \$65 billion in services to the people and communities of the United States.

Though volunteers are not compensated monetarily, we in the Congress can do something to recognize the value of their efforts. I have introduced [a resolution], which calls upon the Federal Government, State and local governments, charitable and service organizations, and private employers to take into account volunteer work in the consideration of applicants for employment. The Concurrent Resolution also states that provision should be made for a listing and description of volunteer work on employment application forms.

Currently, more than 35 states and a number of local governments accept volunteer experience on applications for state jobs. The Office of Personnel Management considers the volunteer experience of applicants for Federal Civil Service jobs. About 100 major companies in the private sector, including Levi Strauss, Kaiser Aluminium, Marriott, Coca Cola, United Airlines, Xerox, TRW, AT&T and Sears Roebuck recognize volunteer experience when they hire people. Organizations that support this concept include the Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, the Association of Junior Leagues, the Association of Volunteer Administration and the American Association of University Women.

This Concurrent Resolution will not cost the employers or the Government any money. It will not require businesses to hire anyone. But, for those who have served as volunteers and gained valuable experience, consideration of their work can be an important tool in landing a job.

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