

HB

355

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(7)
Date Referred to Committee: February 9, 2000

FURTHER REFERRALS:

Finance

Date of Committee Action: 4/11/00

The HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES Committee considered:

HB 355

HOUSE BILL NO. 355

STATE COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

"An Act establishing a state community service program; establishing by statute the Alaska State Community Service Commission; and providing for an effective date."

recommends it be replaced the same title
with the following committee substitute _____ a new title

additional referral to _____ Committee
 attached amendment(s)

ADOPTS: _____ Letter of Intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S): (Dept)

APPROVES PREVIOUS: (Dept/Date)

fiscal note(s) _____

fiscal note(s) _____

zero fiscal note(s) FED

zero fiscal note(s) _____

SIGNING WITH RECOMMENDATIONS	DP	DNP	NR	AM
<i>[Signature]</i>			✓	
<i>[Signature]</i>			✓	
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CHAIR'S SIGNATURE *[Signature]*

4/11/00

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2000 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB 355

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction) _____ Dept. Affected Education & Early Dev.
 Title _____ BRU Early Development
 An Act Establishing a State Community Service Program _____ Component Special Programs
 Sponsor Representative Allen Kempien
 Requester House HESS Committee _____ Component No. 2425

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
-----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type)						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2000) cost: _____

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

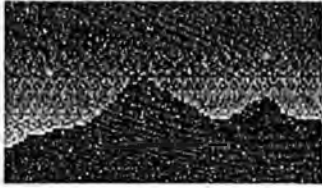
ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

HB 355 amends AS 44.27 and establishes in statute the Alaska State Community Service Commission. HB 355 also articulates volunteer/participant eligibility criteria, establishes eligibility criteria for receipt of educational and housing vouchers and delineates voucher form and use.

Prepared by: Yvonne M. Chase Phone (907) 269-4607
 Division Early Development Date/Time 4/5/00/12:00 AM
 Approved by Commissioner Richard S. Cross Date 4/5/00
 Agency Education & Early Development

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AD-00-164

March 17, 2000

Allen Kemplen , Representative
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Allen:

Thank you for the letter of February 16. I do regard community service programs as an important civic duty. Over the year's I've noticed there seems to be an attitude developing, that "civil service", or community service isn't a relevant field of work in our lives. True, specialization has to a large degree become the operation word in our nation, however in my mind that creates even a greater need for role strengthening, community models in our lives.

I fully support HB 355 and would like to extend my heart felt thanks to you and you're staff in putting forth this greatly needed Legislation.

I will again read HB 355 and should I have comments on any particular words or provision, rest be assured, I would be happy to forward same to you're attention.

Sincerely,

Wilson Justin

WJ/dh

Community service: New look at an old subject

By JANE EISNER

The subject is hot. Appealing. Sentimental. Politically correct.

It hearkens back to the good old days, when it seemed people took care of those in need more frequently than happens now.

It assuages the conscience of a nation facing a new millennium with poverty and inequality still on its doorstep.

It appeals to the better angels in us. Through public work, it can rekindle the sense of we're-in-this-together that's been misplaced by home videos, take-out pizza, stressed-out lives.

Yes, community service is the new buzzword, one that we'll be hearing more frequently as the Presidents' Summit in April draws closer. The Summit for America's Future, it is called.

How easy it would be at this juncture to cynically dismiss the lofty-sounding title and celebrity lineup, the schmaltz and the hype that will accompany people named Clinton, Bush, Reagan, Carter, Ford and Powell when they stride into town. (Never mind Cosby and Schwarzenegger.)

The media are good at such dismissals. So, for different reasons, are leaders from distressed communities, who've seen this before: outsiders peering over the walls society has erected into neighborhoods filled with crime, unemployment, drug-abuse and dysfunctional families, only to toss in bits of help without, of course, getting too messy.

If that's what the summit will be — a chance for publicity and pay-



ANNE RAUP / Daily News file photo

Dolores Waldron watches the progress at the Fairview Park during the United Way's Day of Caring in this 1995 file photo. Part of a citywide multibusiness community service project, Arco Alaska Inc. employees rehabilitated the structures at the park.

backs, for the haves to feel like they're helping the have-nots (without raising taxes) — then today's cynics will be tomorrow's prophets.

But would-be prophets can be wrong. The summit could be more useful than a photo op or a revival meeting, if it helps shift the focus of volunteering from "fixing" community to "building" community. This approach recognizes all communities for their assets, not just their deficiencies, and then seeks cre-

ative ways to build those assets from the street level up, not the corporate suite down.

It's a profoundly different, inside-out view. It means:

- Service starts at home, whether home is North Philadelphia or Nether Providence.

- Volunteering must be a mutual relationship, built on equality and respect, not guilt, sentiment or missionary zeal.

- Attention must be paid to the

"infrastructure" of voluntarism — the hard work of matching contribution and need. It ain't sexy, but it's necessary.

John P. Kretzmann, a former journalist now at the Neighborhood Innovations Network at Northwestern University, studied distressed communities and came to this conclusion: "For years, almost all our major institutions in society — the media, universities, foundations, United Ways — have been saying to distressed communities: If you want to be noticed, you must understand all the problems, needs and deficiencies in your neighborhood. Teenage moms, dropouts, etc. Quantify them, and we'll give you some money."

So the emphasis was always negative. The loudest advocate with the gloomiest statistics got the grant or a spot on the evening news. The underlying theme was: Help, governmental or otherwise, could only come from the outside. Even well-intentioned community service ended up supplanting local energies rather than enhancing them, and delivered a message — especially to the young — that a distressed neighborhood was incapable of solving its own problems.

If the nation has finally learned that throwing money at problems doesn't solve them, the next lesson is: Throwing volunteers at problems won't solve them, either.

What's needed instead is a new partnership, where volunteer and recipient come to the table with complementary gifts; where government is an engaged servant, neither absent dictator nor apathetic bystander; and where the emphasis

is not on fixing what's wrong but growing what's right.

So instead of peering over the wall to see crime, drugs and dysfunction and sending a check to a homeless shelter once a year, a concerned outsider may help a struggling civic association acquire space for a day-care center staffed by local residents and open for older children on school holidays.

This inside-out approach is not new, but it runs contrary to the deficiencies-based, prescriptive model that liberals and conservatives have used for years when crafting social policy to meet their own agendas.

There's good reason to believe this approach will inform the nitty-gritty workings of the April extravaganza. The 10-member delegations, from the public, private and nonprofit sectors, will discuss "best practices" and identify the tools needed to mobilize volunteers and address the needs in their own communities. If done well, it will be "inside-out" on a national scale.

This approach also will inform the nitty-gritty workings of the Inquirer editorial pages, as we study, debate and write about community service over the next few months. There'll be no attempt to paper over differences or difficulties. And, I hope, no preachiness.

Just an honest exploration of the challenges, drawbacks and potentials of a hot, appealing subject that may even help change America.

□ Jane Eisner is editorial page editor of the Philadelphia Inquirer.

Companies discover plus side to volunteerism

By MAGGIE JACKSON
The Associated Press

Once a week, David Luke tutors a teenager in his office at InStyle magazine. Joan Connelly and 20 or 30 co-workers from BankBoston spend a Saturday each month sorting food for the poor.

Committed to their communities both during and after work, Luke and Connelly are the faces of the new corporate attitude toward giving.

Instead of throwing dollars at charities picked by the boss, companies today are more often urging employees — including top executives — to roll up their sleeves and volunteer.

In an era when communities are in need, many employees are demoralized and corporate reputations count more than ever, it's an investment that many companies consider worthwhile.

That's a plus for the Presidents' Summit for America's Future, a three-day effort opening Sunday in Philadelphia, seeking to galvanize the nation to help young people.

As part of the event led by President Clinton and former President Bush, more than 200 companies are pledging to their communities mil-

lions of volunteer hours along with goods from playgrounds to health care.

"The corporations are critically important to the summit," said Bill Shore, leader of a task force evaluating the company pledges. "Corporations have the resources to foster and stimulate more volunteerism."

Increasingly, they are doing just that. Today 75 percent of companies have an employee working full-time on community relations, up from 9 percent in 1987, according to a survey by the Center for Corporate Community Relations at Boston College.

Nearly 80 percent of companies now have a volunteer program and one-third give time off for volunteer work, according to the Center.

In part, companies are stepping more deeply into the community arena because, as government programs are slashed, the needs are greater. And, as the summit illustrates, companies are being pressured to do more.

"The ticket to admission (to the summit) was a pledge about what the company would do, not what we had done," says Burke Stinson, a spokesman for AT&T, which is

pledging \$90 million in grants and services to improve schools' computer links, along with other donations.

And in its pledge to the summit, Timberland Inc. is offering each of its 5,000 employees a week of paid time off for community service.

The corporate appetite for good public relations is, if anything, increasing as consumers and investors pressure companies to be better corporate citizens.

But beyond image-making, companies are discovering direct economic benefits from volunteerism.

After a decade of downsizing, volunteerism boosts morale and helps companies attract employees, says Dan Salera, director of community service at BankBoston.

Such programs "give corporations a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining an employee base that will stay and be committed and feel good about where they're working," says Salera.

Giving an opportunity to volunteer during company time also is a valued benefit to time-starved employees.

"It's amazing that the company allows this to happen," Luke said. "They're paying us to be good citizens."



RICHARD DREW / The Associated Press

S. Jane Comins, senior manager of retail marketing for Little, Brown and Co., tutors Juan Rodriguez, 12, left, and Danny Acosta in her office in New York's Time-Life Building.



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Volunt/ar/eer/ism: What's the Difference?

By Susan J. Ellis

So many people ask me whether there is a distinction between "volunteerism" and "voluntarism" that I have written up my answer. Here it is:

"Voluntarism" (the older term) refers to everything voluntary. In the United States this includes, for example, religion. It certainly encompasses the entire "voluntary sector," but "voluntary" in the "voluntarism" context means not mandated by law (as government is). Many voluntary sector (nonprofit) agencies have a volunteer board because that is a legal requirement, but may not utilize volunteers in direct service in any way. There are subjects within "voluntarism" that have nothing to do with volunteers: things like UBIT legislation; proposal writing; compensation law.

"Volunteerism" was actually coined by Harriet Naylor and used for the first time in an organizational name by Ivan Scheier in the 1970's: The National Information Center for Volunteerism (NICOV). Don't let the fact that we know who invented the term deter you from taking it seriously. In the same time period someone, somewhere coined words like cyberspace, byte, nerd, and maybe 1000 others!

At any rate, "volunteerism" is a more focused term that speaks to anything relevant to volunteers and volunteering. Some people say it refers to the activity, while voluntarism speaks to the nonprofit setting. But the most important point, for me, is that "volunteerism" encompasses volunteering regardless of setting. Therefore, it allows government agencies at all levels to be included, and also covers corporate employee volunteering. Since government-related volunteering is so pervasive (think schools, libraries, parks, etc., etc.), this is not an insignificant point.

The American military confuses us even more. I once told an audience of generals at the US War College that they didn't MEAN a "Volunteer Army," they meant a "Voluntary Army," as in "non-draft." Just one more confusion in the fascinating

world of volunteerism.

When we use "volunteerism," we can communicate that we are speaking about issues relevant to our work: the actions necessary to plan for, recruit, encourage, and generally support volunteers in their important efforts. So it is an important distinction and I therefore recommend that you use "volunteerism" in your work.

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Giving and Volunteering

in the United States
Findings from a National Survey

Key Findings

Household Giving and Volunteering: 1987-1998

	1998	1995	1993	1991	1989	1987
Percentage of households contributing to charity	70.1%	68.5%	73.4%	72.2%	75.1%	71.1%
Average household contribution* (current dollars)	\$1,075	\$1,017	\$880	\$899	\$978	\$790
Average household contribution* (constant 1998 dollars)	\$1,075	\$1,088	\$993	\$1,076	\$1,286	\$1,134
Percentage of household income given*	2.1%	2.2%	2.1%	2.2%	2.5%	1.9%
Percentage of population volunteering	55.5%	48.8%	47.7%	51.1%	54.4%	45.3%
Total number of volunteers (millions)	109.4	93.0	89.2	94.2	98.4	80.0
Average weekly hours per volunteer	3.5	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.7
Total annual hours volunteered (billions)	19.9	20.3	19.5	20.5	20.5	19.6
Assigned hourly wage for volunteers**	\$14.30	\$12.84	\$12.13	\$11.58	\$10.82	\$10.06
Total assigned dollar value of volunteer time (billions)	\$225.9	\$201.5	\$182.3	\$176.4	\$169.6	\$149.0

* Based on contributing households only

**The hourly value of volunteer time is updated yearly by INDEPENDENT SECTOR, and is based on the average hourly wage for nonagricultural workers, as published in the *Economic Report of the President* (1999 Edition), increased by 12% to estimate fringe benefits.

Volunteering in America

- 56% of adults aged 18 or over volunteered a total of 19.9 billion hours. This is the highest ever recorded level of participation in volunteering during the INDEPENDENT SECTOR survey series a 13.7% increase in the rate of volunteering.
- An estimated 109 million people participated in volunteering in 1998.
- The volunteer workforce represented the equivalent of over 9 million full-time employees at a value of \$225 billion.
- A higher percentage of women (62%) than men (49%) volunteered. Men who volunteered gave slightly more time than women: 3.6 hours per week as opposed to 3.4 hours for women.
- 90% of individuals volunteered when asked. Forty-two percent (42%) of the volunteers found out about activities through personal contact while 35% through participation in an organization.
- 43% of seniors aged 75 and over reported volunteering an increase of eight percentage points since 1995 (35%).
- 46% of Hispanics volunteered - an increase of 6 percentage points since 1995 (40%).
- 47% of African-Americans volunteered - a 12 percentage point increase

INDEPENDENT SECTOR Homepage

Giving and Volunteering Homepage

Introduction

Key Findings

Volunteering

Household Giving

The Demographics of Household Contributors

Profile of Contributing Households and Volunteers

The Relationship Between Giving and Volunteering

The Relationship Between Religious Involvement and Charitable Behavior

Household Contributions by Type of Charity

Economic Conditions and Charitable Behavior

Childhood Events and Philanthropic Behavior

Factors That Influence People to Give and Volunteer

Importance of the Ask

Public Attitudes

Conclusion**Methodology and
How to Interpret
Survey Data**

since 1995 (35%).

- 41% of volunteers contributed time sporadically and considered it a one-time activity. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of volunteers preferred to volunteer at a scheduled time, either weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. Nine percent (9%) reported volunteering only at special times of the year such as during a religious holiday.
- Volunteers continued to make larger financial contributions, on average, than people who did not volunteer. Contributing households with a volunteer gave over two and a half times more on average than contributing households where the respondent did not volunteer.
- 1% of respondents learned about volunteering via the Internet.

Household Giving in America

- The average contributing household gave \$1,075 or 2.1 % of household income. In 1995 contributing households reported an average contribution of \$1,017 or 2.2% of household income. From 1995 to 1998, after inflation, the average household contribution decreased by 1.2%.*
- Over 70% of households reported contributions for 1998 - up slightly from less than 69% in 1995.
- 81% of households gave a donation when asked.
- 84% of all charitable contributions were given by households that also volunteered.
- 77% of respondents were motivated by personal requests for contributions.
- The level of giving and volunteering is affected by a person's concern about the future. In 1998 anxiety about having enough money in the future declined. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of respondents were worried about not having enough money in the future - a 7 percentage point drop from 1996. In 1998 respondents who did not worry about having money in the future contributed a higher than average percentage of household income (2.8%).
- The level of household income had an effect on whether a household made a contribution. As the level of income increased, more households reported making a contribution.
- When measured as a percentage of total household income, households at either end of the income scale were the most generous. Households earning under \$10,000 a year gave 2.5% of total household income and households with incomes over \$100,000 gave 1.9%. However, many of those with incomes under \$10,000 were retired with little regular income and gave from their accumulated wealth.
- The average annual contribution for all households (both contributors and noncontributors) in 1998 was \$754, an increase of 1.3% in real dollar terms since 1995 (\$744). The real dollar increase continues an upward trend that started in 1993.
- The average household contribution of \$754 constituted approximately 1.7% of total household income - the same proportion as in 1995.
- The number of households that contributed 3% or more of their household income has risen since 1993 - from 19% to 22% of contributions - and a greater percentage of people reported that their household gave more in 1998 than in 1995.

- African-American contributing households reported donating an average of \$658 - less than in 1995 (\$668). Fifty-two percent (52%) gave in 1998, approximately 2% less than in 1995.
- Almost 63% of Hispanic households reported an average contribution of \$504, or 1.1% of total household income. While the number of Hispanic respondents reporting household contributions increased by 6 percentage points, the average household contribution and percentage of total household income given decreased since 1995 from \$547 and 1.4%, respectively.
- Contributing households used an average of 3 or 4 different methods to make contributions. Almost 84% made in-kind contributions of food or clothing . Approximately 80% of households purchased goods and services from charitable organizations and reported giving cash or a check direct. Only 1.2% of contributors reported giving over the Internet.
- * At present both INDEPENDENT SECTOR and AAFRC's Giving USA 1999 estimate \$135 billion in total individual giving for 1998.

Public Attitudes

- 68% of the respondents expressed a high level of confidence in human service organizations homeless shelters, soup kitchens and employment programs, etc.
- 62% believed that most charitable organizations were honest and ethical in their use of funds.
- 76% agreed that nonprofit organizations generally played a major role in their communities.

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"Bowling
Alone"
Journal of Democracy

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Journal of Democracy 6:1, Jan 1995, 65-78



As featured on *National Public Radio*, *The New York Times*, and in other major media, we offer this sold-out, much-discussed *Journal of Democracy* article by Robert Putnam, "Bowling Alone." The *Journal of Democracy* is at present scheduled to go online in full text in the third year of Project Muse (1997). You can also find information at *DemocracyNet* about the *Journal of Democracy* and its sponsor, the *National Endowment for Democracy*.

Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital

Robert D. Putnam

An Interview with Robert Putnam

Many students of the new democracies that have emerged over the past decade and a half have emphasized the importance of a strong and active civil society to the consolidation of democracy. Especially with regard to the postcommunist countries, scholars and democratic activists alike have lamented the absence or obliteration of traditions of independent civic engagement and a widespread tendency toward passive reliance on the state. To those concerned with the weakness of civil societies in the developing or postcommunist world, the advanced Western democracies and above all the United States have typically been taken as models to be emulated. There is striking evidence, however, that the vibrancy of American civil society has notably declined over the past several decades.

Ever since the publication of Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, the United States has played a central role in systematic studies of the links between democracy and civil society. Although this is in part because trends in American life are often regarded as harbingers of social modernization, it is also because America has traditionally been considered unusually "civic" (a reputation that, as we shall later see, has not been entirely unjustified).

When Tocqueville visited the United States in the 1830s, it was the Americans' propensity for civic association that most impressed him as the key to their unprecedented ability to make democracy work. "Americans of all ages, all stations in life, and all types of disposition," [End Page 65] he observed, "are forever forming associations. There are not only commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but others of a thousand different types--religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large and very minute. . . . Nothing, in my view, deserves more attention than the intellectual and moral associations in America." ↓

Recently, American social scientists of a neo-Tocquevillean bent have unearthed a wide range of empirical evidence that the quality of public life and the performance of social institutions (and not only in America) are indeed powerfully influenced by norms and networks of civic engagement. Researchers in such fields as education, urban poverty, unemployment, the control of crime and drug abuse, and even health have discovered that successful outcomes are more likely in civically engaged communities. Similarly, research on the varying economic attainments of different ethnic groups in the United States has demonstrated the importance of social bonds within each group. These results are consistent with research in a wide range of settings that demonstrates the vital importance of social networks for job placement and many other economic outcomes.

Meanwhile, a seemingly unrelated body of research on the sociology of economic development has also focused attention on the role of social networks. Some of this work is situated in the developing countries, and some of it elucidates the peculiarly successful "network capitalism" of East Asia.² Even in less exotic Western economies, however, researchers have discovered highly efficient, highly flexible "industrial districts" based on networks of collaboration among workers and small entrepreneurs. Far from being paleoindustrial anachronisms, these dense interpersonal and interorganizational networks undergird ultramodern industries, from the high tech of Silicon Valley to the high fashion of Benetton.

The norms and networks of civic engagement also powerfully affect the performance of representative government. That, at least, was the central conclusion of my own 20-year, quasi-experimental study of subnational governments in different regions of Italy.³ Although all these regional governments seemed identical on paper, their levels of effectiveness varied dramatically. Systematic inquiry showed that the quality of governance was determined by longstanding traditions of civic engagement (or its absence). Voter turnout, newspaper readership, membership in choral societies and football clubs--these were the hallmarks of a successful region. In fact, historical analysis suggested that these networks of organized reciprocity and civic solidarity, far from being an epiphenomenon of socioeconomic modernization, were a precondition for it.

No doubt the mechanisms through which civic engagement and social connectedness produce such results--better schools, faster economic [End Page 66] development, lower crime, and more effective government--are multiple and complex. While these briefly recounted findings require further confirmation and perhaps qualification, the parallels across hundreds of empirical studies in a dozen disparate disciplines and subfields are striking. Social scientists in several fields have recently suggested a common framework for understanding these phenomena, a framework that rests on the concept of *social capital*.⁴ By analogy with notions of physical capital and human capital--tools and training that enhance individual productivity--"social capital" refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.

For a variety of reasons, life is easier in a community blessed with a substantial stock of social capital. In the first place, networks of civic engagement foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust. Such networks facilitate coordination and communication, amplify reputations, and thus allow dilemmas of collective action to be resolved. When economic and political negotiation is embedded in dense networks of social interaction, incentives for opportunism are reduced. At the same time, networks of civic engagement embody past success at collaboration, which can serve as a cultural template for future collaboration. Finally, dense networks of interaction probably broaden the participants' sense of self, developing the "I" into the "we," or (in the language of rational-choice theorists) enhancing the participants' "taste" for collective benefits.

I do not intend here to survey (much less contribute to) the development of the theory of social capital.

Instead, I use the central premise of that rapidly growing body of work--that social connections and civic engagement pervasively influence our public life, as well as our private prospects--as the starting point for an empirical survey of trends in social capital in contemporary America. I concentrate here entirely on the American case, although the developments I portray may in some measure characterize many contemporary societies.

Whatever Happened to Civic Engagement?

We begin with familiar evidence on changing patterns of political participation, not least because it is immediately relevant to issues of democracy in the narrow sense. Consider the well-known decline in turnout in national elections over the last three decades. From a relative high point in the early 1960s, voter turnout had by 1990 declined by nearly a quarter; tens of millions of Americans had forsaken their parents' habitual readiness to engage in the simplest act of citizenship. Broadly similar trends also characterize participation in state and local elections.

It is not just the voting booth that has been increasingly deserted by [End Page 67] Americans. A series of identical questions posed by the Roper Organization to national samples ten times each year over the last two decades reveals that since 1973 the number of Americans who report that "in the past year" they have "attended a public meeting on town or school affairs" has fallen by more than a third (from 22 percent in 1973 to 13 percent in 1993). Similar (or even greater) relative declines are evident in responses to questions about attending a political rally or speech, serving on a committee of some local organization, and working for a political party. By almost every measure, Americans' direct engagement in politics and government has fallen steadily and sharply over the last generation, despite the fact that average levels of education--the best individual-level predictor of political participation--have risen sharply throughout this period. Every year over the last decade or two, millions more have withdrawn from the affairs of their communities.

Not coincidentally, Americans have also disengaged psychologically from politics and government over this era. The proportion of Americans who reply that they "trust the government in Washington" only "some of the time" or "almost never" has risen steadily from 30 percent in 1966 to 75 percent in 1992.

These trends are well known, of course, and taken by themselves would seem amenable to a strictly political explanation. Perhaps the long litany of political tragedies and scandals since the 1960s (assassinations, Vietnam, Watergate, Irangate, and so on) has triggered an understandable disgust for politics and government among Americans, and that in turn has motivated their withdrawal. I do not doubt that this common interpretation has some merit, but its limitations become plain when we examine trends in civic engagement of a wider sort.

Our survey of organizational membership among Americans can usefully begin with a glance at the aggregate results of the General Social Survey, a scientifically conducted, national-sample survey that has been repeated 14 times over the last two decades. Church-related groups constitute the most common type of organization joined by Americans; they are especially popular with women. Other types of organizations frequently joined by women include school-service groups (mostly parent-teacher associations), sports groups, professional societies, and literary societies. Among men, sports clubs, labor unions, professional societies, fraternal groups, veterans' groups, and service clubs are all relatively popular.

Religious affiliation is by far the most common associational [End Page 68] membership among Americans. Indeed, by many measures America continues to be (even more than in Tocqueville's time) an astonishingly "churched" society. For example, the United States has more houses of worship per capita than any other nation on Earth. Yet religious sentiment in America seems to be becoming somewhat less

ted to institutions and more self-defined.

How have these complex crosscurrents played out over the last three or four decades in terms of Americans' engagement with organized religion? The general pattern is clear: The 1960s witnessed a significant drop in reported weekly churchgoing--from roughly 48 percent in the late 1950s to roughly 41 percent in the early 1970s. Since then, it has stagnated or (according to some surveys) declined still further. Meanwhile, data from the General Social Survey show a modest decline in membership in all "church-related groups" over the last 20 years. It would seem, then, that net participation by Americans, both in religious services and in church-related groups, has declined modestly (by perhaps a sixth) since the 1960s.

For many years, labor unions provided one of the most common organizational affiliations among American workers. Yet union membership has been falling for nearly four decades, with the steepest decline occurring between 1975 and 1985. Since the mid-1950s, when union membership peaked, the unionized portion of the nonagricultural work force in America has dropped by more than half, falling from 32.5 percent in 1953 to 15.8 percent in 1992. By now, virtually all of the explosive growth in union membership that was associated with the New Deal has been erased. The solidarity of union halls is now mostly a fading memory of aging men. ⁵

The parent-teacher association (PTA) has been an especially important form of civic engagement in twentieth-century America because parental involvement in the educational process represents a particularly productive form of social capital. It is, therefore, dismaying to discover that participation in parent-teacher organizations has dropped drastically over the last generation, from more than 12 million in 1964 to barely 5 million in 1982 before recovering to approximately 7 million now.

Next, we turn to evidence on membership in (and volunteering for) civic and fraternal organizations. These data show some striking patterns. First, membership in traditional women's groups has declined more or less steadily since the mid-1960s. For example, membership in the national Federation of Women's Clubs is down by more than half (59 percent) since 1964, while membership in the League of Women Voters (LWV) is off 42 percent since 1969. ⁶

Similar reductions are apparent in the numbers of volunteers for mainline civic organizations, such as the Boy Scouts (off by 26 percent since 1970) and the Red Cross (off by 61 percent since 1970). But what about the possibility that volunteers have simply switched their loyalties [End Page 69] to other organizations? Evidence on "regular" (as opposed to occasional or "drop-by") volunteering is available from the Labor Department's Current Population Surveys of 1974 and 1989. These estimates suggest that serious volunteering declined by roughly one-sixth over these 15 years, from 24 percent of adults in 1974 to 20 percent in 1989. The multitudes of Red Cross aides and Boy Scout troop leaders now missing in action have apparently not been offset by equal numbers of new recruits elsewhere.

Fraternal organizations have also witnessed a substantial drop in membership during the 1980s and 1990s. Membership is down significantly in such groups as the Lions (off 12 percent since 1983), the Elks (off 18 percent since 1979), the Shriners (off 27 percent since 1979), the Jaycees (off 44 percent since 1979), and the Masons (down 39 percent since 1959). In sum, after expanding steadily throughout most of this century, many major civic organizations have experienced a sudden, substantial, and nearly simultaneous decline in membership over the last decade or two.

The most whimsical yet discomfiting bit of evidence of social disengagement in contemporary America that I have discovered is this: more Americans are bowling today than ever before, but bowling in organized leagues has plummeted in the last decade or so. Between 1980 and 1993 the total number of

bowlers in America increased by 10 percent, while league bowling decreased by 40 percent. (Lest this be thought a wholly trivial example, I should note that nearly 80 million Americans went bowling at least once during 1993, *nearly a third more than voted in the 1994 congressional elections* and roughly the same number as claim to attend church regularly. Even after the 1980s' plunge in league bowling, nearly 3 percent of American adults regularly bowl in leagues.) The rise of solo bowling threatens the livelihood of bowling-lane proprietors because those who bowl as members of leagues consume three times as much beer and pizza as solo bowlers, and the money in bowling is in the beer and pizza, not the balls and shoes. The broader social significance, however, lies in the social interaction and even occasionally civic conversations over beer and pizza that solo bowlers forgo. Whether or not bowling beats balloting in the eyes of most Americans, bowling teams illustrate yet another vanishing form of social capital.

Countertrends

At this point, however, we must confront a serious counterargument. Perhaps the traditional forms of civic organization whose decay we have been tracing have been replaced by vibrant new organizations. For example, national environmental organizations (like the Sierra Club) and feminist groups (like the National Organization for Women) grew rapidly [End Page 70] during the 1970s and 1980s and now count hundreds of thousands of dues-paying members. An even more dramatic example is the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), which grew exponentially from 400,000 card-carrying members in 1960 to 33 million in 1993, becoming (after the Catholic Church) the largest private organization in the world. The national administrators of these organizations are among the most feared lobbyists in Washington, in large part because of their massive mailing lists of presumably loyal members.

These new mass-membership organizations are plainly of great political importance. From the point of view of social connectedness, however, they are sufficiently different from classic "secondary associations" that we need to invent a new label--perhaps "tertiary associations." For the vast majority of their members, the only act of membership consists in writing a check for dues or perhaps occasionally reading a newsletter. Few ever attend any meetings of such organizations, and most are unlikely ever (knowingly) to encounter any other member. The bond between any two members of the Sierra Club is less like the bond between any two members of a gardening club and more like the bond between any two Red Sox fans (or perhaps any two devoted Honda owners): they root for the same team and they share some of the same interests, but they are unaware of each other's existence. Their ties, in short, are to common symbols, common leaders, and perhaps common ideals, but not to one another. The theory of social capital argues that associational membership should, for example, increase social trust, but this prediction is much less straightforward with regard to membership in tertiary associations. From the point of view of social connectedness, the Environmental Defense Fund and a bowling league are just not in the same category.

If the growth of tertiary organizations represents one potential (but probably not real) counterexample to my thesis, a second countertrend is represented by the growing prominence of nonprofit organizations, especially nonprofit service agencies. This so-called third sector includes everything from Oxfam and the Metropolitan Museum of Art to the Ford Foundation and the Mayo Clinic. In other words, although most secondary associations are nonprofits, most nonprofit agencies are not secondary associations. To identify trends in the size of the nonprofit sector with trends in social connectedness would be another fundamental conceptual mistake.⁷

A third potential countertrend is much more relevant to an assessment of social capital and civic engagement. Some able researchers have argued that the last few decades have witnessed a rapid expansion in "support groups" of various sorts. Robert Wuthnow reports that fully 40 percent of all Americans claim to be "currently involved in [a] small group that meets regularly and provides support or caring for those who participate in it."⁸ Many of these groups are religiously affiliated, but [End Page 71]

many others are not. For example, nearly 5 percent of Wuthnow's national sample claim to participate regularly in a "self-help" group, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, and nearly as many say they belong to book-discussion groups and hobby clubs.

The groups described by Wuthnow's respondents unquestionably represent an important form of social capital, and they need to be accounted for in any serious reckoning of trends in social connectedness. On the other hand, they do not typically play the same role as traditional civic associations. As Wuthnow emphasizes,

Small groups may not be fostering community as effectively as many of their proponents would like. Some small groups merely provide occasions for individuals to focus on themselves in the presence of others. The social contract binding members together asserts only the weakest of obligations. Come if you have time. Talk if you feel like it. Respect everyone's opinion. Never criticize. Leave quietly if you become dissatisfied. . . . We can imagine that [these small groups] really substitute for families, neighborhoods, and broader community attachments that may demand lifelong commitments, when, in fact, they do not.²

All three of these potential countertrends--tertiary organizations, nonprofit organizations, and support groups--need somehow to be weighed against the erosion of conventional civic organizations. One way of doing so is to consult the General Social Survey.

Within all educational categories, total associational membership declined significantly between 1967 and 1993. Among the college-educated, the average number of group memberships per person fell from 2.8 to 2.0 (a 26-percent decline); among high-school graduates, the number fell from 1.8 to 1.2 (32 percent); and among those with fewer than 12 years of education, the number fell from 1.4 to 1.1 (25 percent). In other words, at *all* educational (and hence social) levels of American society, and counting *all* sorts of group memberships, *the average number of associational memberships has fallen by about a fourth over the last quarter-century.* Without controls for educational levels, the trend is not nearly so clear, but the central point is this: *more Americans than ever before are in social circumstances that foster associational involvement (higher education, middle age, and so on), but nevertheless aggregate associational membership appears to be stagnant or declining.*

Broken down by type of group, the downward trend is most marked for church-related groups, for labor unions, for fraternal and veterans' organizations, and for school-service groups. Conversely, membership in professional associations has risen over these years, although less than might have been predicted, given sharply rising educational and occupational levels. Essentially the same trends are evident for both men and women in the sample. In short, the available survey evidence [End Page 72] confirms our earlier conclusion: American social capital in the form of civic associations has significantly eroded over the last generation.

Good Neighborliness and Social Trust

I noted earlier that most readily available quantitative evidence on trends in social connectedness involves formal settings, such as the voting booth, the union hall, or the PTA. One glaring exception is so widely discussed as to require little comment here: the most fundamental form of social capital is the family, and the massive evidence of the loosening of bonds within the family (both extended and nuclear) is well known. This trend, of course, is quite consistent with--and may help to explain--our theme of social decapitalization.

A second aspect of informal social capital on which we happen to have reasonably reliable time-series data

involves neighborliness. In each General Social Survey since 1974 respondents have been asked, "How often do you spend a social evening with a neighbor?" The proportion of Americans who socialize with their neighbors more than once a year has slowly but steadily declined over the last two decades, from 72 percent in 1974 to 61 percent in 1993. (On the other hand, socializing with "friends who do not live in your neighborhood" appears to be on the increase, a trend that may reflect the growth of workplace-based social connections.)

Americans are also less trusting. The proportion of Americans saying that most people can be trusted fell by more than a third between 1960, when 58 percent chose that alternative, and 1993, when only 37 percent did. The same trend is apparent in all educational groups; indeed, because social trust is also correlated with education and because educational levels have risen sharply, the overall decrease in social trust is even more apparent if we control for education.

Our discussion of trends in social connectedness and civic engagement has tacitly assumed that all the forms of social capital that we have discussed are themselves coherently correlated across individuals. This is in fact true. Members of associations are much more likely than nonmembers to participate in politics, to spend time with neighbors, to express social trust, and so on.

The close correlation between social trust and associational membership is true not only across time and across individuals, but also across countries. Evidence from the 1991 World Values Survey demonstrates the following: ¹⁰

1. Across the 35 countries in this survey, social trust and civic engagement are strongly correlated; the greater the density of associational membership in a society, the more trusting its citizens. Trust and engagement are two facets of the same underlying factor--social capital. [End Page 73]
2. America still ranks relatively high by cross-national standards on both these dimensions of social capital. Even in the 1990s, after several decades' erosion, Americans are more trusting and more engaged than people in most other countries of the world.
3. The trends of the past quarter-century, however, have apparently moved the United States significantly lower in the international rankings of social capital. The recent deterioration in American social capital has been sufficiently great that (if no other country changed its position in the meantime) another quarter-century of change at the same rate would bring the United States, roughly speaking, to the midpoint among all these countries, roughly equivalent to South Korea, Belgium, or Estonia today. Two generations' decline at the same rate would leave the United States at the level of today's Chile, Portugal, and Slovenia.

Why Is U.S. Social Capital Eroding?

As we have seen, something has happened in America in the last two or three decades to diminish civic engagement and social connectedness. What could that "something" be? Here are several possible explanations, along with some initial evidence on each.

The movement of women into the labor force. Over these same two or three decades, many millions of American women have moved out of the home into paid employment. This is the primary, though not the sole, reason why the weekly working hours of the average American have increased significantly during these years. It seems highly plausible that this social revolution should have reduced the time and energy available for building social capital. For certain organizations, such as the PTA, the League of Women Voters, the Federation of Women's Clubs, and the Red Cross, this is almost certainly an important part of the story. The sharpest decline in women's civic participation seems to have come in the 1970s; membership in such "women's" organizations as these has been virtually halved since the late 1960s. By

contrast, most of the decline in participation in men's organizations occurred about ten years later; the total decline to date has been approximately 25 percent for the typical organization. On the other hand, the survey data imply that the aggregate declines for men are virtually as great as those for women. It is logically possible, of course, that the male declines might represent the knock-on effect of women's liberation, as dishwashing crowded out the lodge, but time-budget studies suggest that most husbands of working wives have assumed only a minor part of the housework. In short, something besides the women's revolution seems to lie behind the erosion of social capital.

Mobility: The "re-potting" hypothesis. Numerous studies of organizational involvement have shown that residential stability and such related phenomena as homeownership are clearly associated with greater [End Page 74] civic engagement. Mobility, like frequent re-potting of plants, tends to disrupt root systems, and it takes time for an uprooted individual to put down new roots. It seems plausible that the automobile, suburbanization, and the movement to the Sun Belt have reduced the social rootedness of the average American, but one fundamental difficulty with this hypothesis is apparent: the best evidence shows that residential stability and homeownership in America have risen modestly since 1965, and are surely higher now than during the 1950s, when civic engagement and social connectedness by our measures was definitely higher.

Other demographic transformations. A range of additional changes have transformed the American family since the 1960s--fewer marriages, more divorces, fewer children, lower real wages, and so on. Each of these changes might account for some of the slackening of civic engagement, since married, middle-class parents are generally more socially involved than other people. Moreover, the changes in scale that have swept over the American economy in these years--illustrated by the replacement of the corner grocery by the supermarket and now perhaps of the supermarket by electronic shopping at home, or the replacement of community-based enterprises by outposts of distant multinational firms--may perhaps have undermined the material and even physical basis for civic engagement.

The technological transformation of leisure. There is reason to believe that deep-seated technological trends are radically "privatizing" or "individualizing" our use of leisure time and thus disrupting many opportunities for social-capital formation. The most obvious and probably the most powerful instrument of this revolution is television. Time-budget studies in the 1960s showed that the growth in time spent watching television dwarfed all other changes in the way Americans passed their days and nights. Television has made our communities (or, rather, what we experience as our communities) wider and shallower. In the language of economics, electronic technology enables individual tastes to be satisfied more fully, but at the cost of the positive social externalities associated with more primitive forms of entertainment. The same logic applies to the replacement of vaudeville by the movies and now of movies by the VCR. The new "virtual reality" helmets that we will soon don to be entertained in total isolation are merely the latest extension of this trend. Is technology thus driving a wedge between our individual interests and our collective interests? It is a question that seems worth exploring more systematically.

What Is to Be Done?

The last refuge of a social-scientific scoundrel is to call for more research. Nevertheless, I cannot forbear from suggesting some further lines of inquiry. [End Page 75]

- We must sort out the dimensions of social capital, which clearly is not a unidimensional concept, despite language (even in this essay) that implies the contrary. What types of organizations and networks most effectively embody--or generate--social capital, in the sense of mutual reciprocity, the resolution of dilemmas of collective action, and the broadening of social identities? In this essay I have emphasized the density of associational life. In earlier work I stressed the structure of networks,

arguing that "horizontal" ties represented more productive social capital than vertical ties.¹¹

- Another set of important issues involves macrosociological crosscurrents that might intersect with the trends described here. What will be the impact, for example, of electronic networks on social capital? My hunch is that meeting in an electronic forum is not the equivalent of meeting in a bowling alley--or even in a saloon--but hard empirical research is needed. What about the development of social capital in the workplace? Is it growing in counterpoint to the decline of civic engagement, reflecting some social analogue of the first law of thermodynamics--social capital is neither created nor destroyed, merely redistributed? Or do the trends described in this essay represent a deadweight loss?
- A rounded assessment of changes in American social capital over the last quarter-century needs to count the costs as well as the benefits of community engagement. We must not romanticize small-town, middle-class civic life in the America of the 1950s. In addition to the deleterious trends emphasized in this essay, recent decades have witnessed a substantial decline in intolerance and probably also in overt discrimination, and those beneficent trends may be related in complex ways to the erosion of traditional social capital. Moreover, a balanced accounting of the social-capital books would need to reconcile the insights of this approach with the undoubted insights offered by Mancur Olson and others who stress that closely knit social, economic, and political organizations are prone to inefficient cartelization and to what political economists term "rent seeking" and ordinary men and women call corruption.¹²
- Finally, and perhaps most urgently, we need to explore creatively how public policy impinges on (or might impinge on) social-capital formation. In some well-known instances, public policy has destroyed highly effective social networks and norms. American slum-clearance policy of the 1950s and 1960s, for example, renovated physical capital, [End Page 76] but at a very high cost to existing social capital. The consolidation of country post offices and small school districts has promised administrative and financial efficiencies, but full-cost accounting for the effects of these policies on social capital might produce a more negative verdict. On the other hand, such past initiatives as the county agricultural-agent system, community colleges, and tax deductions for charitable contributions illustrate that government can encourage social-capital formation. Even a recent proposal in San Luis Obispo, California, to require that all new houses have front porches illustrates the power of government to influence where and how networks are formed.

The concept of "civil society" has played a central role in the recent global debate about the preconditions for democracy and democratization. In the newer democracies this phrase has properly focused attention on the need to foster a vibrant civic life in soils traditionally inhospitable to self-government. In the established democracies, ironically, growing numbers of citizens are questioning the effectiveness of their public institutions at the very moment when liberal democracy has swept the battlefield, both ideologically and geopolitically. In America, at least, there is reason to suspect that this democratic disarray may be linked to a broad and continuing erosion of civic engagement that began a quarter-century ago. High on our scholarly agenda should be the question of whether a comparable erosion of social capital may be under way in other advanced democracies, perhaps in different institutional and behavioral guises. High on America's agenda should be the question of how to reverse these adverse trends in social connectedness, thus restoring civic engagement and civic trust.

Robert D. Putnam is Dillon Professor of International Affairs and director of the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. His most recent books are *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics* (1993) and *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (1993), which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. He is now completing a study of the revitalization of

American democracy.

Commentary and writings on related topics:

- Nicholas Lemann, *Kicking in Groups*, *The Atlantic Monthly* (April 1996).
- Mary Ann Zehr, *Getting Involved in Civic Life*, *Foundation News and Commentary* (May/June 1996). *The Foundation News and Commentary is a publication of The Council on Foundations.*

Notes

1. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J.P. Maier, trans. George Lawrence (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1969), 513-17.
2. On social networks and economic growth in the developing world, see Milton J. Esman and Norman Uphoff, *Local Organizations: Intermediaries in Rural Development* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), esp. 15-42 and 99-180; and Albert O. Hirschman, *Getting Ahead Collectively: Grassroots Experiences in Latin America* (Elmsford, N.Y.: Pergamon Press, 1984), esp. 42-77. On East Asia, see Gustav Papanek, "The New Asian Capitalism: An Economic Portrait," in Peter L. Berger and Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao, eds., *In Search of an East Asian Development Model* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1987), 27-80; Peter B. Evans, "The State as Problem and Solution: Predation, Embedded Autonomy and Structural Change," in Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, eds., *The Politics of Economic Adjustment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 139-81; and Gary G. Hamilton, William Zeile, and Wan-Jin Kim, "Network Structure of East Asian Economies," in Stewart R. Clegg and S. Gordon Redding, eds., *Capitalism in Contrasting Cultures* (Hawthorne, N.Y.: De Gruyter, 1990), 105-29. See also Gary G. Hamilton and Nicole Woolsey Biggart, "Market, Culture, and Authority: A Comparative Analysis of Management and Organization in the Far East," *American Journal of Sociology* (Supplement) 94 (1988): S52-S94; and Susan Greenhalgh, "Families and Networks in Taiwan's Economic Development," in Edwin Winckler and Susan Greenhalgh, eds., *Contending Approaches to the Political Economy of Taiwan* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1987), 224-45.
3. Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).
4. James S. Coleman deserves primary credit for developing the "social capital" theoretical framework. See his "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," *American Journal of Sociology* (Supplement) 94 (1988): S95-S120, as well as his *The Foundations of Social Theory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 300-21. See also Mark Granovetter, "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness," *American Journal of Sociology* 91 (1985): 481-510; Glenn C. Loury, "Why Should We Care About Group Inequality?" *Social Philosophy and Policy* 5 (1987): 249-71; and Robert D. Putnam, "The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life," *American Prospect* 13 (1993): 35-42. To my knowledge, the first scholar to use the term "social capital" in its current sense was Jane Jacobs, in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961), 138.
5. Any simplistically political interpretation of the collapse of American unionism would need to confront the fact that the steepest decline began more than six years before the Reagan administration's attack on PATCO. Data from the General Social Survey show a roughly 40-percent decline in reported union membership between 1975 and 1991.
6. Data for the LWV are available over a longer time span and show an interesting pattern: a sharp slump

during the Depression, a strong and sustained rise after World War II that more than tripled membership between 1945 and 1969, and then the post-1969 decline, which has already erased virtually all the postwar gains and continues still. This same historical pattern applies to those men's fraternal organizations for which comparable data are available--steady increases for the first seven decades of the century, interrupted only by the Great Depression, followed by a collapse in the 1970s and 1980s that has already wiped out most of the postwar expansion and continues apace.

7. Cf. Lester M. Salamon, "The Rise of the Nonprofit Sector," *Foreign Affairs* 73 (July-August 1994): 109-22. See also Salamon, "Partners in Public Service: The Scope and Theory of Government-Nonprofit Relations," in Walter W. Powell, ed., *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 99-117. Salamon's empirical evidence does not sustain his broad claims about a global "associational revolution" comparable in significance to the rise of the nation-state several centuries ago.

8. Robert Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey: Support Groups and America's New Quest for Community* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 45.

9. *Ibid.*, 3-6.

10. I am grateful to Ronald Inglehart, who directs this unique cross-national project, for sharing these highly useful data with me. See his "The Impact of Culture on Economic Development: Theory, Hypotheses, and Some Empirical Tests" (unpublished manuscript, University of Michigan, 1994).

11. See my *Making Democracy Work*, esp. ch. 6.

12. See Mancur Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations: Economic Growth, Stagflation, and Social Rigidities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 2.



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The Dollar Value of Volunteer Time

By Susan J. Ellis

From *Focus on Volunteering KopyKit, 2nd Ed.*

Website for dollar value in the UK -

<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/euroviva.htm>

We live in a culture that assigns "value" to things predominantly in monetary terms. A rain forest appears on the accounting ledgers only when it has been chopped down into "lumber." Caring for children or older parents becomes part of the economy only when a stranger is paid a salary to do what a family member might have done before without cash payment. In short, until there is a way to assign a dollar value to an activity or product, it is invisible to the society's decision makers.

The volunteer community has long debated the practice of assigning a dollar value to volunteer time. Apart from any consideration of the difficulties of collecting data or of finding appropriate dollar amounts, the arguments against measuring volunteer contributions against a monetary standard boil down to: it doesn't feel right. There is a sense that the value of volunteering is intrinsic and that any attempts to measure it--particularly with as crass a tool as money--will, in fact, de-value the activity. Many resent the hold that the dollar has on our thinking and would prefer to live in a world in which human activities would be assessed and esteemed on the basis of their contributions to others. But we don't live in such a world yet. Only things we value in dollars and cents get the attention of decision-makers.

Generally, volunteers have simply not been mentioned on nonprofit agency financial reports. To report that it cost \$7,200 to winterize ten homebound elderly peoples' homes without mentioning the \$4,000 worth of volunteer services or the \$2,000 worth of donated supplies risks the reader forming some false conclusions about the actual value of the service. From a management perspective, never having to "account" for the utilization of volunteers can result in wasting volunteer effort or in discounting its cost to the volunteer and its value to the organization.

Too many nonprofits have not kept accurate records of volunteer time and have made only a minimal attempt to assign a dollar value of such time. During the 1990s, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB), the accounting profession's rule-making group, issued several new rules that pertain to nonprofits. One of the most important new rules, FASB Statement No. 116, requires nonprofits to report certain contributions received from donors, including volunteer services. These rules mean that, for the first time, your agency may need to include the value of certain volunteer services in its external financial statements.

In order to generate the most useful data, take the time to estimate the dollar value of volunteers as fairly as possible. Do not fall into the common trap of using the minimum wage or the national median wage as a basis for your computation. The vast majority of volunteer assignments are worth a great deal more than minimum wage and probably more than the median, too.

Another trap is to confuse the dollar value of the service provided by volunteers with the earning power of the people who are doing the volunteering. If someone is a doctor and volunteers to do glaucoma tests for your organization, then you are justified to estimate the dollar value of that donated service at the hourly rate normally charged by that volunteer. But if that same doctor volunteers to paint your rec hall, drive clients to a picnic, or play chess with residents, the dollar value of that volunteer work has nothing to do with his or her regular earning power. You must assess the value of each volunteer assignment based on what it would cost you to purchase that type of work in the marketplace.

The best system for determining the true dollar value of volunteer services was developed G. Neil Karn while he served as director of the Virginia Department of Volunteerism. For a more complete discussion of the Karn method and the subject of dollar value, see [From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Volunteer Program Success](#) by Susan J. Ellis (Energize, 1996). His key points are:

1. It is possible to find an equivalent salaried job category for every volunteer assignment, even if it means a little creativity and searching. Each volunteer assignment should be given its own dollar equivalency, without trying to find an average rate for all volunteers.
2. The cost of paying an employee includes fringe

benefits that raise the total value of the "annual employee compensation package" considerably.

3. We routinely pay salaried staff for hours they do not work, while we credit volunteers only for hours they actually put in.

4. Volunteers should be "credited" with the dollar equivalent of the hourly amount an employee would earn for actual hours worked.

Whatever method you use to calculate the dollar value of the work volunteers have contributed to your agency, never use the phrase "volunteers save us money."

This statement implies that you had resources you did not need to spend because volunteers are free. A better and more accurate way to make the same point would be that volunteers allow you to spend every cent available and then do more. Or, volunteers extend the budget beyond anything you could otherwise afford.

Independent Sector provides an average dollar value for volunteers at

<http://www.independentsector.org/programs/know.html>

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ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE ALLEN KEMPLEN

SPONSOR STATEMENT

HB 355

"An Act establishing a state community service program; establishing by statute the Alaska State Community Service Commission; and providing for an effective date."

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?" said Rev. Martin Luther King. HB 355 seeks to clarify Rev. King's question for the State of Alaska by establishing the State Community Service Program. HB 355 strengthens the existing Alaska Community Service Commission while addressing unmet community needs and rewarding good neighbors for taking part in community service. Community service or "volunteerism" is simply giving your time and your abilities for the betterment of society.

Voluntary service to your community makes people feel good, helps ease social ills and costs very little. Organizations like the United Way, Americorps, VISTA volunteers, Catholic Community Services, SAGA, and ORCA all provide important community services that would be cost-prohibitive without volunteers. State and private organizations cannot afford the labor intensive services that benefit Alaska's residents. As direct beneficiaries of volunteers, senior citizen programs, day-care centers, and after school programs are able to better the quality-of-life in Alaska. Nationally in 1998, 56% of adults aged 18 or over volunteered a total of 19.9 billion hours worth an estimated \$225.9 billion.

As state and local governments face budget shortfalls, the need for community service is becoming increasingly clear. Commonly, community service fills the gap between the private sector and the government sector by providing needed services that the government can't afford to pay for and the private sector won't pay for. The trend for state governments within the nation has been to reduce the cost of state services. Further reductions in elderly care, child care and education necessitates the extension of volunteerism within the state.

HB 355 revamps the existing Community Service Commission which currently only distributes federal Americorps funds. By expanding the role of the Community Service Commission and creating the new Alaska Community Service Program, HB 355 enhances the commission's abilities to create and assess community services within the state. As part of the program, volunteers would be rewarded for completion of successful terms of service with housing and educational vouchers. Importantly, through reinvestment in the state's volunteers, HB 355 encourages Alaskans to get involved and volunteer their time while establishing a real connection between their neighbors and the entire community.

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