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VETERANS' AFFAIRS

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 29, 2010

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President:

We write you today to ask that you fully and actively engage the Corporation for National and Community Service, CNCS, to assist in the response to the Deepwater BP oil spill along the Gulf coastline.

A disaster of horrific proportions is unfolding on the Gulf Coast. Recent estimates indicate an amount of oil equal to that of the Exxon Valdez disaster has been flowing into the Gulf of Mexico every 8 – 10 days. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, up to 20 national wildlife refuges are at risk from the oil leaking into the Gulf, threatening a variety of species including dolphins, oysters, and sea turtles. As oil continues to erupt from the broken riser pipe and assault pristine national coastline, our constituents are seeking bold and assertive leadership.

But it's not just for environmental reasons we are concerned. This tragedy will have a long lasting economic impact on local fishermen, the livelihoods of middle class families who have small businesses along the coast, and the spirit of an already battered region. Taxpayers in every state and the millions of Americans who go to the coasts as a family vacation destination will also be affected by ongoing environmental disaster.

At the same time as the crisis unfolds on the Gulf Coast, another crisis has been unfolding in communities across our nation. Due to the fallout from the economic slowdown, young people are being ushered into the worst employment market in nearly a century. Their energies and efforts are waiting on the sidelines to do something great for their country. Participating in the oil spill response is an opportunity for these young people to engage in a meaningful enterprise that is crucial to the environmental and economic future of the Gulf region.

We call on you today to fully utilize the CNCS as a part of our nation's response in the Gulf. The CNCS was an integral part of the Hurricane Katrina response and they can do the same for the Gulf region again. While the Corps is already responding to the crisis, it is clear that they need a national recruitment effort that will give them the resources to respond. We ask that you engage in this effort by encouraging Americans to join the corps, and to urge businesses to lend their support.

An unprecedented catastrophe requires an unprecedented response. A nationwide, proactive mobilization of the resources of the CNCS will give Americans across this country the sense of mission they seek: to support the clean-up and revitalization of the Gulf Coast.

Thank you for your continued leadership in addressing this crisis.

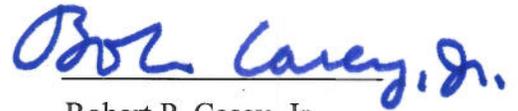
Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator