

**CENTER FOR
STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (CSIS)**

THE COHEN-NUNN DIALOGUES

**WE THE PEOPLE:
HOW DO WE BEST SERVE AMERICA?**

WELCOME:
DOUG WILSON,
COORDINATOR, COHEN-NUNN DIALOGUES

DAVID EISNER,
CEO, CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

MODERATORS:
THE HONORABLE WILLIAM COHEN,
FORMER U.S. SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

THE HONORABLE SAM NUNN,
CHAIRMAN, CSIS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

SPEAKERS:
ALAN KHAZEI,
CO-FOUNDER, CITY YEAR

MICHELLE NUNN,
PRESIDENT, POINTS OF LIGHT & HANDS ON NETWORK

WESTLEY MOORE,
AUTHOR, "ELEVATE: AMERICAN JOURNEYS INTO MANHOOD"

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MR. : Introducing Doug Wilson of the Howard Gilman Foundation, coordinator of the Cohen-Nunn Dialogues. (Applause.)

DOUG WILSON: Good morning. I'm delighted to welcome all of you to this third in the nationwide series of the Cohen-Nunn Dialogues. In January of this year, the former U.S. secretary of defense, William Cohen, a Republican, and the former chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sam Nunn, a Democrat, coauthored an opinion piece in the Boston Globe. It was titled, "American Promise." In it, they said that America needs to focus on the seminal issues that our national leaders must address. They said that such discussions best serve America when the public and the candidates are exposed to new ideas and approaches.

Secretary Cohen and Senator Nunn began that nationwide series of discussions in March of this year in Washington, D.C., with a focus on America's role in the world. Last month, the mayor of New York City hosted and joined them for a discussion on homeland security. And this morning, we're delighted to be in Senator Sam Nunn's home state for the Cohen-Nunn Dialogue entitled, "We the People: How Do We Best Serve America?"

We want to express our deep appreciation to the Corporation for National and Community Service and to the Points of Light and Hands On Network, not only for inviting us to be here, but for the tremendous support that they have given in organizing today's session. And, in particular, I want to express our appreciation to Michelle Nunn, Toby Charlberg (ph), Aaron Sampson, and the Atlanta volunteers who have done a great job in working on this program. (Applause.)

Those who will join Senator Nunn and Secretary Cohen for this morning's discussion – Alan Khazei, Michelle Nunn, and Westley Moore – epitomize the outstanding men and women from all walks of life, to whom Secretary Cohen and Senator Nunn are reaching out throughout this series, men and women who are the thought leaders on the key international and domestic issues that our current and emerging national leaders must address.

In their Boston Globe piece, the two put forth three clear and simple objectives for this dialogue series: to renew our commitment to community, to enable those we elect, and to restore the sense that once again we are all in this together. This series is being sponsored by two outstanding institutions: the Center for Strategic and International Studies, one of the nation's most respected think tanks; and the Howard Gilman Foundation, which is rapidly taking its place at the forefront of efforts to promote new networks and new thinking in the areas of public policy, conservation, and the arts.

And so, on behalf of CSIS, on behalf of my partner in developing this program, the author and playwright, Janet Langhart-Cohen (ph), and on behalf of Howard Gilman Foundation Board Chairman Natalie Moody (sp), Foundation Vice-President Steve Cropper, who are here

today, I'm pleased to introduce and hope you will join me in welcoming to the stage our dialogue participants.

First, the former U.S. defense secretary and former Republican senator from Maine, William Cohen. (Applause.) Second, the co-founder of City Year and the founder and CEO of Be the Change, Alan Khazei. (Applause.) Next, the CEO of the Points of Light and Hands On Foundation, whom you all know, Michelle Nunn. (Applause.) Next, a combat veteran from the fights in Afghanistan, the former White House fellow, the author of the forthcoming "Elevate: American Journeys into Manhood," and one of Ebony Magazine's top 30 leaders under 30, Westley Moore. (Applause.) And here in his home state, I'm pleased to introduce the former senior senator from Georgia, the former chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the man who is the author of the legislation, the seminal legislation that brings most of us here today, Sam Nunn. (Applause.)

And it's now my pleasure to begin the program to introduce the CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, Mr. David Eisner. (Applause.)

DAVID EISNER: Good morning. And thank you, Doug, for that introduction. Thank you to the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Gilman Foundation for organizing this event with our conference. It's such an honor to have the Nunn-Cohen Dialogues here at our conference. We're at the 2008 National Conference for Volunteering and Service. We have 4,700 leaders from across the country with AmeriCorps programs, Senior Corps programs, Hands On Action Center volunteer centers.

And we have been focused for the past several days on the theme of the urgency of now. And it's a fitting theme as we begin to pick up this discussion. What we're going to try to get to today is the future of America's policy around volunteering and national service. And there is a tremendous sense of urgency behind this discussion. We have huge demographic waves, boomers who, in 10 years, will double the ranks of senior Americans, older Americans, who volunteer. We have young Americans who today are volunteering 100 percent more than people in that age group did in the '70s, '80s, and '90s. And those young people are having incredible impacts. We're seeing universities more focused on volunteering. We're seeing business more focused on being green and corporate social responsibility because of the impact of those young people.

We're seeing all Americans volunteering at record levels across the country. We're looking at post-Katrina, more than a million Americans going down to the Gulf to restore homes and bring people hope. We're looking at Martin Luther King Day, which grows, more than doubles in size year over year, and this last January, we had in every single state 5,000 communities volunteers coming out. We have the momentum of the social entrepreneurs who are changing the very structure of our community as they find answers to our problems. We have three presidential candidates, all of whom are promising intense focus on civic engagement and intense focus on national service.

And most important, we have extraordinary need. We have 30 percent of America's students are not graduating high school. We have 15 million children in this country who need a

caring adult and don't have one. We have 25,000 children aging out of our foster care system every year. And the amazing thing is that we've all come to understand that we don't have a better intervention for solving these challenges that when our citizens step forward and say, we care, we want to do something about this, I'm going to make it a priority to give back and to help someone out.

I want to tell a quick story. In Madison, Wisconsin, in the late '90s, African-American children were six times as likely to fail literacy standards in the third grade as white children. Fifteen AmeriCorps Vistas working with the University of Wisconsin recruited 500 volunteers to tutor in Madison schools. And over seven years, last year, the mayor of Madison told me because of that program, today there's no disparity between white third graders passing the literacy standards and African-American third graders passing the literacy standards. (Applause.)

So we know we've got something. And here's where we are. AmeriCorps is at an all-time high, 75,000 members per year; Senior Corps, 500,000 strong. Through Learn and Serve America, we're supporting 1.3 million students onto an on-ramp of service. Our state service commissions are stronger than they've ever been, more connected to the governors, and driving volunteering and service in the state.

We have stronger public-private partnerships than we've ever had every year. We've seen non-corporation funds going to our programs of more than \$400 million. And so the questions that we have to ask ourselves is, what do we now? How do we grab the momentum? How do we move forward? How do we take advantage and seize this opportunity that's before us? What do we do about public-private partnerships? How do we rationalize community service and military service? These are some great questions and I'm looking forward to hearing some of the answers our panel might have. Thank you. (Applause.)

WILLIAM COHEN: Let me thank you once again for this tremendous turnout this morning. And I want to give you just a brief history of why we're here, why us, and why now, or the urgency of now, as your motto has indicated. Last fall, Senator Dunn called me. He and I have had the privilege of working together. We came to Congress actually in 1972, he to the Senate, me to the House of Representatives. And I joined him in the Senate in 1978.

And during the next 18 years, we worked together across party lines because we were focused on something that's vitally important to this country. It's called national security. And there never was a disagreement on any issue between us. And he always was the leader in seeking ways in which we could strike the balance, how we could join hands and work across party lines in order to serve the interests of the country.

In 1996, we both retired. We became concerned – I know I speak for Senator Nunn on this regard – concern for what was happening to our country, what was happening to our political process, that we saw party lines being drawn rigidly. We saw paralysis set in. We saw dysfunctionality in terms of the political system. And I think both of us came to the conclusion perhaps the country was in need, and certainly the Congress was in need, of new blood, new people coming in. Perhaps they could break the logjam.

Well, I think time has proven that we were wrong. It's gotten worse. There is more paralysis, more partisanship, less functionality than ever before. And the big issues that need to be addressed in this country are going unaddressed. And a lot of triviality is being focused upon by certainly elements of the media, but also the American people.

And what Senator Nunn called me about, he said, look, we've got to do something, we've got to focus the American people's attention on the critical issues affecting us, our dollar, our economy, our capabilities as far as the military is concerned, what is taking place in terms of our environment, our competitiveness, all of those are in need of great repair, so we must do whatever we can to join forces and try to bring the country back to the center where most people live and where we can only govern from.

And so we started a series of dialogues. This is the third, as Doug Wilson has pointed out. The first one had to do with how is America perceived. And we had Andrew Kohut of the Pew Research Center talk about how other countries, as well as the American people, see us, and what we need to do to restore a sense of credibility and competence. We had Christiane Amanpour talk about her view, having traveled the world. We had Anthony Zinni, General Zinni, former commander of Central Command, talk about what his experience has led him to believe in terms of countries in the Gulf and beyond, how they perceived us.

Then we went on to New York. We had Mayor Bloomberg. We had Captain Steve Flynn, who has written two books, one called "America the Vulnerable," the second, "At the Edge of Disaster." And he talked about how vulnerable we remain. Jessica Stern talked about terrorism, as something that Senator Nunn has been long concerned about, what happens if we allow terrorists to get their hands on nuclear weapons. And so talking about how we're seen, how we are treated by other countries is vitally important, how we protect ourselves.

And now the third one. And this is something that is near and dear to Senator Nunn's heart and that is, what can the average person, what can each individual do to strengthen this country? What contribution can each of us make toward building the security, to strengthen the economy and moral fiber of this country? And that's what Senator Nunn has dedicated his life to, he and his daughter, Michelle, who has carried on certainly a very, very large legacy.

So we don't pretend to have a corner on wisdom on these issues. We do think it's important that this dialogue continue. We do think it's important that it happen now. And I would just conclude my own remarks with the quote from Hillel, who asked the question, he said, if I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what will I be? If not now, when? And this is the question we have to ask ourselves. If we are only acting for ourselves, what will be? What will we become? And if not now, when? Now is the time for Senator Nunn to come forward and make a few comments to us as well. Thank you.

(Applause.)

SAM NUNN: Thank you very much, David, and thank you very much, Bill. Thanks to all of our panelists. Thanks to the Gilman Foundation and thanks to the Center for Strategic and International Studies. And thanks to all of you.

Bill, there was one other reason I left the Senate back in '96. I wanted to stay out of politics long enough so that my friends in Georgia would realize that everything wasn't my fault. (Laughter.) When I look out on this audience and I see all the people who are participating as leaders in the national service efforts going on around the country and the volunteer services everyday that are helping so many people in communities that need help and, indeed, also building citizenship for those who serve.

I'm reminded of the story when I think about my role of the fellow who was from Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and he goes up to Heaven, he dies and goes up to Heaven and St. Peter tells him, he welcomes him, he says, sir, he said, next week you will be able to have a great privilege, you will be able to address the heavenly audience on any subject of your choosing, you can choose the subject and they will all be very attentive. And the fellow said, well, St. Peter, I am really the world's foremost expert on the Johnstown flood. That was a flood, there was more damage done in the history of Pennsylvania, and I would like to address the audience, heavenly audience, on the Johnstown flood, do you think they will be interested? And St. Peter replied, yes, they'd be very interested, but remember one thing. He said, what is it? He said, Noah will be in the audience. (Laughter.)

Well, we've got a lot of Noahs in the audience and one of our Pennsylvania friends this morning is Harris Wofford (ph) and Harris and I and Bill served together in the United States Senate – (applause) – and he has done so much for national service. Being with Bill Cohen and also with his wife, Janet, is a wonderful thrill for me because Bill and I, as he said, we were partners on many, many different areas of foreign policy and national security over the years. He was a terrific secretary of defense. He continues to be engaged in public policy.

And he has a wonderful wife named Janet sitting here in the front row and Bill and Janet have started a CNN dialogue that you will be hearing about, about race in America and they are truly an inspiration to so many of us and truly are going to, I think, lead a dialogue that will make this country much, much better and much, much stronger. So Janet, it's great to be partners with you and Bill. (Applause.)

We all know that America is not perfect. But in time of peril, time and time again, our country, more than any other country, I believe, in the history of the world has responded and we've responded vigorously with innovation and with tremendous energy. So when we get in a period of crisis, we adapt, we respond, and we overcome.

Today, we have many perils and many challenges. Restoring our credibility in the world – that was the subject of our first forum. Long-term sustainable policy, building one on terrorism, which is going to be with us for quite a while, that's another challenge and a peril. Energy security: we all know that we've got major energy challenges, we all know that we have major environmental stewardship challenges, and we all know that we're going to have to rebuild America's infrastructure.

We also know that America has many social ills. We have many community problems which indeed threaten our values and threaten our future. And we also know, if we've been following events for the last 40 years, that America has to rebuild our human capital. That is education, yes. It's also skill training. It's also values and it's also citizenship.

National service can address a lot of these problems, not all of them, but many of them. So I'm a strong advocate of what we're going to be talking about this morning. That is comprehensive national service. But let me make one assertion that many may not like or agree with. And that assertion is that we cannot succeed in building a comprehensive national service without building into the heart of the structure an approach that puts military service front and center.

Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, recently said in the last couple months, quoting him, "Our ground forces are under significant strain. I am extremely concerned about the toll the current pace of operations is taking on the military and their families and on our equipment and on our ability to respond to crisis beyond Iraq and Afghanistan." David Chu, civilian, undersecretary of defense, personnel, and readiness, recently said, "Never in the history of the volunteer force have our armed forces faced as challenging a recruitment environment as now," end quote.

So we've got to bring the military into this discussion. This is going to be much broader this morning. We're not going to talk all about military. But I'm delighted Wes is going to be here. He's got a firsthand look, having recently served in Afghanistan, outstanding career. So we're going to talk about the military and national service in the broadest sense. And I'm going to be poking questions that I think are, yes, they are provocative questions, but they're the things that we really need to think about because I think we who believe in national service have a hot hand now. But the time you have a hot hand is to reach out to those who are going to be your critics when the legislative process starts and to try to answer the questions in advance that are the toughest questions.

This morning, we have one absent panelist by the name of Charlie Moskos. Many of you perhaps have never heard of him. But from my perspective, Charlie was America's premier military sociologist. He taught at Northwestern. He knew more about the men and women in our U.S. military than anyone in America. If Charlie were here this morning, I am confident that he would tell us a few things. First of all, I think he would say, because he said it to me, our nation is displaying patriotism "light," we did not get an increase in recruitment for our military even after 9/11.

Adding 100,000 people to our U.S. military today is justified, but it will make the present recruiting problems even more difficult because we're in a period where a real strain is on the quality of recruiting. He would also say that because of our manpower shortage, we now have a private army of civilians in Iraq. At last count it was about 20,000 and they cost us approximately six times to nine times for what our military personnel cost doing the same job.

He would also tell us that it bothers him that the elite, the higher-income people in our society, are primarily opting out of military service, certainly in the enlisted ranks, but also increasing officer ranks. And he would also tell us that the volunteer force is in peril and we are seeing a serious erosion in our historical concept of citizen soldier. So Charlie would tell us all of those things.

Charlie was in many ways the intellectual father of AmeriCorps. He was the primary advisor that Congressman David McCurdy and I had when we drafted what was known as then as the Nunn-McCurdy Bill, which led to the pilot project legislation that some of you may be familiar with in 1990 which became AmeriCorps under President Clinton's strong leadership. I invited Charlie to be on this panel this morning and he regretted because of poor health. But we will remember him today and we will honor him today by discussing his passion, national service, and national service's relationship with the U.S. military, to which he devoted most of his adult life.

So I look forward very much to this discussion with the panelists. We'll have a good stimulating, I think, question-and-answer session concluding that. And we also welcome our Internet audience, which is a great addition to our ability to communicate. Thank you very much for being here. (Applause.)

MR. COHEN: Alan, I'm going to turn to you first. We hear a lot about rights. We don't talk very much about duty. We hear a great deal about entitlements. We don't talk much about obligations. And we hear a great deal about freedom, but very little discussion about responsibility or accountability. So if you take this notion that the civilians of this country have an obligation – they have rights, they have duties, they have hopes obviously, they have obligations, and, yes, they enjoy freedom, but that freedom must also have accountability as citizens of this great country.

How in this world, in which it's globalized, it's spread, younger generation, boomers retiring, how do we involve the average citizen in the great causes that Senator Nunn has just enunciated?

ALAN KHAZEI: Thank you, Secretary Cohen. First of all, let me just thank both you and Senator Nunn. It's an honor for me to share a stage with people who are heroes of mine and extraordinary statesmen. And it's not a surprise to me that you have joined together in these critical dialogues in a bipartisan way to forge ahead for our country. I also want to thank David Eisner and Michelle for organizing this extraordinary conference. And as Senator Nunn, said, you all, I want to thank, you are the leaders of this movement. In some ways, we are preaching to the choir here, but it's important that we all band together to respond to your – and also John Bridgeland, who's the founder of the Freedom Corps who's here as well.

I think you're absolutely right, Secretary Cohen, you know, rights and duties go hand-in-hand. We all cherish the right to a jury trial. We couldn't have a jury trial unless fellow citizens were willing to serve on that jury, for example. But I also think that we are at a time now where citizens are ready to be engaged. And what we need to do in our country is forge a new public philosophy.

You know, for the past 75 years, we've basically lived under two public philosophies, the first articulated by President Roosevelt when he said, you know, the government was going to solve all our problems. And then President Reagan came in some years later and went just the opposite: the government, in his inaugural address, he said, the government isn't the solution; it's the problem. And then President Clinton said the era of big government is over. Well, what's going to replace it?

I think what we need is a new era of big citizenship and social entrepreneurship, represented by all the people here and others around the country. And when we call on our citizens as a key part of our new public philosophy, every single citizen has something to give, has something to offer, and we need them. And we need a new system of national service that literally starts in kindergarten with service learning all the way through schools. We need an opportunity for full-time national service – and I agree with Senator Nunn – that needs to be both military and civilian when people are becoming adults. And then we need to have people continue to serve through workplaces, through faith-based, and into the post-50 years now. And we need to look at our citizens to address these problems.

We've tried everything else. We've been talking about education crisis, housing crisis, homelessness, health care, et cetera. If we could call on the citizen energy of this country and get people more involved where everybody is expected to do something, both part-time as a volunteer, but even full-time for a period of time when they become an adult, I think we could actually make a real dent in these problems. I also think people are ready to answer that call. They're ready to step up and serve.

And it's part of the history of our country. It started with citizen shoulders. Our whole country started with citizens picking up their muskets and overthrowing an empire. It continued, de Tocqueville noted in the 1830s, the extraordinary voluntary associations. So this is in our DNA. And I think that now, especially, the 21st century, we look at – citizens are driving everything. There's YouTube and MySpace and Google and Facebook. You see the citizen energy in this campaign. You see how citizens are remaking the private sector where consumers are really driving change.

It's time that we look to citizens and call on our citizens to say, you're the key, we're all the key to finally coming to grips with many of the problems that both you and Senator Nunn articulated, so I couldn't agree with you more. It should be an expectation and obligation. (Applause.)

MR. COHEN: If I could ask one more question, Senator Nunn touched upon this in his opening remarks when he pointed out that many of those who would serve in the military are not qualified to serve in the military because of a variety of things, but principally because of obesity. And we talk about creating an ethic. This is something that is missing in today's world of ours. We need to create a wellness ethic. We have to take better care of ourselves and that ethic carries over, taking better care of our planet, our country, our community. And so we don't have a wellness ethic.

And that also seems to be has to be a part of this discussion of how do we create and mobilize and energize the citizens of this country to get involved with community projects, but with their country, both in the military and non-military fashion. But we don't have that ethic now and that perhaps is what you were touching on in faith-based initiatives as well, bringing faith into it, but bringing ethics into our public squares.

MR. KHAZEI: I think that's absolutely right and it's interesting. All the studies show that people who – there's a wonderful two-way street here. People who serve help the people being served, but they also help themselves. If you ask anyone who's been involved in any type of service, all the people in this room will tell you that when you give, you get. It is part of, I think, human nature to want to be part of something larger than yourself, to want to be part of a community, to want to be able to give up your own gifts and I think, again, that's one of the things that's so important and valuable about this whole citizen service ethic.

You know, we can go back, we talk about the greatest generation. And part of the reason the greatest – now, the World War II generation, several generations ago, I think the reason that generation became the greatest generation is because they all served. You know, men went in droves into the military to fight fascism. Women went into factories. Children did rubber drives and tin drives. And there was a sense of, we're all in this together. And it's not a surprise that that generation became the greatest generation.

I think that if we can institute a more comprehensive system of national service, every generation will be a greatest generation. They'll feel a sense of responsibility for the health of themselves, as you pointed out, but also for the health of our country and our democracy. So I think that there are wonderful spiritual and personal benefits when people serve and when we do it together, we get the sense that, yes, at the end of the day, we are all in this together.

MR. NUNN: Bill, just on that point, following what you and Alan were talking about, the statistics, I just read the other day, 70 percent of the young people who would be in the pool group that are eligible for military service, 70 percent do not meet military standards either for physical or educational or moral reasons. To break that down just a little bit, and I want to ask Wes a question about the military, 35 percent is physical, 35 percent, 9 percent lowest middle aptitude, 18 percent drug and alcohol, 5 percent serious criminal record, and 6 percent too many dependents. And that's not all of it.

But when you look at the physical side of it, obesity is a big part. And one of the things that occurs to me if we're trying to make some synergy between the military side of this and the national service, if AmeriCorps and others could basically inspire that sense of wellness so that the pool grows, people coming out of AmeriCorps, inspired by AmeriCorps in the broad sense, are basically inspired to take care of themselves.

If we can increase the military pool, if you can go from 30 percent of the young people being eligible to military to 40 percent, it's huge. You would solve a lot of the problems. But if we don't take some bold action like this, it's going to be very questionable whether the volunteer force can survive.

Wes, you've been there, you've done that, you've been in Afghanistan, you have a tremendous record in the military, you're in the reserve now. Tell us how you see the military challenges as well as opportunities now and how it blends in with your vision of national service.

WESTLEY MOORE: Thank you. And first I just want to again thank you, thank you both for this. Thank you for the friendship and thank you for organizing this. You know, it's – I don't believe it's a partisan issue to talk about the fact and address the fact that our military is stretched thin right now. I think people on both sides of the aisle can acknowledge that. I think people on both sides of the aisle can also acknowledge that having a strong military force is in the best interest of the people of this country. And I also think that in terms of looking at national service, we have not had a steady concentration of focus in getting the best and brightest on the outside to join the best and brightest on the inside, the best and brightest that we have in our nation in uniform.

Some of the proudest moments in my life have not been when I was wearing a suit, but they've been when I was wearing a uniform. I am so amazingly proud of the young men and women that I served with. And the ironic thing is when I first joined the military, I can honestly say that the military didn't only just help shape me in terms of how to be a strategic thinker or a military thinker, it helped save my life.

When I first joined the military, when I first learned about the military, it was actually at 11 years old, when I had to go to military school. And my mother, who's in the audience, can expand on why I had to go to military school. (Laughter.) But I had a mandatory year in military school because of a lot of trouble that I was getting into, academic and military, inside my neighborhood. And when I first went to military school, I absolutely hated it. I hated every minute of it. Literally, in the first four days, I ran away five times. I wanted to go home so badly.

But eventually, as I got there and I learned about the system and I learned about what the military was offering me as a person, and not just as a cadet at that point, but as a man, that was when it really clicked. And so when I finished high school, there was no question as to what I was going to do. I had opportunities to go to college and, you know, play basketball in college and the such. And I did eventually go on to college and play basketball as well, but I also knew, I'm going to become a soldier. I want to lead soldiers; that's what I want to do. It's now part of my DNA.

And I think if you see so many of these young people who are joining up, and particularly the ones who I served with in Afghanistan, I mean, I joined in 1996, these people are joining after 9/11. When I joined, you know, you joined because you get a chance to go to college and, you know, go run around in the woods for a little while and do some training. They're joining knowing, knowing, that six months after finishing basic training, there's a good chance you're going to be in Baghdad or Fallujah or Jalalabad or Khost, or a whole collection of other areas that prior to military service they wouldn't be able to even point to on a map.

The military must be a pillar of a conversation about national service because it's not just in the best interest of the nation as a whole, but I'm a living testament of what it does to the

individual as they join the military and what can be done to transform them and make them a better citizen and better help them understand the glory of what this country really is.

MR. NUNN: Thank you, Wes. (Applause.) Michelle, you are now leading at least one of the largest volunteer organizations in the United States and perhaps the world and you've put together a wonderful team from Points of Light and Hands On Network and a lot of them in the audience here. What's your vision of national service? How far can we go with this? Can we really scale it – if all of a sudden somebody came in and said they just passed a bill in Congress and you're now going to have every young person serving in some form of national service, what would you do with that pool of people that would be vast? Can you expand it rapidly? How do you scale it? Do we take a big chance in trying to expand rapidly? Should we phase it in? What's on your mind about it?

MICHELLE NUNN: So let me first of all just say it would ordinarily be intimidating to be on either end of former senator, secretary of defense. It's particularly awkward to be the subject of inquisition from your father here. (Laughter.) I feel a little vulnerable. He could ask me anything. I'm in the hot seat.

MR. COHEN: I was going to spare you that in asking you questions.

MR. NUNN: First time in 20 years she's answered a question. (Laughter, applause.)

MS. NUNN: So he's been waiting a long time to get me right here in this seat. (Laughter.) So first of all, I want to just say, Westley, that was amazing to hear the inspiration of your story and I think that resonates so much with the larger call to service and so I think, you know, just your answer there gives us an opportunity to think about how we lift up this larger call to sacrifice and to service the country. And when I go out and talk to AmeriCorps members, that same resonant sense of giving back, but also receiving of being remade through service to country, to community. So there really is a nice opportunity, I think, to pull these together.

So I will try and answer the question, which is, you know, I think that we've said as we look out at this conference with over 4700 participants and an evolution of our service nation over the last 30 years, we now stand upon a foundation that I do think enables us to go to scale. So when we first started having these conversations, you know, I think we did need to start pilot programs and see what worked and the great work of City Year and so many of the people in this audience. I now think we do know what works. We know – I think we know how to scale and we are standing ready to answer not just an incremental call to service, but an exponential call to service.

How do we create a common expectation for a continuum of engagement from those that are, you know, in elementary school all the way through their senior years? So I truly believe that we can be bold and be far-reaching in how we think about scaling our national service efforts. And I think it's vital to being able to answer the challenges of our country. We have to be able to actually solve problems and I think the best way to solve problems is through people and through the power of people to make a difference. And I also think that this country, as we can see in this election, stands ready to be called. People are hungry to be asked to serve.

And so I think that the conversations that we're having today can help us – help equip us, as a movement, to think about what the specific policies are to enable that, but I think there's no doubt that we are standing at a moment in which we can embrace the large-scale change that so many people like Harris Wofford and others that are represented here have been imagining and dreaming. And so we stand upon their shoulders and I think it's our opportunity and obligation to think in a very bold and powerful way about what's possible. (Applause.)

MR. MOORE: And I think that's a brilliant point and it's absolutely right. You know, I think also what we're talking about is just an idea of reshaping how we look at service. You know, it's a concept of you have jobs and you have occupations. A person's occupation can be whatever. A person's occupation could be a banker, a person's occupation can be sanitation worker, a person's occupation can, you know, be diplomat. Whatever the case is, whatever your occupation is, that's fine. But your job is something that's very different. I can be in finance, but my job is still to serve my community. That's something that's part of me. That's something that's part of my core.

And essentially, that's what we're talking about, that no matter what your occupation is, whether it be military officer or whatever else, that you have something that you owe, something that your country needs you for, that is really part of your job and that everyone needs to make sure that they're not only doing the best they can in their occupation, but that they're really doing the best they can in their job, which is supporting whatever it is, your organization, your community, you know, supporting a kid that you see on the street who, without your intervention, isn't going to make it. That becomes our job and that becomes a very important component to what we're doing as a national fabric.

MR. COHEN: Let me add, Wes is not only a citizen soldier. He's also an outstanding athlete, all-American athlete and Rhodes Scholar, and White House fellow. He has gone from the mean streets of Baltimore to the mean streets in Afghanistan to the mean streets in Wall Street. (Laughter.) And he is a classic example of what can happen when a young person like himself, with the guiding hand of his mother and those that he came to respect, can achieve in this country. And I can't tell you how happy we are to have you with us, Wes, and what you represent to millions of people who are out there who will look to you in the future. I have to say that regret – he's only 29 – (laughter) – and he's accomplished all of these things and so he has a great future of him and us, because we look to you for future leadership as well.

Let me get more specific now. What do we do? We've got this energy and people want to volunteer. How do they help out on the environment? How do they help out with dealing with children who are dropping out in large numbers? How do we deal with health care for our young kids coming up to create a culture of caring about themselves, about the community, about the country? How do we do that specifically?

MR. KHAZEI: Well, I'll add some thoughts on that initially. I think that's absolutely the right point, Secretary Cohen. We need to – we have had basically a period now of 20 years of strong bipartisan leadership on national service. It began with President Bush 41, with the Points of Light Foundation and the Commission on National Service and the demonstration

programs that Senator Nunn authored and then President Clinton with AmeriCorps and then President Bush 43 with Freedom Corps that John Bridgeland created. And as Michelle said, we have a base of experience now to build off.

The next phase for national service – and AmeriCorps is a wonderful program – the next phase, I think, is to say, can we focus national service on some big problems. Could we have an education corps that would focus on the high school dropout crisis, for example, on school readiness? Two thousand high schools in this country that produce more than a majority of the dropouts. There are a million kids dropping out every year. So we can find that problem and what Robert Balfanz (ph), who's a professor at Hopkins has shown, is that they need more one-on-one attention. We could put teams of national service participants. Two thousand schools, so we know where they are, if we put 10 national service AmeriCorps members as part of an education corps effort in each one of those schools, so that would be 20,000 people, and it's very cost-effective because they're serving their country, they're not regular paid staff, we can make a real dent on that problem.

If we can add service learning to those schools, the studies have shown that service learning helps to prevent people from dropping out because they get engaged, they get better attention. So we could focus national service, for example, on that problem and we could finally make a difference. And it's a crisis because those kids that are dropping out, they're lost. In the 21st century, they're not going to make it.

So I think we can do the same thing with a clean energy corps, a green corps. There's a whole coalition pushing this effort to say, you know, we have to preserve our environment, we've got to fight climate change, there are a whole group of young people that are ready, both disadvantaged young people that can gain skills by doing clean energy work, but then also we can help preserve our environment and fight climate change through that effort as well.

So there's a way to take national service now in this next phase as we scale it out and focus it and also hold ourselves accountable. Because if we're not making a dent in that high school dropout crisis or if we're not providing more after-school opportunities, there are 14 million kids in this country who need a place after school. Fourteen million kids and, again, there are great programs like citizen schools and other AmeriCorps programs that are providing opportunities.

But as Michelle said, they need to be scaled up. And so if we're not making a dent there, then we can hold ourselves accountable and say, you know what, we shouldn't fund these and the ones that work should get funded. But there is a base of experience now that if we focus this resource, we actually can attack and solve some of these problems.

MR. COHEN: Are there institutional oppositions that you have to overcome to get into any particular field? I'm mindful last week, about a week-and-a-half ago, on the front page of The Washington Post, it had a major story above the fold, "Obesity Number One Problem, Potential Killer in Our Society." On the inside, on the Metro section, it said, a young individual trying to get nutritious food into the school program, total opposition. So on the one hand, there's a recognition that you've got a problem, but there is an institutional barrier saying that

we're not going to have, you know, this kind of good, solid wholesome food in the school system. Do you have that same sort of problem in terms of dealing with – whether it's the environment, after-school issues, health care?

MR. KHAZEI: I think there are institutional barriers almost everywhere when you're trying to push change. One of the great things about national service participants is they come in with a different kind of energy, a different kind of idealism. They are not permanent staff people. So they don't – they come in with a willingness to challenge the system, but also sometimes that institutional change is because people are just overburdened with what they're already doing. They're trying to – especially in very underserved and needy areas where they feel like, we can't take anything else on.

One of the things that AmeriCorps participants do and national service participants do is bring a new energy and a new commitment and also some new thinking of how do you get around bureaucracy, how do you do things in a different way? This generation now, you know, the one with the Internet is figuring out how to use technology to make change.

So there definitely are institutional barriers when you're trying to make change. But what we've seen with the people that participate in AmeriCorps and other service programs is they come in not just saying you need to make change. They come in saying, well, yes, we need to make change and we can be a resource to help you do it. We can invent different ways to get through these. So I think we can get around those issues.

MR. COHEN: Senator Nunn, you raised the issue privately before that some of the opposition to legislation you introduced back in 1988, I think, was the first bill you put in, comes from those on the Republican or more conservative side saying, wait a minute, if it's volunteer, why do you have to be paid? And I think you had a pretty good response to that in terms of dealing with that issue.

MR. NUNN: Well, the left tends to say, this is in addition to every program we already have, so don't cut anything out, this is not in lieu of anything. And the right tends to say, basically that you're spoiling the real volunteerism, if you pay someone, they're not volunteers. They turn right around and say we're dedicated to a volunteer military where we're not only paying people, but we're using very large bonuses now because people are reluctant for retention purposes who have to do that. So there's a total inconsistency there. And to me, there's an inconsistency both to the criticism of the left and right on this one.

And that leads to a question I was going to ask the panel. If you had your way, would you make national service compulsory? All right, that's question one. After you answer that one, I've got one more follow-up. Harris Wofford mentioned this morning and he's absolutely right on this in an earlier meeting, that if you make it compulsory, you have to do it with a lottery system because you don't need that many people in the military. And so that's the question. Should we make it that everybody serves that's physically and mentally capable of serving? Wes, then Michelle, and then Alan. What do you think?

MR. MOORE: My personal opinion is that I think we should have a system where everybody serves. Now, I think service should also be a very broad term. I don't think we need to necessarily put everybody in uniform.

MR. NUNN: Right.

MR. MOORE: But I think we do need to come up with a system where everyone has some type of obligation to do something for the country. And it's not that it's that radical of an idea. I mean, if you look at other countries, they have similar sorts of set-ups, where in some countries they have it where it's just military-focused, but if you look at the U.K. where they have this gap year where immediately after a student finishes high school, before they go on to college, the government strongly encourages their students to go and do something, whether it's work inside of poor neighborhoods in the U.K., or whether it's to go work on issues in Africa, AIDS issues in Africa, whatever it is.

So I do think we should come up with a system. And this is something that the federal government can actually help to coordinate, whether it be through the Department of Labor, whether it be through another agency that the president can appoint, but something where we come up with our own sort of gap year where after –

MR. NUNN: Tiered approach. You could have the military one tier.

MR. MOORE: Absolutely.

MR. NUNN: You could have a second tier, homeland security. That's a subject we're going to really have to delve into in this country. How do we handle devastating circumstances, whether it's intentional or an act of nature? We saw with Katrina the problems there. You could have – the third tier could be a lot of the other programs that are so important and you could have different levels of educational benefits with each of those.

MR. MOORE: Absolutely. Come up with some type of incentives for students to do it. But at the same time, I also don't think we should necessarily, you know, make military service or whatever it is, tier one. Because also, even though I completely understand firsthand the threat of what we're facing overseas, I also consider as we spoke about earlier, the fact that we have, in certain cities like my home city of Baltimore, close to a 70-percent dropout rate, a major homeland security issue.

I consider the fact that we look at, you know – that Harvard University just did a study last year saying in 2007 that one in three African-American children are going to have some type of involvement inside the criminal justice system. One in three children born in 2007; that is a homeland security issue.

So I think we need to look at all these issues from a holistic point. Come up with incentives for young people to say it's good that you take a year; it's also good if we encourage them to go abroad and get to learn what life is like overseas. I tell you, I love this country with all my heart because I honestly believe she loves me with all of hers. But my passion for this

country grew by such a tremendous amount when I first got a chance to leave her, when I first got a chance to see what life was like overseas and get a better understanding of what was right with this country, and where we could improve certain things by seeing other cultures. So I think we need to encourage that with our young people as well.

MR. NUNN: Michelle and Alan? (Applause.) Should everybody serve? Should we use real incentives? Or should we actually pass a law that says you've got to serve.

MS. NUNN: I think, for me, the next step is universal opportunity and expectation for service. And I think that we are prepared for that and that's, to me, politically where the country might be ready to go. And I think this idea of a continuum of engagement opportunities that enables everybody to serve military, international, domestic, is the right way and that we begin to grow that expectation. I think that's the next step.

MR. NUNN: Alan?

MR. KHAZEI: Yes, I agree with what Michelle said. I don't think – I do think we should have a universal opportunity expectation. I don't think we need compulsory education. I do think that we need – we should launch a new Serve America campaign. We used to have sort of the Uncle Sam Wants You campaign and I think as part of that campaign, it should be for both military and civilian service. There should be one-stop recruiting centers in malls and on college campuses and on the Internet where you could, say, you could join the Peace Corps or you could join the Army, join the Navy or join AmeriCorps, join the Marines or join Teach for America, et cetera.

And there needs to be a call. This generation is already answering that call. The millennial generation is the most serving generation since World War II and it's partially because of the great service movement that all of you have led over the past 20, 30 years. The boomers that are now approaching retirement are ready to serve. So I think – but we need the call. You know, there was a – Harris told me there was a reunion of the Peace Corps after 25 years and somebody said, why did you sign up? Because we were asked.

So I think it's – it's premature. We also don't – we have to scale it up. I think if we did scale up national service, both military and civilian in this country, over the next 10 and 15 years and we should take time to scale it up. The genius of AmeriCorps is that it's 2,000 programs around the country. So we can build on it and we can scale it. Then I think we could have a real debate, once the infrastructure is fully there and once we have a critical mass of people in our country participating. You know, a hundred years ago, public high school wasn't mandatory. Now it is, once we got to the place where we realized, well, this is important. But I think it's premature.

I also think that there is an idealism and a hunger in the country. People are ready to serve. They just need to be asked. And there needs to be quality opportunities. And I do think that it would be good both for military recruitment as well as civilian recruitment if we had a new sort of national call where there was this sense, everybody should serve, there are some

incentives provided, and choose where you're going to serve. And we've seen actually that some people who do AmeriCorps then sign up and join the military and vice versa. (Applause.)

MR. NUNN: Alan, let me pose alternative B here. Okay, let's say we wait on compulsory and don't even have that debate now. I understand that and that's probably the right judgment. But we have billions of dollars we spend on student loans today from the federal level and grants. Should we say you're not eligible for these if you do not serve in some capacity? And basically, certainly you would exempt people for one reason or the other physically or mentally not capable. But should we think about that as a phase-in approach so that this is not simply an add-on, but something we can say to the taxpayers, we're not going to basically duplicate. We're going to basically say, you've got a choice: serve or you don't get taxpayer help, you don't have serve, but you won't get taxpayer help if you don't.

MR. KHAZEI: I'm glad I got the easy question. (Laughter.) You know, and I appreciate –

MR. NUNN: The educators will all love you if you say “yes” on this.

MR. KHAZEI: And I appreciate the leadership you've provided on all this literally for 20 years. I think it's an important debate to have in the country. I've been pushing a little different idea, which is a service bond idea, which I've worked on with some people in this audience, which would basically say that when children are born in this country, anywhere from \$500 to \$5,000 will be put into an account by the government. If it was \$500, it could go over 10 years and then families could match it with tax-free money.

But the way you earn that account is through a year of service. And it could be used for basically the American Dream. It's sort of an American Dream notion where you could use it for college education. You could use it for a down payment on a home. You could use it to start your own business or your own non-profit, to be an entrepreneur. And the genius of compound interest is if you start with \$5,000 and you put nothing in it, it gets to \$19,000 by the time you're 19. If you put \$1,000 a year as a family, it gets to be over – close to \$58,000.

So and then it's a nest egg for every young American. We sort of have social security which is wonderful to take care of people in their retired years. We need to give people a jumpstart. But the catch would be you can't earn this money, you don't get to use it, unless you've done a year of service.

And so – and we can look at – we may want to say – we could – you know, we spend over \$5,000 a year on Pell Grants right now. We may decide, you know what, we could reapportion that, invest it when people are born, same amount of money. There's almost \$5,000 in the AmeriCorps award right now, and provide people with a different kind of incentive, but have this, as Secretary Cohen said, rights and responsibilities, yes, we're actually going to help you in a bigger way because of the genius of compound interest to actually be able to help really get you a college education or get you that down payment for a home. But you've got to serve to earn it. It's not free money. It's not a handout. It's something everybody earns.

So I think we should have that debate. I think we should look at how are we best leveraging our resources. I also think that as we look at having an education corps, a clean energy corps, we should look at, you know, the funding that's in the Department of Education or in the department – the EPA or in other areas and say can we reapportion some of this money for citizens' service as opposed to some of the different programs we're spending it on. I do think we have to look at, you know, how we can use our resources more effectively.

MR. COHEN: So we're going to open this up to the audience for any questions you might have. We can carry on the dialogue infinitely up here, but perhaps those in the audience would like to ask some questions. I see a lady right in the second row.

Q: (Inaudible) – very inspiring conversation presented. Thank you all. My question, actually, is for you, Captain, but would also like the response of the senators as well. You talked about your country loving you back with all of her heart and also about military service and the challenge of recruiting now and when we are fighting a war that, while, clearly potentially making some progress, it is not necessarily making the country safer and when our young men and women return and are not being given opportunities like the G.I. Bill or a full education can – when they are returning with issues like post-traumatic stress disorder in a way that our mental health system is not organized to relieve them in any way and when the outcome is – the kind of outcome that our young people are coming back from the war with, how is that we, as parents and as the young people that we support, can embrace the notion that you so eloquently are professing and so that we can see that our kids will, in fact, look like you, and not be a statistic that is something that none of us, I think, can live with?

(Applause.)

MR. MOORE: And first, thank you very much. Thank you very much for the question. It's a great question because the reality of what's happening on the ground, as many people know, and I was just reading a statistic the other day saying, you know, it's one of three of people, now, come back with – come back with PTSD. And so in addition to giving the soldiers, sailors, Marines, airmen the resources that we need overseas, we've also got to make sure we're taking care of them when they come back home and I think, again, I don't believe – (applause) – it's a partisan issue to say that it has not been done.

Now, into – going back to the heart of the question, one of the greatest obligations, and again, obligations, of citizenry is the ability to vote, is the ability to go – is the ability to go in and say who are our elected officials that are making the decisions? That is putting – that is, you know, putting brigade after brigade inside of harm's way and for what reason? And if we don't agree with that, then we need to use that power of the ballot to put in leaders that actually tend to profess a view of the world that we, more closely, are aligned with.

So the way I see – as an individual citizen, the best way of being able to determine the outcomes of different conflicts overseas is simply to go in and make sure your leaders hear your voice. And if they don't hear your voice, you get them out of office and you put people in who do hear your voice. (Applause.) And with that, and with that, and honestly, I completely, again, you know, honestly, I completely understand the question and my heart goes out to all family

members because it's extraordinarily difficult when you send someone off into combat. I mean, I saw my family go through it and what it was like both when they left and both with the homecoming and then where they're uncertain even on the homecoming of what is coming back to them.

But still understanding the virtue of the importance of the military to this country and what this military means to the country and what the military means, again, to the individuals that are a part of it, I think, has to be part of that equation as well. And in many ways, not to necessarily punish the institution because we disagree with some of the policies, affect the policy by getting people in who make policies that make sense but still support and love the institution that is out there supporting you.

(Applause.)

Q: Hi, I'm Sue Ann Stom (ph) with American Humanics and I took note of Congressman Lewis' comments the other night when he mentioned that he first learned and thought and heard of Martin Luther King when he was only 18 years old in the late 1950s. So by the time Martin Luther King was selected to lead the movement, he, himself, was 29 years old, Wes, and you're 29 years old today. When I think about my role as a Baby Boomer, I think it's time that some of us invite the leadership that Martin Luther King and the other were invited to by the elders and the black church back in the 1960s. So what I would ask that we consider, whether it's national service as a requirement, compulsory, if it's engaged through some of the other ideas that have been suggested here, that we add the word leadership and we call it national service and leadership or national leadership and service, something like that because I think what we really are focused on is not just giving and getting but encouraging people to take leadership roles from now and into the future. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. NUNN: Michelle, why don't you comment on that because you all have done a lot of work on the leadership angle?

MS. NUNN: Well, I mean, I do think that we need to call upon is the reservoir of leadership across this country and I think the – when we think about mobilizing citizens and when we talk about national service, I think one thing that's important is to think about, again, the continuum of engagement because – for what we know, only a small percentage of the population is going to be involved in – at any one time in national service movement so whether that's the military or whether that's AmeriCorps, we want to get that a lot bigger but it still will be the vanguard of citizenship. We want the entirety of the population to join us throughout their lifetime and we also know that you know, young people in elementary school and people we're honoring a Points of Light Award winner today, Edith Harvey, 94 years old, serves three days a week – her fellow seniors' meals and so, you know, we have a whole lifetime to give and I think that the key is unleashing the power of citizens to lead others.

As we think about this question of infrastructure, I do think we have to turn to and tap into the power of volunteer leaders to lead others in service because that's the way that we're

going to get the leverage and the scale. No matter how many federal resources we put in, and we need a lot more than we have and we will create a great return on investment for those, we still need to call upon the volunteer energy of others to lead others in service and I think that's how we'll get to the multiplier effect. So I think your point around leadership is really, really on point.

(Applause.)

Q: Is this on? Okay, Marsha Mates Kelly (ph) with – in Mississippi – I can only tell you, I'm trying to make my comments crisp because there's a lot of folks that want to say a number of things. First of all, my front-hand-view over the past 32 months of having been a part of the relief and recovery of Hurricane Katrina – we're 32 months into this, 700,000 volunteers that we can document strong that have come to our recovery just in Mississippi alone. We've got 60,000 homes to build, we built 3,000 in the best year that Mississippi ever had so we've got a long way in front of us but our Governor Haley Barbour would tell you that if it were not for the volunteer force, if it were not for the faith-based force of the folks that continue to come, that we are not going to have – we will have a huge homeless population before – before we can get folks where they need to be and out of FEMA trailers and all the complicated situations that they find their lives in.

So I am a huge advocate of the transformative force that's happening in this country to the change and the engagement that I'm seeing of folks wanting to come and then going back to their hometowns and saying, you know, I'm going to find a way to get involved like I never have before. So there is a mighty force that is happening in this country that I've been able to observe first-hand in a very passionate way and in a very profound way that I am a witness to something that, you know, and I'm honored to be in that way.

Having said that, I just – this force is going to – it's going to go in front of us or else we're going to lead the parade and I think Alan and this leadership of service nation and where we're going with the honeymoon period of a new president, there is going to be change. I just think we need to help shape that dialogue and we see that with 100-percent engagement of the millennium and the way that they're communicating. So take that and let us then lead that parade and shape that future because it is – it is a part of our future and I've seen that.

And one last quick comment is that if every single university who got work study dollars didn't use that force to do work on that campus to keep the campus nice and the clerical work going and all those kind of things, but they sent that force off that university into those neighborhoods where real problems are, that would be transformative.

(Applause.)

MR. KHAZEI: I just – first of all, I want to thank Marsha. You have been an extraordinary leader in the service movement and what you've done in Mississippi and the Gulf Coast, you've led the country and you are an example of what we hope everyone who does service grows up to be. So thank you for your leadership.

(Applause.)

And I just wanted to build off of what Marsha said. I'll take a moment for just a commercial. Marsha mentioned that I'm working very closely with John Bridgeland, the founder of the Freedom Corps and Michelle and Points of Light/Hands On and my former colleagues at City Year, and now a growing coalition of 84 organizations, many of you represent in this room and we want to keep growing it for what Marsha referred to as a service nation campaign. And essentially, what we're trying to do, many of you probably saw the cover story that Time Magazine did last September, "The Case for National Service."

Well, soon after they came out, Bridge and I and Michael from City Year had a chance to meet with Rick Stengel and we said, well, would you like to take that to the next level? How about if we tried to organize a summit on national service so we can bring together 500 leaders from across the country, governmental leaders like Senators Nunn and Cohen, business leaders, faith-based leaders, civic leaders, university presidents for a summit in New York to basically kick off this next campaign with a commitment to national and community service, where the citizens are saying, this is important for the country. Well, we are trying to push the dialogue so we're going to be doing that in September, September 11th and 12th, Time and CNN are going to have a presidential forum broadcast nationally, we're inviting both our nominees to participate.

But the most – the more important part of that, and this is my plea to all of you, is two weeks later, we're going to have a national day of action, September 27th, which is also a national public lands day, celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Civilian Conservation Corps. It's the first day after the first presidential debate, which will be happening in Mississippi. The members of Congress are out by then. And we're asking people in the service movement. This is very viable, it's very local, to organize events all over the country, to invite your members of Congress, invite your mayors, your governors, invite your business, civic leaders to come for service projects, for town meetings, for citizen hearings, all building off of this dialogue. We'd love to see dialogues like this happening all over the country, led by you, on September 27th. So if you want to participate, go to www.servicenation.org.

(Laughter.)

Everybody's got an Internet plug. (Applause.) And please sign up. Again, we're a small organization. We're just trying to be a facilitator for this. But if you all take the lead, if the energy that's at the conference, which is extraordinary, we can do what Marsha said, which is, we can push our leaders. We can build off of the tremendous leadership that Secretary Cohen and Senator Nunn are doing with this kind of dialogue and we can actually get to the place of a nation of service. So thank you, Marsha, for the – for the plug. Over here?

Q: Good morning, panelists. My name is Dixon McReynolds and I am from Takoma, Washington, and I just want to thank each and every one of the panelists for your service to this country and for this nation. I am, too, a Air Force retired and an AmeriCorps member and one thing that concerns me about our volunteerism – we had a class yesterday about how we engage the poor and people of color into volunteerism. Now, we know in our inner cities, we have a reservoir and a pool of people who have a heart to serve. How do we reach out to them to show

them that national service is in their interest and in the interest of the country? And how do we get them to trust us to help them to get to where they need to get to?

MS. NUNN: No, start us off.

MR. COHEN: I'll answer it. (Chuckles). This is something that Senator Nunn talked about in his introductory remarks about my wife, Janet, and Doug Wilson because the racial divide in this country is still very serious and very deep and in terms of the building of the trust, we have to have a dialogue on race and reconciliation in this country. And that's another dialogue that's going to take place in July and we're going to bring together thought leaders from all over the country to start dealing with the issue in a very forthright manner.

What is the nature of the problem, historically? Has it persisted and why has it persisted? How do we deal with it openly without any assignment of guilt or blame – but rather, here is an issue that we have to deal with because it is a homeland security issue as West Moore just mentioned. If you got one out of every three young black children who are going to end up in our criminal justice system, that is going to threaten the security of this country. So we have to deal with the race issue and Janet is taking the lead on that and we will have a dialogue, I think, that will be the first of many that are to come.

And I think the other issue we really – I haven't come to grips with – we've got all of this energy, we've got all these programs, how do we organize it all so that we know that there is a central focus where you can make these kinds of assignments with people who have the desire, who want to be asked to serve and are eager to serve and they say, where do we go? How do we sort out where we're best suited? Who is going to be organizing that for us? I think that's another part of what we have to come to grips with as we expand or scale up on national service, be it the military or in the non-military fashion.

MS. NUNN: I would just add that I do think that this is a critically important issue. We did have a conversation about it yesterday. I think we need to have an ongoing dialogue about it as a movement. I think we all know that service, we've all said, and we know the statistics, that service is important for those who are serving as well as those who are receiving. And we see service as a strategy – I learned recently from our colleagues at Children for Children and they're engaging young people in New York City that the best predictor of future success for a child is actually the quality of empathy and emotional intelligence.

So if you think about that, I mean, that's an amazing thing. And that, if we really focused on that, that would change the way that we think about how we allocate our resources to engage children and how we reach out to, especially, youth that may be at risk and use service as a strategy to engage them. So I think that we, you know, I think that this is an imperative and I think that we need to think about how do we allocate our organizational resources and our investments in such a way that we stress and reinforce this as a priority.

MR. MOORE: And if I could just add one more thing to that. You know, I was speaking with a friend of mine from Baltimore before who was talking about – we were talking about public service and he was saying my contribution to public service is making sure that my two

daughters are good citizens, making sure that my two daughters are going to school, going to college, becoming productive citizens, et cetera. And I said, you know, that's fine, but your leadership matters in the larger conversation as well because if your daughters can't walk down the street because your neighborhood is torn apart, how are you helping your daughters? If your daughters can't go to school because their school is completely dilapidated and 50 percent of the kids there drop out, how are you helping your daughters?

So I think a good way of approaching it as well is showing people that their leadership does matter and again, also on that individual level because you can't support your own personal family unless you're supporting your larger family.

(Applause.)

MR. KHAZEI: I have one quick thing to add. First of all, thank you for your own service in the Air Force and AmeriCorps. You're a great example of the link, literally, between military and civilian service and we need more people like you. There are programs that are doing this successfully that we can learn from and we need to scale up. YouthBuild, extraordinary program founded by, you know, one of the leading social entrepreneurs in our country, Dorothy Stoneman, which is bringing mostly young people of color, mostly who dropped out of high school, getting them skills and building, providing housing for the homeless and having them do service. The Corps Network, led by Sally Prouty, who is here at this conference, a whole network of conservation corps programs around the country that's involving a lot of young people of color. City Year is majority young people of color.

So there are programs we can learn from. We need to figure out how to scale them up and we need to talk to their leaders and say, how have you been successful? So that all of us can learn how to be successful, but – and I want to applaud Secretary Cohen and his wife Janet for leading this dialogue on race. It's so important and national service, you know the civil rights movement, changed the laws but you don't change people's hearts and their minds until they get a chance to work together and that's something that national service has shown it can do and it's critical. We're going to have – this country's going to be majority people of color within our lifetimes. California is already there. There is going to be no majority race soon and if we don't figure out how to work together and again, national service can be a key part of this, if we don't come – we've seen it in this campaign already.

If we can't figure out how we all come together as a country across lines of race and class and religion and socioeconomic levels, we won't make it as the premiere country in the 21st century. And the flip side is, we can role-model it for the world because we are the most diverse country in the world so there's an opportunity here so I saw you guys on CNN yesterday. It's a wonderful dialogue that you're kicking off. And again, all of us in this room need to be a part of that.

(Applause.)

Q: Al Schneider, I'm with the Arkansas Service Commission, executive director and I was particularly struck, Senator Nunn, by your comment about the cost of privatizing the war

effort, that it costs six to nine times as much when it's privatized as compared with having the armed forces deal with those issues and I'd like to dig into that a little more. What that says is that our armed forces efforts are not free. They cost us something but the return on the dollar is so incredibly much more. I think that needs to be said about all the volunteer efforts that we are talking about here this morning and little as we like in this idealistic and incredibly inspiring conversation to talk about it, it takes money to fuel these efforts. And I'd just like some comment on how we can communicate that message to our elected officials and to our corporate citizens who also have a responsibility to give back because they have been so incredibly blessed in this country that we live in.

(Applause.)

MR. NUNN: I'll just say a word on that. The hard part about a debate on the cost-benefit-ratio of national service is that the critics basically measure the service to community and individual and try to put a dollar mark on it. But what they don't capture is the benefit of rebuilding the human capital of our nation. The G.I. Bill happened to be the key, by most economists, right, to the productivity that basically led our country to be the strongest economy in the world in the '50s, '60s, '70s. The other thing that's not measured is how much is worth to have a citizen who serves for a year and then from that point on, is inspired to help communities on a continued lifetime basis?

That's not measured. So this price-benefit ratio has to be calibrated in a much broader sense than simply a dollars-cents comparison of how much the service is worth versus what could have been done in a private contract. That's not the right measurement. The measurement's got to be much broader. We need some of our basically volunteer economists in institutions around the country to start working on that challenge. Michelle and I have talked about that and that's one where we really need a volunteer with the special task of defining and helping quantify certain very great benefits that are inherently difficult to quantify.

MR. COHEN: And we need one other thing in our programs, especially on the military side, and that – we need more accountability. We cannot continue to appropriate two or \$300 billion in supplemental appropriations and then not know how the money is being spent and then simply say, no one is held accountable. (Applause.)

But we're going to move to the Internet. We have an Internet audience watching us and I have a couple of questions here: "What countries outside of the U.S. have model national service programs?" Which countries, who are they? What are they?

MR. KHAZEI: I can mention a couple. Israel is probably the best example where people serve. They have universal service there, both military and then also civilian alternatives for people based on reasons of faith. They are a great example. Germany also has a service program, again, where people can choose to serve in the military or serve on the civilian side. We can learn from them. South Africa is instituting a program where all students who get the benefit of going to medical school, become doctors, then have to serve for a period of time in either townships or in rural areas in South Africa. So there are some countries that are doing this.

I think that we have a chance here in America, though, to really role-model this for the world. I spent a year traveling around the world with my wife, Vanessa, looking at various citizen service opportunities and I think we have a chance – and people, this is 10 years ago – people totally admire this country and they want to learn from it. We’ve had, at City Year, people from 30 different countries come visit. We ended up starting a City Year program in South Africa. And I think we have a chance again to role model this for the country.

Could we become the first country in the world where every single citizen does some period of volunteer service as just part of their life every year, starting in kindergarten, as Michelle said, all the way through the retired years? And then every single citizen chooses to spend some period full-time – a semester, a summer, or a year or two – and role-model that for the world, because I think it’s essential to democracy that our citizens lead the way. And we can inspire the world that way, again, the way we’ve inspired the world in so many other areas. So there are things we can learn from other countries. I also think there’s a way for us to be the model in the 21st century.

MR. COHEN: Sam, do you have a –

MR. NUNN: Yeah, I’ve got an Internet question and I think, probably, Wes, you would be the right one for this one. John from Kentucky says, “How can we keep veterans engaged in national service after their tours are up?”

MR. MOORE: It’s a great question, John. And one thing that you will see, I think a lot of vets will see when they come back from deployments is, you know, it’s interesting. I’ll tell a quick story.

The week after I came back from Afghanistan, my mom was doing some work down in New Orleans, down in both Mississippi and the entire gulf area. And I first got a chance – again, this is a week after coming back from a combat zone – and I got a chance to go down to the lower ninth ward. And I told her something and she said it blew her away when I told her. And I said, you know, I’ve just spent almost a year in Afghanistan and I have never seen what I’ve seen down here, the amount of destruction and the fact that this happened almost a year before because, when this all happened, I was actually overseas. So, again, you’re getting spotty media coverage about, you know, a flood and some details, but you’re not getting the full impact of what happened until you come back to the States.

So a way that – you know, first, I think the military has programs where they actually do funnel people into, once they come out of the military service, they actually bring them to organizations and community groups that they continue to work with and the such. But also, I think, for a lot of military vets, once you return from that experience and you simply just go back into so many of these communities and you see what’s happening. You see the communities and you see the citizens that you were fighting for for so long and you see that, they didn’t only need your help overseas, but they need your help over here as well. I think it’s a great opportunity for military veterans to get involved, to contact organizations that are doing the work on the ground

and put their hand up and say, I put my hand up before to serve and I'm doing it again. And I just want to help and volunteer in some way.

So the military has certain programs that do that, but also, I think, it will take a lot of initiative also on the military personnel to go out and find these organizations that are doing the work and, again, as you're seeing here, it's easy to find them. But to help them connect and create that marriage so the service can continue even after they take off the uniform.

MR. NUNN: Bill, have you got another question?

MR. COHEN: Well, I had one that was already, I think, addressed. That is, should national service be mandatory? Wes, you've spoken and addressed that. I ask the other members of the panel.

MR. NUNN: I think they probably – my understanding of what the answer was, that's a debate for a later time. (Laughter.)

MS. NUNN: Well, I think –

MR. NUNN: Sounds like politicians to me. (Laughter.)

MS. NUNN: I think Wes probably expressed all of our emotional attachments to the idea of what might be possible. And I think Alan and I answered with a pragmatic sense that we should start with universal opportunity for everyone.

MR. NUNN: Let me mention one thing that Charlie Moskos, who I referred to earlier, has been promoting. And I think it makes a lot of sense. It's not compulsory, but he would really target college-aged young people with a 15-month tour. So it would be a short tour. Understandably, they would not be able to be in long enough to acquire all of the skills, but he did a test at Northwestern in the last 12 months and he asked students from all over the campus in a statistically sound way whether they would be willing to volunteer for 15 months in the U.S. military if they got regular pay and then they got a \$15,000 scholarship at the end of it. And 23 percent of the students said they would.

He asked the same question about four-year enlistments with \$60,000 scholarships. Only 2 percent said they would. Charlie's view was that 23 percent is a very large number and that that would do a wonderful thing for the military because they could be assigned jobs and – he used the hypothetical about military police because it doesn't take a huge amount of training for that. Guarding at Guantanamo is one of the things he said. Of course, I think we ought to close Guantanamo, but whatever. (Laughter.)

But, nevertheless, I think that is the way to go now. I think compulsory right now, with a war going on, would not be greeted well by the military or the population. I think, eventually, we may make – I'd like to make national service so attractive so that the wealthiest families in this country would want their children to serve because they would be participating with other people. Sometimes we forget the value.

I wasn't in the service but six months, but it had a tremendous effect on my life by serving with people from every walk of life, every economic group. It was a shaping, forming experience to me. And I think that is an experience a lot of our young people get in AmeriCorps, but a lot of people who don't serve don't get. And I'd like to make it so that everybody at every economic group says, I want to serve. I think that's the aspiration. (Applause.)

MR. COHEN: We're running out of time. I'd like to close at least my remarks with a reference to how I got involved in public service. And I was inspired by John F. Kennedy, who in that magnificent inaugural address asked what we could do for our country and not what our country could do for us. And when we think about the Kennedys, of course, we think about Teddy Kennedy and what he's going through at this moment. And our prayers truly are with him. He has been an incredible force in favor of promoting our best instincts in terms of humanity. And I think all of us – (applause) – are indebted to him.

And I would like to at least close my remarks with a quote taken from Robert Kennedy, another anniversary coming up, unfortunately, for Robert Kennedy. But he said that, "Each time a person stands up for an ideal or acts to improve the lot of others or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope. And coming from a million different centers of energy and daring, these ripples of hope can create a current that could sweep down the muddiest walls of oppression and resistance." That, to me, is what this conference is really all about. It is sending forth these tiny ripples of hope about what we can do together as individuals coming together on behalf of our families and our community and our country.

And that's why I wanted to thank Senator Nunn, for insisting that if we're going to have a series of dialogues, what we can do to make America great again, why we can –how we can maintain a premier leadership role throughout the world and set that standard to which everybody has looked to us for so many years in the past. He said, we've got to have a conference and a dialogue on national service. So I'm proud, Sam, that you organized this. We're indebted to you and to Michelle. And, Wes, we couldn't be more proud of you as citizen soldier, athlete, scholar. And, Alan, you have just done tremendous work throughout your life in dedicating yourself to public service and national service. You are a true leader of this effort. So thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. NUNN: Very briefly, a couple of thoughts. One is, if we ever get down in terms of being pessimistic about America, the best cure for that is to get around a bunch of people that are represented here in this audience and go out with them on a volunteer day and watch them with the shovels and watch them take young kids and turn playgrounds into boom-boom recreation areas and take murals and paint them on the walls of schools and have a wonderful atmosphere when kids walk in to the school on Monday. You get really inspired to the point of being emotional.

The other thing I would offer to this audience, and it may be a great recruiting ground for volunteers, if you ever think that America is still not the most wonderful country in the world, go

to a ceremony where the immigrants are being sworn in to be legal American citizens. If that won't bring tears to your eyes, nothing will. These people are very, very emotional and proud to be Americans. So we've got one heck of a foundation to build on. And we need to remember that as we face these problems.

My third point is, there's a very important person in this audience. And I think it's apparent from this panel this morning. And that's Wes' mother. And I think she ought to stand up and let us give her a round of applause. (Applause, chuckles.)

Thank you, all. I think that concludes the program. (Applause.) Wes, great job.

(END)