

For Immediate Release

**PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA SIGNS HISTORIC VOLUNTEERISM ACT INTO LAW
Senators Kennedy and Hatch honored during National Volunteer Week**

ATLANTA (April 21, 2009) – Today, President Barack Obama signed into law the historic Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, heralding the next phase in the nation’s renewed call to service. With the signing, America’s local, regional and national service programs and nonprofit organizations are now poised to expand to further meet the nation’s most pressing challenges.

“We applaud Congress and President Obama on this important bi-partisan legislation that will change the course of history and civic responsibility in our country,” said Michelle Nunn, CEO, Points of Light Institute and co-founder of HandsOn Network, the largest volunteer management and civic engagement organization in the country. “Just as importantly, we applaud the countless volunteers and community organizers across the country that have supported the President’s call to service by advocating for this new legislation.”

The signing of this landmark legislation comes during National Volunteer Week, a time when individuals, families, nonprofit organizations and government entities alike celebrate the ordinary people who accomplish extraordinary things through service. While there are celebrations of service all over the country, Washington D.C. is the hub of many of these activities and Points of Light Institute will pay special tribute tomorrow to the authors of this legislation, Senators Edward M. Kennedy and Senator Orrin G. Hatch at a special National Volunteer Week Congressional Reception. As two of the nation’s greatest leaders and architects of the service movement, Kennedy and Hatch will receive the Points of Light Lifetime of Leadership Award for Volunteerism and Service. This award recognizes individuals whose commitment and exemplary leadership in civic service has served as a catalyst for transformational change.

“Senator Kennedy and Senator Hatch were selected as recipients long before the Serve America Act was signed,” said Nunn. “But it is fitting that we honor their lifetime of leadership tomorrow, the day after the signing of an Act that will go down in history as the beginning of a new day of service for America. The Act truly provides the foundation needed to empower people--to give them the tools and access needed to be active, involved servant leaders, shaping their own communities, and, in the process changing their own lives.”

In addition to increasing support for national service program like AmeriCorps, VISTA and Senior Corps, the Serve America Act also includes a Volunteer Generation Fund that will help build a “truly inclusive and powerful volunteer service in this nation,” said Nunn. The fund provides for a grant program that will help to strengthen organizations nationwide. It also ensures that volunteers are recruited, trained, and supported in volunteer projects that have measurable outcomes.

“We are seeing enormous increases in volunteerism as well as increases in the demand for volunteers,” said Nunn citing a 60% increase so far this year in the number of volunteers stepping up to support communities through their national network of 250 volunteer management and connector organizations. She also noted that the demand for volunteers has also increased correspondingly.

Tomorrow’s first ever National Volunteer Week reception will be attended by over 300 national leaders, members of Congress and corporate, civic and community leaders who will pay tribute to the Senators. Among the long list are Senators Christopher J. Dodd-Connecticut, Barbara A. Mikulski-Maryland, Saxby Chambliss-Georgia, Daniel Inouye-Hawaii, Congresswoman Doris Matsui of

California, Congressman John D. Dingell of Michigan; Grammy Award winning artist Usher Raymond IV, a strong supporter of service and volunteerism for youth, top corporate executives from Chevron, The Coca-Cola Company, Delta Air Lines, GE, The Home Depot, SAP, Textron, Inc. and several other companies. Guests also include the leaders from national nonprofit organizations America's Promise, City Year, Youth Service America, New Profit, AARP, United Way, Be the Change, KaBOOM! and more.

About Points of Light Institute

Points of Light Institute has a global focus to redefine volunteerism and civic engagement for the 21st century and puts people at the center of community problem solving. Our vision is that one day every person will discover their power to make a difference, creating healthy communities in vibrant democracies around the world. To realize this vision, Points of Light Institute operates three dynamic business units that share a mission to equip, mobilize and inspire people to take action that changes the world: HandsOn Network, MissionFish and the Civic Incubator.

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