



Pass The Peace Corps Reauthorization Act!
NPCA's Top Legislative Priority
(House of Representatives: H.R. 1456)
(Senate legislation pending)

Our Request To Lawmakers

House of Representatives Meetings:

- [Use this link](#) to see if your Rep is a co-sponsor of H.R. 1456
- If your Rep is a co-sponsor, say thank you! If they are not, ask them to become a co-sponsor of H.R. 1456
- Urge lawmakers to bring the legislation to the House floor for a vote as soon as possible

Senate Meetings:

- At this time, Peace Corps Reauthorization legislation is being finalized but has not yet been introduced in the Senate
- Tell Senate offices that significant progress has been made to advance legislation in the House of Representatives
- Make Senate offices aware you will inform them when Senate legislation is introduced, and urge them to support passage of this legislation when the time comes

In All House and Senate Meetings:

- **Inform every office that Peace Corps Reauthorization legislation is our top legislative priority, and it is extremely important to pass this legislation this year!**

Background

- In the House of Representatives, this bipartisan legislation (H.R. 1456) was introduced on March 1, 2021 by the Co-Chairs of the House Peace Corps Caucus, Congressmen John Garamendi (D-CA) and Garret Graves (R-LA)
- The Peace Corps Reauthorization Act (PCRA) was first introduced in 2019. At that time, Congressman Garamendi, a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV), stated he wants this legislation to focus on supporting both serving and returned Peace Corps volunteers.
- At the conclusion of the previous (116th) Congress, the PCRA had 48 co-sponsors (43 Democrats and 5 Republicans).
- In the current (117th) Congress, the PCRA has grown to 113 co-sponsors (109 Democrats and 4 Republicans). Along with Reps. Garamendi and Graves, the other original co-sponsors of the legislation are Ed Case (D-HI), Grace Meng (D-NY), Dean Philipps (D-MN), Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen (R-American Samoa), and Albio Sires (D-NJ).
- In a strong bi-partisan show of support, the [House Foreign Affairs Committee](#) (HFAC) voted 44 to 4 to approve the legislation in the form of a substitute amendment introduced by Chairman Greg Meeks. Eighteen HFAC Republicans joined 26 Democrats to approve the legislation. The four who voted against H.R. 1456 were Reps. Tim Burchett (R-TN), Ronny Jackson (R-TX), Scott Perry (R-PA), and Greg Steube (R-FL).
- The House Education and Labor Committee has reportedly waived the need for H.R. 1456 to come before its committee. Lead supporters of H.R. 1456 are now working to bring the legislation to the full House for a final vote.
- In the Senate, Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ), the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is working on finalizing their version of the PCRA. This legislation is expected to be introduced soon.
- While various Peace Corps legislation has been passed in recent years, it has been more than twenty years since a comprehensive Peace Corps Reauthorization Act was passed by Congress.

Content of the Legislation

This is the [text of H.R. 1456](#), as amended by the House Foreign Affairs Committee:

H.R. 1456 would do the following:

Peace Corps Funding

- **Recommended Peace Corps Appropriations:** The legislation calls for increased funding for the Peace Corps reaching \$550 million through Fiscal Year 2024.

Volunteer Health, Safety and Security

- **Extension of Sexual Assault Advisory Council:** The Kate Puzey Volunteer Protection Act of 2011 created the Peace Corps' Sexual Assault Advisory Council. In 2018, the Sam Farr and Nick Castle Peace Corps Reform Act extended the work of the council through 2023. H.R. 1456 would extend the work of the council through 2025.
- **Protection of Peace Corps Volunteers Against Reprisals or Retaliation:** Language in the legislation outlines recommended procedures and policies to protect Volunteers from acts of reprisal or retaliation.
- **Menstrual Equity Act:** H.R. 1456 includes text of [H.R. 1467](#), the [Menstrual Equity in the Peace Corps Act](#), legislation introduced by Rep. **Grace Meng** (D-NY). This legislation requires the Peace Corps to ensure access to menstrual products for Volunteers who require them, either by increasing stipends or providing the products for affected Volunteers.
- **Anti-Malarial Drugs:** The legislation states that the Peace Corps shall consult with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on recommendations in prescribing malaria prophylaxis, and that the agency shall address training of medical personnel in malaria countries on side effects of such medications.
- **GAO Reporting on Mental Health:** The legislation requests a report by the Government Accountability Office on the status and possible improvements related to mental health services provided to RPCVs upon coming home from service.
- **Additional Reporting Requirements:** H.R. 1456 includes additional reporting requirements on Peace Corps guidelines and standards used to evaluate the mental health of Peace Corps applicants prior to service. It calls for more detailed information on the number of evacuations due to medical or mental health circumstances, and associated costs.

Volunteer Benefits and Recognition

- **Workers Compensation Increase:** H.R. 1456 includes long fought-for language calling for an increase in the rate of compensation for RPCVs who come home and are unable to work due to service related illness or injury.
- **Post-Service Health Coverage for Returned Volunteers:** The traditional period in which the Peace Corps pays for post-service health insurance for returning Volunteers would be increased from 30 days to 60 days under the legislation.

- **Volunteer Readjustment Allowance:** The legislation would set the current Volunteer readjustment allowance (\$375/month) as the statutory minimum allowance for Volunteers going forward.
- **Increased Duration for Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE):** H.R. 1456 would protect the full NCE benefit for new Volunteers should they be unable to work due to illness or injury upon returning home, or if there is a federal government shutdown or hiring freeze. The amendment would also extend the general length of NCE from one year to two years.
- **Respect for Peace Corps Volunteers Act:** The legislation includes text of [H.R. 4188](#), the [Respect for Peace Corps Volunteers Act](#), legislation introduced by Rep. **Albio Sires** (D-NJ) and Rep. **Garret Graves** (R-LA). This would confirm that an allowable use of the Peace Corps name, official seal, and emblem would include its use at gravesites or in death notices.

Other

- **Expedited Volunteer Re-enrollment:** H.R. 1456 outlines steps to support volunteers whose service ended involuntarily as a result of an emergency, suspension of operations, or otherwise through no fault of a volunteer or trainee. This includes providing separation allowances for affected volunteers, and eliminating or expediting certain requirements for individuals seeking to re-apply to the Peace Corps.
- **Renewed National Advisory Council:** H.R. 1456 would reestablish a National Advisory Council to bring more exposure to the agency and its work. The council would also be charged with considering key issues related to the Peace Corps' future, including agency progress in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion and examining financial barriers that might prevent individuals from applying to the Peace Corps.
- **Peace Corps Service Deployments in the U.S.:** Given the emergency deployment of Peace Corps Volunteers in response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and the service by Volunteers to assist the Federal Emergency Management Agency with COVID relief in 2021, the legislation would codify into law the allowance of future Volunteer deployment in the U.S. at the request of another federal agency.
- **Expanded Language on Virtual Service Opportunities:** The legislation expands language regarding virtual volunteer opportunities and incorporates it into the Peace Corps Act. It notes that this expands opportunities to recruit individuals who face barriers to serving physically in a country outside the U.S.
- **Service and Technology:** The legislation directs the Peace Corps to establish new Volunteer opportunities that promote internet technology-adoption in developing countries and engage tech-savvy Americans.

Key Talking Points

- **This is the Moment!** In all meetings, emphasize this legislation is the top priority of National Peace Corps Association, and that we need lawmakers to pass this legislation this year. As the first volunteers are expected to return to service in the coming weeks and months, it is imperative that they return to a stronger and better Peace Corps.
- **Respect and Support Peace Corps:** The work of the Peace Corps deserves our respect and support. This legislation contains a number of key provisions that recognize and honor those who serve our nation in the Peace Corps.
- **Pick Your Passion:** It will not be possible in your meetings to discuss all the items contained in H.R. 1456. You (and other speakers in your meeting) should choose three or four of the provisions listed above which you feel strongly about or have expertise. Highlight the issues about which you feel most knowledgeable and passionate.
- **Funding Increases that are Responsible and Necessary:** H.R. 1456 calls for steady, sustainable increases in funding over the next three fiscal years. Along with providing financial resources to assist the Peace Corps in moving towards the 10,000 Volunteer minimum referenced in the original Peace Corps Act, increased funding is also necessary to better implement reforms outlined in this and previous legislation.
- **Prioritize Evacuated Volunteers Who Wish to Serve:** It has now been two years since the COVID-19 pandemic caused the Peace Corps to bring home more than 7,000 Volunteers, many of whom were only a few months into the start of their service. While many Volunteers have pursued other opportunities, we must respect and support those evacuees who are managing their lives to allow them to return to service.
- **Continue Addressing Sexual Assault:** As news reports have continued to point to problems within the agency in addressing sexual assault, we must continue to be vigilant in seeking improvement and reform. H.R. 1456 extends the important work of the congressionally established Sexual Assault Advisory Council through 2025.
- **Disability Pay—Overview:** A longstanding need for improvement involves increasing the payment for RPCVs who are disabled due to illness or injuries stemming from their Peace Corps service. By raising the pay scale based on the current GS–7 level to GS–11, monthly disability pay would increase from approximately \$1,800 to more than \$2,500. This critical increase for some of the most vulnerable members of our community would cost the agency roughly \$2 million per year.
- **Enhanced Non–Competitive Eligibility:** One of the few post-service benefits RPCVs receive is one year of non-competitive eligibility (NCE) for federal hiring. H.R. 1456 would expand this benefit to two years. It also supports RPCVs in getting their full NCE opportunity by “stopping the clock” on eligibility should there be a federal hiring freeze or government shutdown. The legislation also delays the one year of eligibility for RPCVs who come home with a service related disability that prevents them from working.
- **National Advisory Council:** Dormant for more than 30 years, a high-level advisory council would heighten the profile and status of the Peace Corps and help propel the agency forward on key matters, including diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts across the agency, as well as strategies to eliminate economic barriers to service.