

Given our strong interest in not reducing student services and minimizing disruption to the Job Corps Program, we proceeded cautiously in evaluating and implementing cost saving measures in PY 2012. In retrospect, it is clear that we did not act as quickly or decisively as circumstances required. As the Assistant Secretary, I take full responsibility for our failure to manage these issues more aggressively.

Although they ultimately were insufficient, we did take several significant steps throughout PY 2012 to gain better control of Job Corps' expenses. For example, in August a newly-created Office of Financial Administration (OFA) within ETA, headed by a Senior Executive Service-level Comptroller, began operating. OFA oversees the now-centralized budget and financial operations of Job Corps. After OFA began operating, we developed initial targets for both savings and what we believed would be a sufficient reserve for the Job Corps program. We also eliminated a contract for accounting services within the Job Corps Operations account, reduced USDA costs, and negotiated with contractors to identify additional cost-savings measures.

In September 2012, the Secretary approved several additional measures for PY 2012: a reduction in new student biweekly stipend and transition pay to graduates, suspension of enrollments in late November and December, centralizing student transportation costs, and reducing the national academic support contract and career technical support contract. In October 2012, we issued guidance informing the Job Corps community that we would be suspending enrollment from November 26 through December 31, 2012. We also announced that, effective November 1, 2012, Job Corps would reduce the stipends and transition pay for new enrollees.

Despite these cost-cutting measures, our analysis of data in November showed that Job Corps would need to implement additional savings because costs were again exceeding budgeted amounts. Therefore, in December, we took additional steps, including eliminating the student stipend for days when a Job Corps student is not present for duty, which took effect immediately, and reducing the student clothing stipend, effective January 1, 2013. We reduced Job Corps' national media buy by \$4 million for PY 2012. In mid-December, we increased the student to teacher ratio from 15:1 to 18:1 in order to save costs, while properly accounting for the special academic needs of at-risk youth.

In January 2013, we also issued guidance to reduce health care-related costs, including by modifying the current health staffing requirements, adjusting the hours for center physicians, dentists and Training Employee Assistance Program specialists based on center usage, and requiring applicants to provide a current record of immunizations in order to eliminate duplicative care. We also continued our work to cut administrative costs. Among other things, we have issued a solicitation that we anticipate will help Job Corps right-size its career technical training and academic programs and we are exploring the best way to centralize utility and other procurements.

Notwithstanding these efforts to reduce costs for PY 2012, as of the beginning of January 2013 we continued to project insufficient cost savings to remain within budgeted levels for the program year. On January 18, 2013, Job Corps instructed all centers to temporarily suspend outreach and admission activities, effective January 28, except for runaway, homeless and foster care candidates. The length of the suspension will be determined by the time it takes to achieve the necessary savings, but we do not expect it to last past June 30, 2013.

The decision to temporarily freeze Job Corps enrollment nationwide was extremely difficult. It came after we implemented many alternative cost-savings measures, albeit insufficient ones. We also considered other alternatives before deciding to implement the temporary enrollment freeze.

Some of the options we considered include an abbreviated program year, slot reductions at a specified number of centers, cutting student stipends and transition pay to current students, and adopting a student leave policy in lieu of scheduled holiday and other school breaks. Ultimately, we rejected these and other options because of their more harmful effect on the Job Corps program and the students that it serves as well as the insufficient savings we would have obtained. Our conclusion was that the most certain and least detrimental savings Job Corps could achieve for the remainder of PY 2012 was from the temporary suspension. This will result in reduced center operating expenses, lower Outreach/Admissions contract costs, as well as savings in student stipend and transportation costs.

Notwithstanding the temporary enrollment suspension, on January 28, 2013, Job Corps continued to serve 44,268 students as of that date. With the suspension of new enrollments, Job Corps will be able to keep its commitment to students who are already in the program.

In closing, the Department deeply regrets the current situation facing the Job Corps program. I personally take responsibility for not acting more quickly to ensure that the program was operating within its appropriated levels. The decision to temporarily suspend enrollment at all centers is the most balanced, efficient way to achieve the savings now in order to avoid a shortfall in PY 2012. However, we clearly recognize that a comprehensive review and assessment of the Job Corps program, contracting, budget, and management is needed to ensure that we do not face this situation again. We will keep your office updated. Please contact Michelle Rose in the Department's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs with any questions. She may be reached at (202) 693-4600.

Sincerely,

JANE OATES,
Assistant Secretary.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 320—DESIGNATING DECEMBER 14, 2013, AS "WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA DAY"

Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. KING) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 320

Whereas 22 years ago, the Wreaths Across America project began an annual tradition, during the month of December, of donating, transporting, and placing Maine balsam fir holiday wreaths on the graves of the fallen heroes buried at Arlington National Cemetery;

Whereas more than 1,000,000 wreaths have been sent to locations, including national cemeteries and veterans memorials, in every State and overseas;

Whereas the mission of the Wreaths Across America project to "Remember, Honor, Teach" is carried out in part by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery as well as veterans cemeteries and other locations in all 50 States;

Whereas the Wreaths Across America project carries out a week-long veterans parade between Maine and Virginia, stopping along the way to spread a message about the importance of remembering the fallen heroes of the United States, honoring those who serve, and teaching the people of the United States about the sacrifices made by veterans and their families to preserve the freedoms in the United States;

Whereas in 2012, wreaths were sent to more than 800 locations across the United States and overseas, 100 more locations than the previous year;

Whereas in December 2013, the Patriot Guard Riders, a motorcycle and motor vehicle group that is dedicated to patriotic events and includes more than 250,000 members nationwide, will continue the tradition of the group of escorting a tractor-trailer filled with donated wreaths from Harrington, Maine to Arlington National Cemetery;

Whereas thousands of individuals volunteer each December to escort and lay the wreaths;

Whereas December 15, 2012, was previously designated by the Senate as "Wreaths Across America Day"; and

Whereas the Wreaths Across America project will continue the proud legacy on December 14, 2013, bringing approximately 130,000 wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery on that day: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates December 14, 2013, as "Wreaths Across America Day";

(2) honors the Wreaths Across America project, the Patriot Guard Riders, and all of the volunteers and donors involved in this worthy tradition; and

(3) recognizes the sacrifices that our veterans, members of the Armed Forces, and their families have made, and continue to make, for our great Nation.

SENATE RESOLUTION 321—HONORING THE LIFE, ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND LEGACY OF NELSON ROLIHLEHLA MANDELA AND EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES ON HIS PASSING

Mr. REID (for himself, Mr. McCONNELL, Mr. COONS, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. COATS, Mr. COBURN, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CORKER, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HELLER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHANNIS, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Mr. KIRK, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. REED, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SANDERS, Mr.