



For Immediate Release

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Senator Cochran Honored for Commitment to National Service ***Mississippi Senator Thad Cochran Receives Edward M. Kennedy National Service Lifetime Leadership Award***

Washington, D.C.—Senator Thad Cochran, R-Miss., was presented the Edward M. Kennedy National Service Lifetime Leadership Award for his life-long dedication to citizen service and for outstanding leadership in advancing national service as a civic commitment and legislative priority. Cochran was among thirteen legislators and citizen humanitarians honored February 14, 2012, at the Friends of National Service Awards Reception, an annual event sponsored by Voices for National Service.

Cochran has been a long-time advocate for literacy programs, volunteerism and national service programs. Cochran serves as the Senate Republican Chair for the National Service Caucus, a bipartisan group of legislators dedicated to raising awareness of national service and expanding service opportunities for all Americans. In his acceptance speech, the senior senator from Mississippi spoke fondly of his friendship with the late senator Edward M. Kennedy, for whom the lifetime achievement award is named.

Mississippi was well-represented at the awards ceremony, emceed by Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service Executive Director W. David Mallery. Mallery also serves as Vice-Chair for Voices for National Service. Senator Roger Wicker, R-Miss., and Representative Gregg Harper, R-Miss., were in attendance, as was Mayor Paul Winfield of Vicksburg, one of the "Founding Cities of Service." Marsha Meeks Kelly, current National AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) Advisory Board member and MCVS Executive Director Emeritus, also attended the reception. This is not Mississippi's first time in the national service spotlight: in 2011, Governor Haley Barbour received the Friends of National Service State Leadership Award.

National service is an integral part of Mississippi life, and the bulk of the state's national service programs support and enhance Pre-K and K-12 education initiatives throughout the state, teaching students vital skills they will carry with them throughout their lives. National service opportunities also contribute heavily to Mississippi workforce development, offering participants practical experience and proven on-the-job training: last year, 1,848 individuals applied for 696 AmeriCorps Mississippi positions. In 2011, Mississippi volunteers engaged by MCVS contributed the equivalent of \$8,727,631.92 in service to our communities. Statewide, volunteers and national service members are getting things done, making a difference for our children, our seniors, our veterans and military families.

The Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service (MCVS) is the state office of volunteerism. Since the agency was established by executive order in 1994, MCVS has worked to encourage a culture of citizenship, service and responsibility to America. In partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, Mississippi Department of Education, Mississippi Center for Nonprofits, and faith-based and community organizations statewide, MCVS is fostering community engagement and building volunteer capacity throughout the state. Contact MCVS at 888.353.1793, our website www.mcvs.org, Facebook www.facebook.com/volunteeryall and Twitter @volunteeryall.

Voices for National Service is a diverse coalition of national service programs, state commissions, and individual champions committed to expanding opportunities for Americans of all ages to serve and volunteer. Founded in 2003, Voices for National Service mobilized supporters to spread a critical message: America needs AmeriCorps.

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