

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

October 13, 2023

The Honorable Michael D. Smith  
Chief Executive Officer  
AmeriCorps  
250 E Street SW  
Washington, DC 20525

Dear Mr. Smith:

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability is conducting oversight over the American Climate Corps (ACC), a “workforce and service initiative” recently announced by the Biden Administration.<sup>1</sup> According to the Administration’s announcement, this initiative would purportedly enlist more than 20,000 young people to work green energy jobs which “will focus on equity and environmental justice.”<sup>2</sup> That announcement indicates that AmeriCorps “will stand up a new ‘[ACC] hub,’” and coordinate with the Department of Labor, Department of the Interior, Department of Agriculture, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Energy, and other agencies.<sup>3</sup> We request documents and information to understand the role of AmeriCorps in carrying out this initiative and the anticipated cost of the ACC, including the extent to which the ACC will redirect funds from other AmeriCorps programs or any other existing federal agencies and programs.

Unlike the Civilian Conservation Corps, which was implemented by President Roosevelt in response to an authorization in a law passed by Congress,<sup>4</sup> the announcement of the program does not reference any legal authority giving rise to the program. According to the announcement, as the nexus of the ACC for federal agencies, AmeriCorps seems poised to facilitate the flow of an unspecified sum of federal taxpayer dollars to unknown individuals and entities.<sup>5</sup> It is unclear where these funds are coming from and for what purposes they will be used.

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<sup>1</sup> The White House, Statements and Releases, *FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Launches American Climate Corps to Train Young People in Clean Energy, Conservation, and Climate Resilience Skills, Create Good-Paying Jobs and Tackle the Climate Crisis* (Sep. 20, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> See *An Act for the relief of unemployment through the performance of useful public work, and for other purposes*, Public Law 73-5 (Mar. 31, 1933).

<sup>5</sup> See Robin Bravender, *Biden launches American Climate Corps*, E&E NEWS (Sep. 20, 2023); See Letter from Americas Service Commissions, et. al, to Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the United States (Sep. 18, 2023).

AmeriCorps is a federal agency devoted to national service and fostering volunteerism.<sup>6</sup> This includes “providing people power and funding” to eligible organizations,<sup>7</sup> raising questions about identity and goals of the parties who may be applying to AmeriCorps for taxpayer funds to facilitate the ACC program. Presumably this would include environmental advocacy organizations who called for the ACC’s creation.<sup>8</sup> The White House’s recent announcement also suggests ACC participants will be hired into government or private-sector union jobs through a “streamlined pathway.”<sup>9</sup> It is therefore important to understand exactly which jobs applicants would fill, how they would be selected, and for what purposes.

To assist the Committee’s oversight of the creation and implementation of the ACC, we request the following documents and information, covering the time period January 20, 2021 to the present, as soon as possible but no later than October 27, 2023:

1. All documents and communications containing any accounting of the projected cost of the ACC, describing the specific sources of funds and classifying all anticipated expenditures by federal agency, program and object class;
2. All documents and communications between and among AmeriCorps and the White House referring or related to the ACC;
3. All documents and communications between and among AmeriCorps and federal agencies, including the Department of Labor, Department of the Interior, Department of Agriculture, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Energy, referring or related to the ACC;
4. All documents and communications between and among AmeriCorps and state governments, including Arizona, California, Colorado, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Utah, and Washington, referring or relating to the ACC;
5. All documents and communications between and among AmeriCorps and third parties referring or relating to the ACC, including Americas Service Commissions, Blue America, Center for Biological Diversity Action Fund, Chesapeake Climate Action Network, Chiron Communications, CivicWell, Conservation Trust for North Carolina, Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action, Debt Collective, Evergreen Action, Farallon Strategies, Food & Water Watch, Gen Z for Change, GreenFaith, GreenLatinos, GRID Alternatives, Healthy Communities of the Capital Area, Hip Hop Caucus, IfNotNow, Justice Democrats, Labor Network for Sustainability, League of Conservation Voters, Maine Conservation Voters, Main Farm to

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<sup>6</sup> AmeriCorps, *FAQs*, available at <https://americorps.gov/about/faqs> (last visited Sep. 26, 2023).

<sup>7</sup> AmeriCorps, *Partner*, available at <https://americorps.gov/partner> (last visited Sep. 26, 2023).

<sup>8</sup> See Letter from Americas Service Commissions, et. al, to Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the United States (Sep. 18, 2023).

<sup>9</sup> *Supra*, n. 1.

- Institution, March for Our Lives, Marked by Covid, Milwaukee River Keeper, National Wildlife Federation, Next100, NextGen America, OIC of America, Inc., Oil Change International, Our Hawaii, Partnership for the CCC, Path to Progress, People's Action, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada, ReImagine Appalachia, RuralOrganizing, Service Employees International Union, Serve Washington, Service Year Alliance, Sierra Club, States for Service Coalition, Sunrise Movement, The Climate Initiative, The Climate Reality Project, The Corps Network, US High Speed Rail Association, WildEarth Guardians, and Working Families Party;
6. All documents and communications referring or relating to any ACC memorandum of understanding between the Department of Labor, Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Energy, and AmeriCorps;
  7. All documents and communications related to any cost to taxpayers for the "ACC hub";
  8. All documents and communications referring or relating to ACC skills-based training;
  9. All documents and communications containing the words "student loan" referring or relating to the ACC;
  10. All documents and communications referring or relating to an individual or organization joining or supporting the ACC;
  11. All documents and communications referring or relating to an individual or organization hosting members of the ACC at project site; and
  12. All documents and communications referring or relating to <https://www.whitehouse.gov/climatecorps> or any government website domain of the ACC.

Additionally, please provide a staff-level briefing on this matter as soon as possible, but no later than October 20, 2023. Attached are instructions for producing the documents and information to the Committee. If you have any questions, contact the Committee on Oversight and Accountability Majority staff at 202-225-5074.

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate, "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

The Honorable Michael D. Smith

October 13, 2023

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Sincerely,



James Comer

Chairman

Committee on Oversight and Accountability



Pete Sessions

Chairman

Subcommittee on Government  
Operations and the Federal  
Workforce

cc: The Honorable Jamie B. Raskin, Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Accountability

The Honorable Kweisi Mfume, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Government Operations and the Federal Workforce