

September 22, 2008

The Honorable Benjamin Cardin
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Olympia Snowe
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Ensign
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Cardin, Snowe, Schumer and Ensign:

The undersigned organizations are writing to express our support for your revised legislation, S.3532, the Giving Incentives for Volunteers Everywhere Act of 2008 (GIVE Act), a bill to address the impact of high gasoline prices on volunteers, charitable organizations, and the people and communities we serve.

As has been widely reported in recent months, charitable organizations are finding it increasingly difficult to find volunteers who are able to use their own automobiles to deliver critically needed services due to the burden of high gas prices. These are the volunteers who provide food deliveries, transportation for elderly persons, and home-based services and other services for the most vulnerable among us.

Current tax law, which has not been updated since 1997, provides a very modest tax deduction of 14 cents per mile to cover the costs of using personal vehicles for volunteer service. Further, when nonprofits are able to reimburse their volunteers for mileage, the individuals must treat most of that reimbursement as taxable income.

The GIVE Act addresses these problems in two ways. First, it would turn over authority to the Treasury Department to set an appropriate volunteer mileage deduction that “shall not be less than” the current rate for medical mileage expenses. This would set the rate at 27 cents per mile initially and allow Treasury to adjust the rate in the future. While many in the nonprofit community believe that a higher deduction is more appropriate, given the value to society that volunteers provide, we recognize that your proposal for the volunteer mileage deduction represents the best approach that can be enacted at this critical time. Next, your bill would exempt from taxable income reimbursements from charities up to the business rate (currently 58.5 cents per mile) for use of a personal vehicle for volunteer service. Both changes are urgently needed to help make it more affordable for volunteers to continue with their service to communities.

We commend you for your leadership on this very important issue and plead to work for its prompt enactment into law.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

American Association of Homes & Services for the Aging
American Cancer Society Action Network

American Heart Association
 American Red Cross
 American Society of Association of Executives
 Catholic Charities USA
 Easter Seals
 Experience Wave
 Feeding America (formerly known as America's Second Harvest)
 Fulbright Association
 Habitat for Humanity International
 Independent Sector
 League of American Orchestras
 Lutheran Services in America
 Meals On Wheels Association of America
 National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (N4A)
 National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs
 National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
 National Council on Aging
 National Multiple Sclerosis Society
 National Seniors Corps Association
 Points of Light Institute
 United Jewish Communities
 United Way of America
 YMCA of the USA

State Organizations

Arizona Community Media Foundation	AZ
Gabriel's Angels, Inc.	AZ
Girl Scouts -- Arizona Cactus-Pine Council, Inc.	AZ
Hospice of the Valley	AZ
Youth On Their Own	AZ
Yuma Conservation Garden, Inc.	AZ
Golden State Donor Services	CA
Jewish Family Service of Colorado	CO
Greater Washington Partnership for Palliative & End-of-Life Care	DC
Lutheran Social Services of North Florida	FL
Georgia Center for Nonprofits	GA
American Red Cross, Wyandotte County Chapter	KS
Jewish Family & Vocational Services	KY
Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations	LA
Bethesda Health Center	MD

Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations	MD
Montgomery College	MD
Nehemiah Community Revitalization Corporation	ME
Bloomfield Township Senior Services	MI
Calvin College	MI
Communities in Schools of Lenawee	MI
Focus: HOPE	MI
Lenawee Community Foundation	MI
MARO Employment and Training Association	MI
Mercy Hospital-Port Huron	MI
Michigan Nonprofit Association	MI
Volunteer Center of Greater Kalamazoo	MI
Goodwill/Easter Seals of Minnesota	MN
Minnesota Nonprofit Associations	MN
Humanitri	MO
Befrienders	MT
Heisey Youth Center	MT
North Carolina Center for Nonprofits	NC
Shepherd's Center of Winston-Salem	NC
The New Hampshire Center for Nonprofits	NH
The Bach Foundation	NJ
Habitat For Humanity of New York	NY
Thousand Islands Area Habitat for Humanity	NY
UJA-Federation & Jewish Philanthropies of New York, Inc.	NY
NE Ohio Greyhound Rescue	OH
University Hospitals Case Medical Center	OH
Metropolitan Family Service	OR
Yamhill County CASA Program	OR
A Child's Haven	SC
Increasing H.O.P.E. Financial Training Center	SC
South Carolina Association of Nonprofit Organizations	SC
The ACCESS Network Inc.	SC
UpperEx National Outreach Coalition	SC
CASA of Johnson County	TX
Instruments of Peace	TX
National Multicultural Western Heritage Museum	TX
Spirit Horse Therapy	TX
The Turning Point	TX
A Caring Heart	WA
CDM Services	WA
Human Services Council	WA

MOSAIC Arts Alliance	WA
Nonprofit Network of Southwest Washington	WA
Vancouver Watersheds Council	WA
Advocates of Ozaukee	WI
Barron County WI Economic Development Dept.	WI
Marquette Co. Commission on Aging	WI
The Friends of the Cedarburg Bog, Inc.	WI