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Senate

Recognizing the 10th Anniversary of Public Allies Delaware

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I recognize the 10th anniversary of Public Allies Delaware. This organization is celebrating a decade of mobilizing diverse groups of young leaders by both civic participation and community outreach. Public Allies Delaware has built a reputation for providing integral community service throughout Delaware. If this organization's first decade is any indication of what it will offer in the future, we have much to look forward to.

In 1992, a diverse group of young social entrepreneurs were helped by a number of established community and national leaders to create Public Allies. They believed that there were many energetic, talented young people who wanted to address critical issues in their communities and that many organizations and communities could benefit from such contributions to society.

Through the signature AmeriCorps program, Public Allies identifies talented young adults from diverse backgrounds and advances their leadership through a 10-month program of full-time, paid apprenticeships in nonprofit organizations, weekly leadership trainings, and team service projects.

In order to effectively achieve its goals and uphold its values, the program consists of apprenticeships, leadership training, and

team service projects. The apprenticeships offer Allies the opportunity to gain "real world" experience through service in nonprofit and public agencies. In these apprenticeships, Allies face important issues such as youth development, education, and public safety.

Furthermore, the leadership training aspect of the program helps Allies develop the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities so they can work productively and effectively with people from all walks of life. Through this leadership training, Allies attain skills in communication, critical thinking, appreciation of diversity, conflict resolution, and community asset recognition from a multitude of community leaders, professional consultants, and executives from nonprofit and corporate organizations.

Recognized by the Bush and Clinton administrations as a model for national service, Public Allies has grown to 11 communities nationwide in which more than 1,350 Allies have served. Evaluations have demonstrated Public Allies' effectiveness at advancing diverse young leaders, strengthening communities, strengthening nonprofits, and strengthening civic participation.

In 1994, full-time volunteer Suzanne Sysko, founded the fourth site of the fledgling Public Allies national organization in Wilmington, DE. With her father's assistance, she obtained free office space in

the PNC Building on Delaware Avenue. After putting together a strong Board of Directors, she began working with Antoine Allen in the implementation of the program. The first class graduated in 1995 with financial support from five corporations and foundations and a grant from AmeriCorps.

In the 10 years subsequent to its inception, Public Allies Delaware has made substantial progress in the areas of funding and development. In 1995, the organization was able to successfully secure a 100 percent increase in Public Allies Delaware's Grant-in-Aid allocation from the State legislature. By 1998, the board and program staff members were able to dramatically increase program funding by obtaining a line item in the State of Delaware Department of Labor's operating budget.

More recently, in 1999, the program began an invaluable partnership with the University of Delaware's College of Human Resources, Education and Public Policy. Through this affiliation, Public Allies Delaware alumni are offered the opportunity to supplement the education and experience they gained from the Public Allies program with a full-tuition undergraduate or graduate scholarship. To date, program alumni have utilized more than a half million dollars of Federal Government scholarship funds and matching fund awards provided by the University of Delaware in pursuit of higher education.

Currently, Public Allies operates both in Wilmington, DE, and at a new satellite site in Georgetown, DE. The program continues to maintain a statewide presence through 11 Allies located in Sussex and Kent Counties and another 11 located in New Castle County. By presenting a vehicle by which young people can both get involved in their community and receive scholarship

opportunities, Public Allies Delaware has provided an essential service to the State.

I thank the Public Allies for all that they do not only in Delaware but all across the country, and I wish them a very happy 10th anniversary. I today offer my full support and congratulate them on a remarkable decade of success.