

[HOUSE PASSES BILL CREATING COMMONWEALTH CORPS](http://litalien.wordpress.com/2007/10/26/house-passes-bill-creating-commonwealth-corps/)

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Will help promote public service and community engagement

BOSTON - Representative Barbara L'Italien (D-Andover) announced today that the House of Representatives passed Governor Deval Patrick's legislation to establish the Commonwealth Corps, a statewide volunteer and service organization aimed at encouraging residents of Massachusetts to lend their time and service to communities in need.

"This legislation stands to foster the values of volunteerism and encourage individuals to give back to their communities. This is not just a bill to promote civil service but to improve the quality of life and community in Massachusetts," said Representative L'Italien.

"The House voted to promote public service and provide aid to the many deserving communities of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Corps will serve to strengthen our neighborhoods and renew a commitment to volunteerism in our state," said Speaker Salvatore F. DiMasi.

"Civic engagement is fundamental to the well-being of our communities," Governor Patrick said. "By seeing our stake in each other, we become a stronger Commonwealth. Thanks to the help of our partners in the House and Senate, the Commonwealth Corps will soon be a reality. I want to particularly thank Speaker DiMasi and Chairman DeLeo for their efforts in moving this bill forward. Through mentoring, staffing soup kitchens and shelters, cleaning up parks and beaches, we can help transform communities and inspire others to take action to promote the common good."

The Commonwealth Corps will consist of a broad network of volunteers. Individuals 18 years or older, from all educational and career backgrounds are encouraged to volunteer part-time or full-time for the Corps. Members will devote no less than one year to serving a non-profit organization, civic program, or public agency, supplying services to individuals or areas in immediate need.

The legislation emphasizes the volunteerism of college students by creating a Commonwealth Student Corps pilot program at up to five public colleges or universities. Students will be encouraged to reinvest in their communities through service relevant to their field of study.

The program is envisioned as a private-public partnership with involvement from various entities such as public colleges and universities, private businesses, community groups,

foundations, public agencies and individuals. Commonwealth Corps will be supported by a \$3 million appropriation approved by the Legislature in the Fiscal Year 2008 budget.