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**FEINGOLD, COLEMAN REINTRODUCE PROGRAM TO HELP AMERICANS  
VOLUNTEER INTERNATIONALLY**

***Bipartisan Measure Will Enhance U.S. Citizen Diplomacy and Engagement Abroad***

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senators Russ Feingold (D-WI) and Norm Coleman (R-MN) have reintroduced legislation creating a program to help Americans volunteer overseas. The Global Service Fellowship Program would reduce the costs associated with volunteering internationally, allowing more U.S. citizens the opportunity to engage with people beyond our borders. The bipartisan measure will help improve the perception of our country abroad and strengthen our country's existing federal international education and exchange system. The bill is cosponsored by Senators Robert Casey (D-PA), Thad Cochran (R-MS), John Kerry (D-MA), George Voinovich (R-OH), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI).

“People in Wisconsin often tell me about their incredible experiences volunteering overseas and how those experiences impacted their lives and the lives of those they were helping,” Feingold said. “Now, more than ever, we need to be investing in every opportunity to improve the perception of the U.S. abroad. Some of the greatest threats to our national security are based on false impressions of who we are as Americans. To change these impressions, we need the world to understand who the American people really are.”

“Global volunteerism enriches international relations, creates well-rounded citizens and helps vulnerable populations overseas,” said Coleman. “The small investments made by this bill will not only help ease the financial burden associated with international volunteering, but also help foster a culture of volunteerism whose impact will go far beyond the program's direct beneficiaries. This program will not compete with, but rather complement the Peace Corps, by facilitating shorter term projects in a cost-effective manner. This program is a win for U.S. public diplomacy and a win for those whose lives will be touched, both the volunteers and the people they will serve.”

Feingold and Coleman first introduced the Global Service Fellowship Program in May 2007. The reintroduced measure builds on the original legislation by ensuring fellowships overseas are not taxed, encouraging fellowships to be awarded throughout the country, increasing collaborative opportunities for the Department of State and USAID, and calling on participants to engage with Members of Congress about their experiences abroad. Studies have shown that in areas where U.S. citizens have volunteered their time, money, and services, opinions of the United States have improved. This program will be a valuable addition to our public diplomacy and private humanitarian efforts abroad.

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