

1           A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION establishing the Kentucky Service Caucus  
2 within the Kentucky General Assembly.

3           WHEREAS, national service and civic volunteerism are essential for the health and  
4 vitality of both the United States and the Commonwealth; and

5           WHEREAS, national, state, and local service organizations across the nation assist  
6 in providing essential services to the elderly, the impoverished, the disabled, and the  
7 downtrodden; and

8           WHEREAS, service programs are wildly popular with the public. Eighty-three  
9 percent of American voters want Congress to either maintain or increase federal spending  
10 on national service programs; and

11           WHEREAS, our federal government has a long history of establishing volunteer  
12 and service programs to assist our country's most vulnerable with the creation of the  
13 Volunteers In Service to America program in 1964, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program  
14 in 1973, the National Civilian Community Corps in 1992, and AmeriCorps in 1993; and

15           WHEREAS, nationwide, more than 275,000 Americans are serving their  
16 communities through AmeriCorps and Senior Corps to meet pressing needs in mentoring  
17 students, helping communities respond to and recover from natural disasters, fighting the  
18 opioid epidemic, connecting veterans to jobs and resources, and supporting independent  
19 living for seniors and Americans with disabilities, and helping families achieve economic  
20 self-sufficiency; and

21           WHEREAS, through AmeriCorps, volunteers helped provide essential services to  
22 Americans suffering from terrorist attacks and natural disasters. In 2001, AmeriCorps  
23 volunteers helped New York address the devastation of 9/11. In the 10 years following  
24 Hurricane Katrina, over 40,000 national service participants served nearly 10 million  
25 hours and enrolled 650,000 volunteers to provide disaster relief to New Orleans; and

26           WHEREAS, in 2017, to help address the nation's growing opioid crisis,  
27 AmeriCorps significantly increased its support of substance abuse prevention, education,

1 and recovery programming by devoting \$27.9 million to opioid-related grants and  
2 programming; and

3 WHEREAS, throughout our current COVID-19 pandemic, over 9,400 members and  
4 volunteers have engaged in COVID-19 emergency response, over 100,000 wellness  
5 checks have been conducted, and over 15.6 million pounds of food have been collected  
6 and distributed to those in need; and

7 WHEREAS, federal funding, through national service organizations like  
8 AmeriCorps, provide much-needed life support for Kentucky's citizens. In fiscal year  
9 2021, Kentucky received \$8.1 million in federal service grants through Serve Kentucky,  
10 with funds for utility assistance, housing needs, clothing and food to those in need, as  
11 well as tutoring, mentoring, teaching, and other educational services for all grade levels  
12 and post-secondary, senior living facilities, and hospice facilities; and

13 WHEREAS, in spite of all of the assistance and success of our civic engagement  
14 programs, our nation, states, and communities are not utilizing civic engagement  
15 programs to their full potential. In 2003, as a way to promote civic engagement, civic  
16 duty, and civic responsibility, Voices for National Service was founded to position  
17 national service as a viable policy solution to leverage human capital, tackle unmet needs,  
18 and expand opportunity; and

19 WHEREAS, Voices for National Service led the effort to develop and pass the  
20 Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009, which serves as a road map to a  
21 revitalized and innovative national service infrastructure in America; and

22 WHEREAS, through its advocacy, Voices for National Service, through the  
23 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, added 13,000 AmeriCorps members to the  
24 program in response to the economic downturn; and

25 WHEREAS, a legislative caucus dedicated to promoting civic duty, civic  
26 engagement, and public service will allow the General Assembly to take a leading role to  
27 cultivate, foster, encourage, and advocate for service programs that are essential in

1 providing aid to our Commonwealth's needy;

2 NOW, THEREFORE,

3 *Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of*  
4 *Kentucky, the House of Representatives concurring therein:*

5 ➔Section 1. There is hereby established a nonpartisan, bicameral caucus within  
6 the Kentucky General Assembly to be called the Kentucky Service Caucus.

7 ➔Section 2. The Kentucky Service Caucus shall work to promote and develop  
8 initiatives in the Kentucky General Assembly that further service and volunteerism at the  
9 state level by encouraging civic engagement and participation throughout the  
10 Commonwealth. The caucus shall work closely with the relevant state agencies and  
11 nonprofit organizations to achieve those goals.

12 ➔Section 3. It is respectfully requested that the President of the Senate and the  
13 Speaker of the House of Representatives support the creation of the Kentucky Service  
14 Caucus by encouraging members of each chamber to participate in the caucus.