

**Excerpts from Statements by U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-GA) and U.S. Sen. Chris Dodd (D-CT)  
Regarding Peace Corps Volunteer Catherine “Kate” Puzey,  
Made During the National Service Act Bill Debate in the Senate  
Washington, DC  
March 24, 2009**

**Mr. ISAKSON** ...I also want to take a minute--Senator *Dodd* served in the Peace Corps, and I wanted him to hear this because I want to acknowledge his support on this effort, along with Senators *Hatch* and *Kennedy*. This past Saturday, I attended one of the most moving ceremonies of my life--moving in a sad way but also in an uplifting way.

Unfortunately, a wonderful young lady, 24 years old, from Cumming, Georgia, Kate Puzey, was killed in Benin, Africa, on March 11. She was a Peace Corps worker who graduated first in her class in high school, was an honors graduate from William and Mary, and she studied French in Paris to learn the language that led her to be able to go to this part of the world and teach this poor African nation about agriculture and other skills. She served since July of 2007 and was in the last two months of her service in Benin.

I went to this service because I felt moved. I am ranking member of the African Subcommittee on Foreign Relations. Paul Coverdell, who served in the seat I now hold, was a director of the Peace Corps. I felt moved that morning when I got to go to the service and sit in the back of the room and pay my respects to a great American. I left having listened to 12 eulogies by young people whose lives were changed by Kate. The acting director of the Peace Corps, Ms. Jody Olsen, delivered a beautiful eulogy.

I realized how much voluntarism means to the United States, not just on our shores, but in Africa and on continents around the world. I commend people such as Senator *Dodd* who have given time in the Peace Corps. I ask the Senate to give its unanimous support to this legislation. I dedicate this speech in honor of Kate Puzey, to her life, and what she did as a Georgian and as a Volunteer. She joined the Peace Corps and changed the plight, the lives, the hopes, and in fact the future of children in that small country on the west coast of Africa.

God bless the Peace Corps and the life of Kate Puzey. And thanks to those who have volunteered and to the committee that has brought this National Service Act reauthorization to the floor of the Senate.

**Mr. DODD** ... I thank (Sen. Isakson) for his gracious comments about this young woman. My nephew graduated from college a few years ago and was in Africa for approximately a year and a half. He spent six months in Guyana working with the people there, increasing awareness on issues such as HIV/AIDS. These are wonderful examples, like the young woman the senator described, of people who make a difference.

The great thing about the Peace Corps is not just helping people in a struggling country get back on their feet, but it is the experience of returning home from service. It is the lessons learned that we bring back to our communities. There are 180,000 of us who are

returned Volunteers since the first group left from the south lawn of the White House to go to Ethiopia, and how blessed we are with the richness of opportunities here and the lessons learned.

I commend my colleague for being at that ceremony and reflecting on the impact this one individual made, this young woman, in service of our country. I can't think of a more compelling argument on why this bill being offered by our colleagues deserves our unanimous support. Again, I thank the senator for his comments.

...As a very young boy of 12 or 13 years of age, I listened to the president excite a generation to get involved in things larger than ourselves. I was so motivated by his remarks, as were millions of others, that a few years later when I finished college, I joined the Peace Corps. I traveled to the Dominican Republic, not far from the Haitian border, where I spent two years in the mountains of that country working with the people in the small village of Benito Moncion in the province of Santiago Rodriguez. It was a life-changing experience. I came back from that experience a very different person than when I had left.