



MESSAGE FROM MARSHA

Youth Challenge Corps Program for Colorado

April 15, 2009

This year I sponsored HB1280, a bill that allows Colorado to adopt the **Youth Challenge Corps Program**, a comprehensive 17 month program that focuses on "at risk" teens from 16 to 19 years old that have dropped out of high school, are economically and educationally disadvantaged, unemployed and currently drug free. The goal is to produce program graduates with the values, skills, education and self-discipline necessary to succeed as adults.

The Youth Challenge Corps Program is funded by the Department of Defense and is structured with a five month residential phase at one of Colorado's military facilities followed by a twelve-month post-residential phase that involves skilled and trained mentors to support the cadets. This program will assist the cadets in obtaining a high school diploma or GED, increase their employment potential, and enhance their education and life skills.

This award winning program has been recognized as one of the nation's most effective and cost efficient interventions for targeting youth who are at the greatest risk for substance abuse, teen pregnancy, delinquency, and criminal activity. Impressive results show 70% of the 2005 graduates received their high school diploma or GED, over 57% of the cadets have joined the work force and 27% of the cadets have gone onto college.

This is a program that I thought was worth fighting for and bringing to Colorado! Our high-school dropout rate is staggering, and this community based program produces graduates who have reclaimed their lives and will become productive citizens in Colorado's future.

With the passage of HB1280, this option will now be available for the parents and students of House District 19 and throughout Colorado. The Youth Challenge Corps Program has over 11 years of success in 29 other states and will begin here when Congress appropriates the funds next year.

If anyone has any questions regarding the Youth Challenge Corps Program or any other issues, please call or email me anytime.

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