

Chairman Beltz and members of the Committee,

My name is Heather May, I vote in district 35, and today I am testifying as a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer in favor of House Bill 1529.

I served in Peace Corps China from 2013-2016, extending my placement for an extra year because I loved it so much. At the end of my service, I worked for Peace Corps China as a Technical Trainer, preparing the new volunteers to be teachers. I returned to China two more times during my summers off to train new volunteers until the program closed during the pandemic.

Returned Peace Corps Volunteers are field tested and prepared to live in North Dakota. We have lived in concrete apartments in China with no central heat. We have lived in Mongolia where winter lasts from October to May and we have to chop our own firewood for heat. We have lived in huts in Zambia where the hot, dry season is like the prairie in August. We are responsible, flexible problem-solvers who can do more with less. We are the kind of people who could benefit North Dakotan communities if we come here to pursue our teaching certificates, as I did, or advanced agriculture or medical degrees, and choose to stay, as I, a former lifelong Ohioan, did.

I reviewed the fiscal notes for this bill and suggest that not only would the bill have minimal negative impact, it might also result in positive impact. As we plan our return from service, we volunteers routinely look for states and programs that offer additional benefits related to Peace Corps service and are even counseled about such programs during exit activities like the Close of Service conference. With an in-state tuition benefit in place I believe North Dakota universities could expect a small increase in the number of out of state graduate students applying to and choosing their programs.

I do suggest an adjustment to the wording of the amendment because there is not a document that technically matches it as written. It currently states "k. An individual certified by the director of the peace corps as having served satisfactorily as a peace corps volunteer."

First, not every returned Peace Corps volunteer will have a document signed by the *Director of Peace Corps*. Upon completion of service, volunteers usually receive a country level decorative certificate signed by their Country Director and have the option of sending away for a Peace Corps headquarters decorative certificate, signed by the Peace Corps Director, and the President. These decorative documents are not replaceable if lost or destroyed. Returned volunteers also receive a "Description of Service", known as DOS, which states the dates and location of service, details of the assignment, training hours, and is signed by the *Country Director*. This document could be likened to a DD214 and is

replaceable upon request, should it be lost or destroyed. The other types of certification documents available at the Peace Corps website, <https://www.peacecorps.gov/returned-volunteers/support/certifications-of-service/>, might have the Director's signature, but are for taxes, loans, healthcare, and retirement purposes. It seems the DOS or the decorative certificates would be the documents commonly submitted for the purposes of this bill.

Second, it is not the practice of Peace Corps to state that someone has served "satisfactorily", rather, that they served. The implication being that completion of service itself implies they have met a standard.

For these two reasons, I suggest the wording be adjusted to "k. An individual certified by a director of the Peace Corps as having completed service as a Peace Corps volunteer."

Thank you for listening to my testimony in favor of House Bill 1529.



美中友好志愿者

U.S.-China Friendship Volunteers
United States Peace Corps

DESCRIPTION OF PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Heather Maureen May

[Full official name]

China

[Country]

After a competitive application process stressing applicant skills, adaptability and cross-cultural understanding, *Heather M. May* was invited into Peace Corps service. She was assigned to teach English as a Foreign Language at the university level in People's Republic of China.

Heather M. May entered training on June 30, 2013 participating in an intensive 9 week training program in Chengdu, China, which included approximately 200 hours of Chinese language/cross cultural classes, 100 hours of technical training on teaching English as a Foreign Language, education methodologies and curriculum design, and topics on the history, economics, political development, and cultural norms of China. As part of the technical training, *Heather M. May* completed two weeks of practice teaching in a model school.

At the completion of Pre-Service Training, *Heather M. May* was tested by a certified Foreign Language examiner. She scored a Novice Intermediate level in standard Chinese on the ACTFL testing scale.

Having successfully completed the comprehensive Pre-Service Training, *Heather M. May* was then sworn into service on August 29, 2013.

She was assigned to an accredited institution--- *Guiyang University* in *Guizhou* Province, where she was one of 20 faculty members in the School of Foreign Languages. The school offered 4 years of study and had an enrollment of approximately 750 students. *Heather M. May* served as a full-time English teacher and reported directly to the *Dean* of the school, *Ms. Meng Junyi*. Instruction was set in formal classroom settings exclusively for Chinese students.

After the first, third, and fifth semesters at site, *Heather M. May* attended two-week in-service trainings in Chengdu. The training provided her with more extensive TEFL, cross-cultural and language training. In addition, *Heather M. May* received historical lectures from resident experts that provided context for the educational and political system in which she taught. *Heather M. May* also used this time to plan secondary projects.

Heather M. May was responsible for teaching the following courses:

<u>Date</u>	<u>No. Months.</u>	<u>No. Wks.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>No. Students</u>	<u>Hrs./Wk</u>
9/1/13	4	17	Oral English	2	165	12
9/1/13	4	17	Integrated English	2	34	4
3/3/14	4	18	Oral English	2	165	12
3/3/14	4	18	Integrated English	2	34	4
8/25/14	4	18	Oral English	2	144	12
10/8/14	4	14	Comparative Literature	1	34	4
3/2/15	4	18	Oral English	2	144	12
3/2/15	4	18	Speaking & Listening	1	57	4
8/24/15	4	18	Oral English	2	92	12
2/29/16	4	18	Oral English	2	92	12

Additionally, during her service *Heather M. May* worked with her students and Chinese colleagues in a myriad of capacities including:

1. Held 6 weekly Office Hours, which provided informal opportunities for students to: practice speaking English outside of class, speak more in depth about sensitive topics, forge closer bonds, and allowed for more technical instruction to advanced students.
2. Organized, attended and led the University's weekly English Corner. This included facilitating the event with a team of 4-5 students, communicating with 4 other foreign teachers, and planning activities.
3. Provided Chinese teacher training and evaluation for International Scholarly Exchange Curriculum (ISEC) Program. In this program, teachers with expertise other than English (Chemistry, Electrical Engineering, Philosophy) must teach their content in English to students who are preparing to go abroad for their final two years of university. Trained 4 distinct cohorts of Chinese teachers, 72 teachers total, in Western methods, Lesson Planning, Building Confidence and Pronunciation. Each training was 6-8 hours, and was followed by a sample teaching demonstration and evaluation.
4. Designed and delivered a 3 hour teacher training workshop, 'Culture, Confidence and Curriculum', to local countryside middle school and high school teachers, through a university-provided, provincially-funded program.
5. In collaboration with a colleague, planned and facilitated a teaching workshop using the PPP planning method for 3rd year English majors to prepare them for a teaching competition.

6. Annually, during the 4 weeks prior to the Test for English Majors, band 4 (TEM4), provided additional instruction to students needing assistance in writing.
7. Provided one-on-one, individualized practice for non-English majors preparing for IELTS exam.
8. Planned and held assorted holiday events such as Halloween mask-making workshops, Halloween parties, Christmas parties, and Easter Egg dying parties.
9. Judged assorted departmental, university and provincial speaking competitions.
10. Edited assorted English documents including text for the University's English website, travel books, and dissertations.
11. Wrote the preface for a colleague's text book.

Additionally, during her service *Heather M. May* worked with her Peace Corps peers and colleagues in a myriad of capacities including:

1. Managing Editor of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Newsletter for 2 years. Monthly, attended meetings, edited articles for opinion, tone and gendered language, and coached writers to explore ideas and find their voices.
2. Peer Professional Support (PPS) representative for 2 years. Actively monitored and responded to requests in 'Peace Corps China PPS' facebook page, providing advice and support to peers seeking teaching advice. Responded to individual requests for teaching support. Attended monthly meetings.
3. Planned and provided sessions at In Service Training (IST) and Close of Service (COS), including Lesson Planning for Low Level Learners, Lesson Plan swaps, Nutrition and Cooking, Do It Yourself, and Blog it Home.
4. Co-founded and administered 'Cooking in Peace Corps China' facebook page.

Additionally, during her service *Heather M. May* actively worked to meet Peace Corps 3rd Goal in the following ways:

1. Acted as half of the writing team/contributors for blog *Sponge and Slate*, documenting her Peace Corps experience. Blog was a 2014 'Peace Corps Blog It Home' award winner.
2. Coordinated Peace Corps China contributions to Marianist Environmental Education (MEEC) Art and Education Show in 2014 and 2015. Each year, prompted Chinese students and PCVs to submit their work on an environmental theme, collected and submitted the works, and wrote introductory panels for display at the MEEC Gallery. Over 250 visitors viewed the show each year, learning more about the Chinese experience and what China is doing right in relation to environment.

In the summer of 2014, *Heather M. May* participated in a two-week teacher training program on English teaching techniques and language skills for 120 primary and secondary school English teachers from her region. With a team of two other volunteers, she planned and taught a full time, two-week, needs-based curriculum focusing on TEFL Best Practices, Lesson Planning, Western Pedagogy, Confidence Building and Pronunciation.

At the completion of two years of Peace Corps Service in China, *Heather M. May* was re-tested by a certified Foreign Language examiner in *April*, 2015. She scored at a Novice High level in standard Mandarin.

Midway through the second year of her two-year service period, *Heather M. May* applied for and was granted a service extension of one year.

Heather M. May ended her Peace Corps service on *August 1, 2016*.

Privacy Act Notice: The information requested herein is collected pursuant to Section 5 of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2504 (f).) The information will be used exclusively to prepare the Description of Volunteer Service Statement, which will be permanently retained by the Peace Corps. The Statement will be used to verify service performed.

This is to certify in accordance with Executive Order 11103 of April 10, 1963, that *Heather M. May* served successfully as a Peace Corps Volunteer. Her service ended on *August 1, 2016*. She is therefore eligible to be appointed as a career-conditional employee in the competitive civil service on a non-competitive basis. This benefit under the Executive Order extends for a period of one year after termination of Volunteer service, except that the employing agency may extend the period for up to three years for a former Volunteer who enters military service, pursues studies at a recognized institution of higher learning, or engages in other activities that, in the view of the appointing agency, warrant extension of the period.

Pursuant to Section 5 (f) of the Peace Corps Act, 22 U.S.C. No. 2504 (f) as amended, any former Volunteer employed by the United States Government following her Peace Corps service is entitled to have any period of satisfactory Peace Corps Volunteer service credited for purposes of retirement, seniority, reduction in force, leave or other privileges based on length of government service. Peace Corps service shall not be credited toward completion of a probationary or trial period or completion of any service requirement for career appointment.

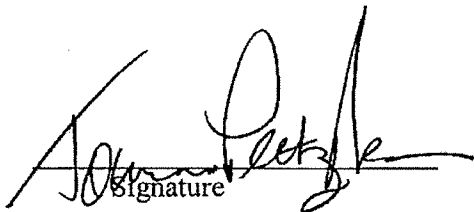
Volunteer


Signature

Group

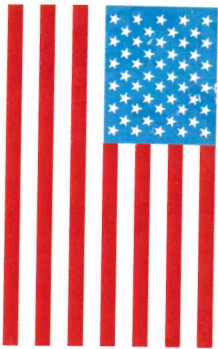
PC/China 19

Acting
Country Director


Signature

Date

1 Aug 2016



美中友好志愿者

U.S.-China Friendship Volunteers



Awards this

Certificate of Appreciation

To

Heather May

This is in recognition of your completion of service as a Peace Corps Volunteer. Your contribution as a China 19 has directly benefitted your students and your school community. Your efforts in building friendship and understanding between the peoples of the United States and China is deeply appreciated.

Mikel Herrington



Zhu Kui

Peace Corps Country Director

Date April 23, 2015

Program Manager