

Opinion Paper¹ How can the Department of Peace and Nonviolence help your local district?

by
Milt Hetrick
Centennial, Colorado
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When discussing the proposed legislation to establish the Department of Peace and Nonviolence it may be useful to include how the DoPN will help your local district, your local community, and specifically the person (i.e. legislator, educator, and practitioner) to whom you are talking. *Campaign volunteers can help identify these local benefits and opportunities.*

Q. How do we know the DoPN will provide services to the local level? Ref: **Bill Sec. 101.(c)(1)**

SEC. 101. ESTABLISHMENT OF DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE.

(c) Mission- The Department shall:

(1) hold peace as an organizing principle, coordinating service to **every level of American society**;

Individuals, families, communities, towns & cities, counties, congressional districts, states, as well the country as a whole will be served by this Department.

Q. How will our local colleges and universities benefit from the DoPN? Ref: **Bill Sec 104.(c)(1)**

SEC. 104. OFFICE OF PEACE EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

(c) Grants- The Assistant Secretary of Peace Education and Training shall--

(1) provide peace education grants to colleges and universities for the creation and expansion of peace studies departments; and

Local colleges and universities can receive grants to extend their existing conflict management degree programs and research functions. *Campaign personnel can identify their local educational institutions and related research organizations. Some examples include:*

[University of Denver, Conflict Resolution Institute](#) (CD1)

[University of Colorado, Conflict Research Consortium](#) (CD2)

[University of Colorado, Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence](#) (CD2)

[Regis University - Peace and Justice Studies](#) (CD1)

(under construction – we assume that most if not all Colorado universities and colleges have applicable programs)

To help illustrate the magnitude of this source of grant funding, we can hypothetically allocate the proposed funding level defined in the legislation of 2 % of the DoD budget and assume that the DoPN Grants program would receive about 10% of the annual budget.

¹ The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not imply agreement with the Colorado or National campaign to establish a U.S. Department of Peace and Nonviolence.

This would translate to about \$1B for grant resources. If we hypothetically allocated this \$1B to a variety of grant recipients, there would be sufficient funds to offer: 1000 grants of \$100K each; plus 500 grants of \$500K each; plus 100 of \$1M each; plus 40 grants of \$5M each; plus 20 grants of \$10M each; plus 2 grants of \$50M each; and still leave \$50M (5% of the total grant budget) for Grant Administration. Based on the known quality of the work conducted at the four Colorado organizations listed above, there is no doubt they will be eligible for and receive a portion of these grant resources.

Q. Will our local elementary and secondary schools benefit from the Department of Peace and Nonviolence? Ref: **Bill Sec 102.(f)**

SEC. 102. RESPONSIBILITIES AND POWERS.

(f) **Educational Responsibilities-** The DoPN Secretary shall--

(2) in cooperation with the Secretary of Education--

(A) commission the development of such curricula and make such curricula available to local school districts to enable the utilization of peace education objectives at all elementary and secondary schools in the United States; and

(B) offer incentives in the form of grants and training to encourage the development of State peace curricula and assist schools in applying for such curricula;

(3) work with educators to equip students to become skilled in achieving peace through reflection, and facilitate instruction in the ways of peaceful conflict resolution;

The Department of Peace and Nonviolence will provide local schools with training and educational materials that are proven to be effective (i.e. Best Practices/Model Programs/ BluePrint Programs) for teaching youth how to identify and manage conflict constructively.

- A team of individuals developed an outstanding “Bully Proofing” curriculum for students in the Cherry Creek school district (CD6). This educational program is among the best in the nation. Here is an example where our local developers could help the DoPN identify and disseminate Model Programs.
- The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence located in Boulder (CD2) is already a recognized National resource for identifying and evaluating the effectiveness of curriculum and training programs for reducing youth violence. Programs that have been measured to be effective are identified as BluePrint or Model programs. Although there are several similar evaluation organizations in the nation, it is fair to assume that the CSPV in Boulder would receive significant support from the Department of Peace and Nonviolence to continue to identify Best Practices for conflict resolution training.

This paper is a work in progress. Without citing specific sections of H.R 3760 / S. 1756, we continue to identify other areas where the DoPN will benefit Colorado residents, organizations, local governments, etc. The following can eventually be linked to specific sections of the legislation.

- a. Local mediators, ADR practitioners can benefit because of the grants and contract work that will be issued by the DoPN – *Campaign can provide a list of other “stakeholders”*
 - Denver is the home of The Conflict Center (CD1) – a unique non-profit organization devoted to reducing levels of violence in families, schools, communities.
- b. Local organizations like Women’s shelters, etc. will benefit, because the DoPN can identify the best practices to identify domestic violence risk factors and recommend early intervention programs before the situation escalates to physical violence / injury / death. *Campaign can work with local law enforcement – identify areas of violence*
- c. There may be instances where a local conflict is identified that will require the development of a new invention strategy – the DoPN can perform research or issue competitive contracts to develop an effective intervention program for this specific community need.
- d. Conflict and violence in the workplace. Business organizations understand that unmanaged conflict, hostile work environments, and bullying behavior by supervisors/ managers are counterproductive and do not constitute good business practices. The Department of Peace and Nonviolence will support business with resources that train employees to respect and honor workplace differences, and provide skills on how to transform conflict into constructive experiences that often translate into process and product improvements.
- e. The DoPN will focus on early identification of youth-at-risk – youth who have been exposed to significant “risk factors” that are indicators they are at risk (have a higher than normal probability) of being involved in future violent behavior. Early intervention has been found to be effective in changing violent behavior of these youth. This additional training reduces the number of young adults who act violently and who end up in prison.
 - Despite what some people still believe, the tragedy at Columbine High School was not a freak event – there were warning signs that a violence specialist could have identified. These specialists are in-tune with non-physical forms of violence – e.g. emotional violence (in the form of ostracizing, belittlement, disrespect, bullying and other forms of emotional abuse that have a profound affect on people that is usually internalized and not directly visible.) With today’s easy access to knives, guns, explosives, and other tools of destruction, people who feel offended will strike back. Violence begets violence. The key is to identify these systemic causes of violence early. Early identification of violence is something a trained violence specialist can do – something the Department of Peace and Nonviolence will do. These specialists will then present options to the local officials – perhaps even provide resources and recommendations for a detailed comprehensive intervention plan. Just as the military develops detailed plans of attack including logistics for their support functions, so too can the Department of Peace and Nonviolence specialists provide actions plans and support plans for nonviolent interventions.
- f. Although rehabilitation is an important element of the work of the DoPN, preventing violent behavior is even more important.
- g. Restorative justice. Community based restorative justice programs have been demonstrated to be effective and reduce recidivism among young offenders. There are many such programs in place around the nation. The Department of Peace and Nonviolence can help identify the best Restorative Justice programs and assist in implementing them at the local level. By reducing recidivism, there are fewer incarcerations and less need to build new prisons.
- h. Public Safety / Law enforcement officers could obtain training at the local branch of the Peace Academy. The Peace Academy would teach the latest strategies in hostage taking

situations, confronting domestic violence, etc. and provide the tools and techniques for effective negotiation / de-escalation of these potentially volatile situations

- i. The DoPN could provide trained experts who upon request can sit-in on community events and classrooms as “observers” to help identify subtle forms of violence. We know that forms of violence that are non-physical, if left unresolved or unmanaged, can escalate to physical violence. (ref: [Marvin Heemeyer’s Bulldozer rampage in Granby, June 2004](#))
- j. The DoPN can work with legislators to identify structural forms of violence in their community and provide suggestions and strategies on how to develop constructive nonviolent intervention programs.

Example: In June 2006, President Bush ordered the call-up of 6,000 National Guard [“to help the Border Patrol as it seeks to hire some 6,000 new agents, bringing its total to 18,000 by the end of 2008 as part of an effort to increase security.”](#)

In Colorado CD6, Representative Tancredo is conscientiously working in Congress on current immigration issues. This is a very complex multi-national problem involving people from the U.S., Mexico, and Canada. Representative Tancredo is to be commended for taking on such a difficult and controversial issue. One approach is to build barriers and add armed forces along our borders to enforce U.S. immigration laws. The Department of Peace and Nonviolence would be instructed to assist Representative Tancredo in exploring avenues that address the systemic causes of this immigration problem, and develop a number of alternative solutions that Representative Tancredo, his staff and Congressional colleagues could consider and evaluate for effectiveness. Each of these alternative programs would protect the rights and freedoms of U.S. citizens, but also respect the dignity and human rights of our neighbors. Imagine if we also had 18,000 highly trained people (graduates of the Peace Academy or similar educational institutions) who were focused on understanding the systemic or root causes of the immigration problems and skilled in developing detailed constructive plans that address these issues. They would be tasked with protecting the rights and freedoms of U.S. citizens and respecting the human rights of our bordering neighbors. I am certain that if the Department of Peace and Nonviolence were given the task of developing a solution to immigration issues that apply the principles our country stands for, we could find a long range plan that manages and resolves the current immigration issue without violence in any form – we just need to apply the American initiative and our expertise to this very real problem. The U.S. is world renown for its ability to use its bullets and brawn. We can also be world renown for using our brains, because we have that ability as well – that national energy just needs to be focused in a constructive problem solving direction.

- k. Local DoPN trained specialists can work with local officials to provide early warning signals, identify risk factors and precursors to violence. There is rarely a “random act of violence”
Trained specialist can identify subtle forms of ongoing, unmanaged violence that has the potential to escalate to a physical act of violence.
 - We used to believe that a bolt of lightning was a random phenomenon. We now can identify potential dangerous situations (i.e. being the highest object in the local area, being under the highest tree, etc.) and avoid many dangerous situations. We continue to learn more about the onset of violence – The Department of Peace and Nonviolence would continue this research on human behavior.
- b) Identify areas of concern about the legislation as written. Offer suggestions on how to make the bill better.

APPENDIX – APPLICABLE SECTIONS OF THE DOPN LEGISLATION

SEC. 101. ESTABLISHMENT OF DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE.

(c) Mission- The Department shall:

- (1) hold peace as an organizing principle, coordinating service to every level of American society;
- (2) endeavor to promote justice and democratic principles to expand human rights;
- (3) strengthen nonmilitary means of peacemaking;
- (4) promote the development of human potential;
- (5) work to create peace, prevent violence, divert from armed conflict, use field-tested programs, and develop new structures in nonviolent dispute resolution;
- (6) take a proactive, strategic approach in the development of policies that promote national and international conflict prevention, nonviolent intervention, mediation, peaceful resolution of conflict, and structured mediation of conflict;
- (7) address matters both domestic and international in scope; and
- (8) encourage the development of initiatives from local communities, religious groups, and nongovernmental organizations.

SEC. 102. RESPONSIBILITIES AND POWERS.

(b) Domestic Responsibilities- The Secretary shall--

- (1) develop policies that address domestic violence, including spousal abuse, child abuse, and mistreatment of the elderly;
- (2) create new policies and incorporate existing programs that reduce drug and alcohol abuse;
- (3) develop new policies and incorporate existing policies regarding crime, punishment, and rehabilitation;
- (4) develop policies to address violence against animals;
- (5) analyze existing policies, employ successful, field-tested programs, and develop new approaches for dealing with the implements of violence, including gun-related violence and the overwhelming presence of handguns;
- (6) develop new programs that relate to the societal challenges of school violence, gangs, racial or ethnic violence, violence against gays and lesbians, and police-community relations disputes;
- (7) make policy recommendations to the Attorney General regarding civil rights and labor law;
- (8) assist in the establishment and funding of community-based violence prevention programs, including violence prevention counseling and peer mediation in schools;
- (9) counsel and advocate on behalf of women victimized by violence;
- (10) provide for public education programs and counseling strategies concerning hate crimes;
- (11) promote racial, religious, and ethnic tolerance;
- (12) finance local community initiatives that can draw on neighborhood resources to create peace projects that facilitate the development of conflict resolution at a national level and thereby inform and inspire national policy; and
- (13) provide ethical-based and value-based analyses to the Department of Defense.

(f) **Educational Responsibilities-** The Secretary shall--

- (1) develop a peace education curriculum, which shall include studies of--
 - (A) the civil rights movement in the United States and throughout the world, with special emphasis on how individual endeavor and involvement have contributed to advancements in peace and justice; and
 - (B) peace agreements and circumstances in which peaceful intervention has worked to stop conflict;
- (2) in cooperation with the Secretary of Education--
 - (A) commission the development of such curricula and make such curricula available to local school districts to enable the utilization of peace education objectives at all elementary and secondary schools in the United States; and
 - (B) offer incentives in the form of grants and training to encourage the development of State peace curricula and assist schools in applying for such curricula;
- (3) work with educators to equip students to become skilled in achieving peace through reflection, and facilitate instruction in the ways of peaceful conflict resolution;
- (4) maintain a site on the Internet for the purposes of soliciting and receiving ideas for the development of peace from the wealth of political, social and cultural diversity;
- (5) proactively engage the critical thinking capabilities of grade school, high school, and college students and teachers through the Internet and other media and issue periodic reports concerning submissions;
- (6) create and establish a Peace Academy, which shall--
 - (A) be modeled after the military service academies;
 - (B) provide a 4-year course of instruction in peace education, after which graduates will be required to serve 5 years in public service in programs dedicated to domestic or international nonviolent conflict resolution; and
- (7) provide grants for peace studies departments in colleges and universities throughout the United States.

SEC. 105. OFFICE OF DOMESTIC PEACE ACTIVITIES.

(a) In General- There shall be in the Department an Office of Domestic Peace Activities, the head of which shall be the Assistant Secretary for Domestic Peace Activities.

The Assistant Secretary for Domestic Peace Activities shall carry out those functions in the Department affecting domestic peace activities, including the development of policies that increase awareness about intervention and counseling on domestic violence and conflict.

(b) Responsibilities- The Assistant Secretary for Domestic Peace Activities shall--

- (1) develop policy alternatives for the treatment of drug and alcohol abuse;
- (2) develop new policies and build on existing programs responsive to the prevention of crime, including the development of community policing strategies and peaceful settlement skills among police and other public safety officers; and
- (3) develop community-based strategies for celebrating diversity and promoting tolerance.

SEC. 109. OFFICE OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE AND NONVIOLENT CONFLICT RESOLUTION.

(a) In General- There shall be in the Department an Office of Peaceful Coexistence and Nonviolent Conflict Resolution, the head of which shall be the Assistant Secretary for Peaceful Coexistence and Nonviolent Conflict Resolution.

The Assistant Secretary for Peaceful Coexistence and Nonviolent Conflict Resolution shall carry out those functions in the Department affecting research and analysis relating to creating, initiating, and modeling approaches to peaceful coexistence and nonviolent conflict resolution.

(b) Responsibilities- The Assistant Secretary for Peaceful Coexistence and Nonviolent Conflict Resolution shall--

- (1) study the impact of war, especially on the physical and mental condition of children (using the ten-point agenda in the United Nations Children's Fund report, State of the World's Children 1996, as a guide), which shall include the study of the effect of war on the environment and public health;
- (2) publish a monthly journal of the activities of the Department and encourage scholarly participation;
- (3) gather information on effective community peacebuilding activities and disseminate such information to local governments and nongovernmental organizations in the United States and abroad;
- (4) research the effect of violence in the media and make such reports available to the Congress annually; and
- (5) sponsor conferences throughout the United States to create awareness of the work of the Department.

SEC. 110. OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS.

(a) In General- There shall be in the Department an Office of Human Rights and Economic Rights, the head of which shall be the Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Economic Rights. The Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Economic Rights shall carry out those functions in the Department supporting the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948.

(b) Responsibilities- The Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Economic Rights shall--

- (1) assist the Secretary, in cooperation with the Secretary of State, in furthering the incorporation of principles of human rights, as enunciated in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 217A (III) of December 10, 1948, into all agreements between the United States and other nations to help reduce the causes of violence;
- (2) gather information on and document human rights abuses, both domestically and internationally, and recommend to the Secretary nonviolent responses to correct abuses;
- (3) make such findings available to other agencies in order to facilitate nonviolent conflict resolution;
- (4) provide trained observers to work with nongovernmental organizations for purposes of creating a climate that is conducive to the respect for human rights;
- (5) conduct economic analyses of the scarcity of human and natural resources as a source of conflict and make recommendations to the Secretary for nonviolent prevention of such scarcity, nonviolent intervention in case of such scarcity, and the development of programs of assistance for people experiencing such scarcity, whether due to armed conflict, maldistribution of resources, or natural causes;

Opinion Paper 062406

(6) assist the Secretary, in cooperation with the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury, in developing strategies regarding the sustainability and the management of the distribution of funds from international agencies, the conditions regarding the receipt of such funds, and the impact of those conditions on the peace and stability of the recipient nations; and

(7) assist the Secretary, in cooperation with the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Labor, in developing strategies to promote full compliance with domestic and international labor rights law.

SEC. 102. RESPONSIBILITIES AND POWERS.