Mandatory Service in America

A Proposal to Combat Polarization
Measuring Polarization

Self-reporting research techniques

- Political Polarization
  - Subconscious Biases
  - Behaviors of favoritism/discrimination

- Racial Polarization
  - Prejudice
  - Empathy
Goals

What can we accomplish by the end of the decade?

- Statistically significant improvements in racial polarization among participants
- Political out-party feeling brought back to near neutral
Contact Theory

- Improving social relations between groups by means of intergroup contact

4 Conditions

1. Equal status
2. Need for cooperation
3. Common goal
4. Support from authorities
Identity

- National identity correlated with increased civic engagement
- Identity strengthened through reminding
Options for service

- Variety of fields
  - Military
  - Infrastructure
  - Education
  - Climate
  - Health
  - International Service
  - and more

- Participants able to rank service choices

- Americorps model
Service Term Details

- Can be carried out any time from 18-30
- Promoted as a gap year for recent high school graduates
  - Will involve all young Americans
- Minimum of 6 months
  - Length varies by program
- Economic disincentives for not serving
Making Service Worthwhile

- Valuable skills training for participants
- Stipend to make up for lost income
- Work to make experience meaningful
- Variety of civilian options allows almost every single American to serve
- Physical and mental health services available
Why A Mandatory Service

● Larger scale to combat the massive reach of polarization
● Pulls Americans from all backgrounds
● Achieves larger, more meaningful goals for the country
  ○ Provides financial and social benefits
  ○ Gives concrete results for Americans