

NoDraft.org

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Statement to the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service

November 12, 2019

Statement in Support of Ending Draft Registration and In Opposition to Any Form of Compulsory National Service

“The draft or draft registration,” as Ronald Reagan argued, “destroys the very values our society is committed to defending.” A free society should be and will be defended by free people, volunteers, as has been the evidenced throughout our nation’s history.

Conscription is wrong, and unconstitutional by any clear reading of the 13th Amendment, which prohibits slavery and “involuntary servitude.”

1. Draft registration should be ended for everyone, not extended to women.

The modern military neither needs nor wants a massive manpower infusion, which would only dilute the quality of the All-Volunteer Force. The draft is so unpopular that in 2004, the last time it the U.S. House of Representatives addressed it, the vote was 402 to 2 against the draft with even the author of the legislation voting against his own bill.

Additionally, the draft registration program is a failure. “[T]he current system of registration,” Dr. Bernard Rostker, former director of the Selective Service System testified in April, “does not provide a comprehensive and nor an accurate data base upon which to implement conscription.”

The former director advised “suspending” the program. “My bottom line,” he argued, “is there is no need to continue to register people for a draft that will not come; no need to fight the battle over registering women, and no military need to retain the MSSA.”

2. All criminal, civil, federal and state penalties for failure to register should be ended for those currently living under these penalties.

In bringing an end to draft registration, the punishments and other restrictions inflicted on citizens who did not register (for a myriad of reasons) should also be ended.

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3. National service should remain voluntary — compulsory service, whether civilian or military, is in conflict with the principles of a democratic and free society.

It is absurd for this Commission or the Congress to be considering compulsory military and/or national service programs in pursuit of some sort of ethos of “service,” when the government presently does not even offer young people these same job opportunities to serve.

“There is an overwhelming desire to serve,” Chairman Joe Heck declared in January. But he explained that while young people “want to do it. They just don’t want to be told to do it.”

So don’t tell young people—er, force them into servitude. Instead, young people could be offered jobs.

NoDraft.org urges the Commission to recommend that Congress end draft registration, stop denying equal opportunity to those who have not registered, and keep all military and non-military service voluntary. This is the best option for the military and the least divisive to civil society.

Commit to raising an army of soldiers as well as other service providers by persuading citizens to freely serve their communities and their country. And work to be worthy of the voluntary service of the American people.

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