



Universal Service Hearing: Should Service be Mandatory?

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This transcript was prepared by official military court reporters based on an audio recording of the hearing.

Commission:

- The Honorable Dr. Joseph Heck, Chairman
- The Honorable Debra Wada, Vice Chair for Military Service
- Mr. Edward Allard, Commissioner
- Mr. Steve Barney, Commissioner
- The Honorable Dr. Janine Davidson, Commissioner
- Ms. Jeanette James, Commissioner
- Mr. Alan Khazei, Commissioner
- Mr. Tom Kilgannon, Commissioner
- Ms. Shawn Skelly, Commissioner

Guest Speaker:

- The Honorable Sylvia Burwell, President of American University

Panelists:

- Mr. Doug Bandow, Senior Fellow, Cato Institute
- Dr. William Galston, Ezra K. Zilkha Chair and Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution
- Mr. Ted Hollander, Author of *Step Forward America! – A case for a National Service Program*
- Ms. Lucy Steigerwald, Author of *Stop Suggesting Mandatory Service as a Fix for America's Problems* and journalist and contributing editor to *antiwar.com*.



INTRODUCTION

Dr. Joseph Heck

I'd like to welcome everyone to the second hearing of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service.

Joining us today is a very special guest, Sylvia M. Burwell, American University's 15th president. President Burwell is no stranger to public service having held two cabinet positions among other roles in the U.S. government. She has served as a strong national service advocate during her foundation and nonprofit years. President Burwell brings her experience to advance solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges to American University.

President Burwell, thank you for joining us today. Thank you for hosting us, and I turn it over to you.

GUEST SPEAKER

President Sylvia Burwell

Thank you very much, Dr. Heck, for the introduction. Thank you and all the commissioners on the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service. And to all that are in the audience today, I want to welcome everyone to the Washington College of Law at American University. I'm honored to be joining you this afternoon and am happy to do that; almost as happy as all our students were to have a snow day yesterday.

Service has always been close to my heart from my childhood. I grew up in the Mathews household where commitment to service was basically a prerequisite. On Halloween, you would actually do two rounds of trick-or-treating. The first one was for UNICEF, and then the second one, once you completed that, you could go out again and do the next round for candy. Service is actually why my mother was active in every service, business, community organization, and church organization in our community from 26 years as the president of the Church Women to the Business and Professional Women to every organization in our community. My father actually belonged to every funny-hat group; the Lions, the Shriners, everything. My father was a



part of that. So that commitment to service has guided me in both my education and my work in trying to create change of scale. It's actually what led me here to American University.

I don't think you could have picked a more perfect place, from our perspective, in terms of having this meeting and having this conversation. Service has been the core of American University for the past 128 years since our founding. It's very true here at the Washington College of Law, where we're sitting, as well. From its founding, it's been a place of change-makers and people focused beyond themselves in terms of creating a better society.

In 1896, what would become the Washington College of Law, where we now are, was founded by Ellen Spencer Mussey and Emma Gillett. They became the first law school in the world ever founded by women. It was the first to have a woman dean, and it was the first to graduate an all-female class of law students. Alice Paul, a name some of you may know, the famous suffragist, was an advocate for the 19th Amendment and the author of the Equal Rights Amendment. She also studied here at our School of Public Affairs. Supposedly, she wrote part of that as she was a student. We certainly don't expect all of our students to lead a nation-wide movement for a constitutional amendment between classes, but we sure like it when they do.

On our main campus, you'll see our School of International Service. You'll note the title is not a "School of International Studies" or "International Affairs". It's actually about deeper engagement and an active engagement with the world. As President Eisenhower said, when he laid the groundbreaking stone at SIS, "We need our best and our brightest young people committed to waging peace." Our university attempts to do that. Our students report more than 60,000 hours of service each year, and you'll find that American University is in the top-five list of enlisting out of schools for the Peace Corps. We're top recruiters for AmeriCorps and Teach For America too, in terms of places where we are excited to have lots of our students go. And we have a wealth of students who serve in our nation's military or work for the military family, and that's really important to us. We have students from all proud branches of the Armed Forces, as well as the NOAA Corps, U.S. Merchant Marines, and a group I'm particularly familiar with, the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. G.I. Jobs Magazine has, for 8 years in a row,



called us a military friendly university. So whether it's military service or other service, we as a university are quite focused on that.

When you look at service in our military and in our nation, we deeply engage and think it's important. What I've learned from this community of change-makers since I've been here and from my own experience is a few things. First, I've learned that service is contagious, and at American University, the spirit of service rests. You find it in everything from our annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, where even though it was the coldest day in D.C., we were oversubscribed and had more students than we'd ever had on our MLK Day of service, to our voter registration drives. The spirit of service spreads actually, we believe, by positive peer pressure, in terms of making lasting and positive impact on our students as they graduate and then pursue their careers. Second, in an era of curated life that we all see on social media, I think service is one of the antidotes. As Martin Luther King Jr. said more than 60 years ago, "...all human beings have a desire to belong and to feel significant and important. And the way to solve this problem is not to drown out the ego, but to find your sense of importance in something outside of the self." Give yourself to that something, and life becomes meaningful. I think service opens the door to that kind of meaning, and we really do see that in our students and our community.

Finally, at American University, we focus on the future of citizenship; what it means to be responsible, contributing members of our society in our very rapidly changing world. It calls us to be change-makers ourselves; to continuously find new and innovate ways to make a positive, lasting impact on the world. The idea of service has to adapt and change as we learn more about the needs of our society in our changing world.

Booker T. Washington famously said, "The best way to lift oneself up is to help someone else." On behalf of American University, and as a fellow citizen, thank you, this commission, for your commitment to lifting up our nation's young people by helping them help others.

With that, I will turn it back to Dr. Heck, and thank you all so much for being at American University.



OPENING STATEMENT

Dr. Joseph Heck

Today the commission meets to ponder an important question: Should all Americans be required to serve? Our distinguished panel will help us get at this difficult question and explore in greater depth whether all Americans should be mandated to serve in military, national, and/or public service.

As we begin the new year, it's important to note that troops from our nation's military forces continue to serve and fight overseas in conflicts that have endured continuously for nearly 18 years. With the advent of the professional, all-volunteer force, a much smaller percentage of Americans serve in uniform, and fewer and fewer Americans even know personally an active duty, national guardsman, or reserve service member. This reality of "a responsibility borne by a few" combined with the increasing polarization and stratification of today's society has led many to revive the early notion of universal service.

As we traveled around the country and discussed this fundamental topic with experts and everyday Americans, it became clear that many Americans are willing to consider a transformative effort to involve more in service. The commission has heard a variety of universal service options to encourage or require service of all citizens. Universal service is defined as a transformative effort to involve many more Americans in military, national, and/or public service. These conversations have focused on three approaches:

Universal access, making sure that everyone with a desire to serve can do so; universal expectation in that while service stays voluntary, it becomes the norm so that everybody wants to serve; and a universal obligation where all Americans are required to serve, but have a choice of how they serve.

At the same time, we've heard from many Americans who support the idea of service, but oppose making it mandatory. Some believe that a spirit of volunteerism is necessary for service to be effective. Some see mandatory service as a violation of personal civil liberties, and others cite multiple challenges in implementing a national service program.



I hope that our panelists will address these important issues as directly as possible in their oral statements and in their responses to commissioner questions.

Let me welcome our panelists: Mr. Doug Bandow is a Senior Fellow of the Cato Institute; Dr. William Galston is the Ezra K. Zilkha Chair and Senior Fellow of the Brookings Institution; Mr. Ted Hollander is the Author of *Step Forward America!- A Case for a National Service Program*, a book laying out the case for mandatory service; and Lucy Steigerwald is the Author of *Stop Suggesting Mandatory National Service as a Fix for America's Problems* and a journalist and contributing editor to antiwar.com. We thank you all for joining us today.

Before we begin, let me explain how we will conduct today's hearing. The commissioners have all received your written testimony, and it will be entered into the official record. We ask that you summarize the highlights of your testimony in the allotted five minutes. Before you, you will see our timing system. When the light turns yellow, you have approximately one-minute remaining, and when it turns red, your time has expired. After all testimony is completed, we will move into questions from the commissioners. Each commissioner will be given five minutes to ask a question and to receive their response. I ask that the commissioners maintain the five-minute limit.

Depending on time, we will proceed with one, and, possibly, two rounds of questions. Upon completion of commissioner questions, we will provide an opportunity for members of the public who are in attendance to offer comments, either on the specific topic addressed today, or, more generally, on the commission's overarching mandate. These comments will be limited to two minutes. The light will turn yellow when there are 30 seconds remaining and red when time has expired.

We are now ready to begin with our panelists' testimony.

Mr. Doug Bandow

I appreciate the opportunity to present my views on this subject. Service is in Americans' DNA, as was commented upon by Alexis de Tocqueville on his famous trip to the United States,



where he saw a civic society that did not exist in the monarchical Europe. Mandatory national service really is a very different concept, I think, though it's not a new one. Much of the literature on national service reaches back to Edward Bellamy, his famous book, and looking backward, especially to the William James essay, "The Moral Equivalent of War", I think it's something that, in fact, is worth reading in part to show that the arguments made at that time are radically different from the ones today. If you read William James, his conception of what national service is, it sounds very alien to what we would think of today.

There have been a number of advocates of mandatory programs over the years, ranging from Margaret Mead to Robert MacIver, Charlie Moskos, Ted Kennedy, John McCain, others like Harris Wofford and Stanley McChrystal have talked of some of these ideas; proposed, suggested, and offered different ideas. The outcome over the years have always been small programs, voluntary programs: AmeriCorps, Teach America, and such things. I would argue that the idea of a mandatory, universal program is, in fact, a very bad idea, and one that I think one of the dangers is it purports to be a panacea where everyone who supports it sees it as solving different issues and different problems. It becomes a universal solution for a variety of ills they see in American society.

First, I think we want to be very careful about presuming that American youth in America are so far down that this is the only kind of program to rescue them; so bad, so selfish, so greedy. The Potomac Institute Report back in 1978, of which Harris Wofford was involved, talked about a "Saturday night fever", essentially, of America at that point 40 years ago with that movie. Of course, we have dangers of exaggerating America's virtues but also we have dangers of exaggerating America's failings and we don't want to go overboard when we're discussing those kinds of issues.

Second, I think there's extraordinary danger in seeing a program like this as being an element of soul molding. I think that the notion that the government's going to be good at turning people into good; to transforming them from selfish to suddenly compassionate to a number of other things, I'm skeptical of that. The issues of values formation is very important. We have issues of family, community, churches, where we've traditionally had values formation.



I don't see a massive government program, one that would have 4 to 8 million people, presumably, (roughly 4 million turn 18 every year) -- I think the spectacle of the comfortable and privileged judging the young and vulnerable and explaining how they are so selfish and need to be taught compassion is one that's more likely to breed cynicism than idealism. While there are tasks that I think are unique and special that can be done, are there 4 million or are there 8 million, and what do we actually think a program like this would do? And, ultimately, do we believe that compulsory compassion is something that really works? I tend to think compassion is something that does not come through compulsion.

Almost all of these issues discuss the old question of unmet social needs, the vision for 8 million people doing wonderful things across the country. The question, of course, is what does that mean? Basically, all these lists, when they come out, and I've seen a number of lists over the years -- I remember one toted up 5.3 million unmet social needs, 200,000 in libraries. It went down the list, and if you ask people if they'd like to have free labor, they can come up with a very large list. The problem is if there is no conception of cost, either direct cost of paying people, etc., or of the opportunity cost of what they would otherwise be doing, a list of this nature tells us nothing. The question is what is valued? What is useful? How will these be used? How will organizations use them? We know nothing. So you have to have both costs and benefits to take into account. I think one has to be very careful about using this kind of language.

The question of putting this all in the public realm; there are lots of forms of service. It's not clear to me that we want the government defining what appropriate service is. Someone in private medical practice can be very self-sacrificing. Somebody go on mission trips. Some can serve. We have a U.S. senator, an ophthalmologist, that goes down to Haiti and does operations on his off time. Service is a multiple out there. People in the private sector can do extraordinarily important service. I think there's a danger of baptizing only one sense of service. Ultimately, is it better to shelve books in a library or to shelve books in a private book store? It's not clear to me that working in a library itself is uniquely self-sacrificing compared to other uses.



Again, the question of free labor, how this is used; how agencies would use this; how NGOs would use this, I worry that there's an element in which we are continuing a process of giving primacy to state programs, where the welfare state tends to push out the independent sector. Within the independent sector now there's government funding, so the NGOs are really not nongovernmental, but, in fact, rely on government; and it's not only funding, but it's going to be volunteers who are going to be provided by government that we're losing something in the expectation of duty to give money, to be involved in organizations, to access needs. Average folks who may not be able to take off full time are going to have trouble doing it. I think we should be very skeptical of the concept of mandatory, universal, and national service.

Dr. William Galston

Thank you for this opportunity to offer my thoughts on the appropriate scope of national service. The modern national service movement is more than three decades old and has scored many remarkable successes. But those of us who were present at the creation of AmeriCorps, for example, must acknowledge that it has fallen short of our aspirations. We hoped that as it grew, it would come to transform the prevailing understanding and practice of American citizenship. We hoped that active citizenship would become the norm, and that all Americans would see that citizenship consists not only in rights to be claimed, but also in responsibilities to be met. We hoped, above all, that national service could help close the widening gap among Americans of different backgrounds, partisan affiliations, and ideological orientations.

Little of this, alas, has come to pass. We now face the choice between scaling back our hopes to fit the reality of national service as it now exists and expanding service to fit the scale of our hopes. I incline toward the latter, because I refuse to accept the civic status quo, which I regard as dangerously inadequate, and I doubt that I'm alone in that view. So what should we do?

The first step, which is not trivial, is to come as close as we can to what the commission calls "universal access" to service for all who desire to participate. In my judgement, the best course would be to quadruple the opportunities AmeriCorps offers each year. A program that



engaged 300,000 people each year, which, corrected for population growth was the original conception, would be much more visible than today's program or version. Most Americans would know or at least know of someone who's performing service. The odds that the program could reshape civic norms would rise significantly.

If we had achieved the original vision quickly, I'm not alone in this room in believing that the texture of American civic and political life today might be very different. There's a caveat. The venue matters. I believe that service is most likely to achieve its civic mission when it's performed in diverse groups, that is, in teams. Learning through concrete experience with people whose backgrounds and beliefs are different and working together to accomplish shared goals is the heart of the lesson that today's service must convey. It's hard for me to see what else can even begin to reweave our frayed civic fabric.

When I was younger, I backed service as a universal obligation for everyone. I still do in principle, but I no longer regard it as practical. We simply do not have the resources, human or material, to administer such a system in circumstances other than the kinds of emergencies that call for national mobilizations. So I now support something far less reaching, which might be called "universal exposure". Here's how it would work. Upon graduating from high school or reaching the age of 18, everyone would receive a randomly generated lottery number based on their date of birth. Out of each annual cohort, a certain portion of the number holders would be selected for service, civilian or military. Those choosing civilian service would receive modest living stipends and would earn funds that could be used to defray the costs of post-secondary education and training or for other approved purposes. Of course, individuals who are not part of the lottery would still be free to volunteer for AmeriCorps and other service opportunities. By the time young people entered high school, they would know that they might be called upon to serve. They would begin to talk to older siblings, relatives, or counselors about their options, and they would begin to understand that there's more to citizenship than just asserting their rights as individuals.

I know that some will raise philosophical or constitutional objections to any mandatory service requirements. I don't share these objections. Citizens are required to serve on juries, and



in a national emergency, the selective service system continues to provide the basis for resuming military conscription. Universal exposure to national service is a policy issue, and the arguments for and against it are practical, not philosophical or constitutional.

Mr. Ted Hollander

Thank you for this opportunity to speak before you. Why should national service be mandatory? Mandatory service would imply to some that there is a national emergency akin to Pearl Harbor, for example. I contend that we are, indeed, in the midst of another type of national threat, an existential threat to America as we know it, based on my impression that America no longer warrants respect that we have always received from both our enemies and our allies, and that we've lost our belief in the American idea.

For example, we threatened to abandon our allies who, with us, have been responsible for maintaining the world order in the decades following World War II. We threatened to wall ourselves off from needy migrants escaping persecution and looking for a better life. We have backed out of our commitment to do our share of cleaning up the planet, and, perhaps more importantly, we continue to widen the economic and social gap between the empowered, educated class and the lower, poorly educated class. We've become accustomed to addressing our major security problems by turning over the heavy lifting to the very small percentage who serve in the military, those who fight our endless wars while the rest of us, contributing nothing, are not even asked to pay an additional tax to support these efforts. In simple terms, either restore the draft or implement a similar process involving all of us in universal service.

The challenges listed in my written testimony cannot be met by merely hoping that all will get on board. I am proposing a traditional military draft, where everyone, with obvious exception, reaching their 18th birthday will register and make a commitment, addressing, of course, any deferrals or exemptions that the program allows. My program is mandatory rather than voluntary for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that a voluntary program would, undoubtedly, elude those who need it most. There's a lot to pack into my program, and, therefore, it must be very structured. A mandatory program would be set up so that not only



participation would be mandatory, but certain aspects of the program, for example, basic training and the education I proposed in my written testimony, would be mandatory.

A voluntary program relying on the good intentions of academia, corporate America, and the ingrained functioning of existing institutions cannot ensure the diversity and togetherness that will accomplish the goal of putting young people from different backgrounds together, so that they are exposed to different cultures and ideas and thereby learn to tolerate the opinions of others and the need to compromise with others in order to be productive in their endeavors. A good deal of time for all participants should be spent learning, living, and working together as opposed to one-off assignments for individuals. The program must have enough control over the assignments to ensure this, whereas in a strictly volunteering program, the individual would, for the most part, be determining the assignment. It would not seem possible that a voluntary program can accurately determine the number of participants and provide the necessary infrastructure, facilities, and time set aside for the training and education comparable to that in my proposed two-year mandatory program. A basic training component could probably not be worked into a voluntary program, so a voluntary program cannot reach the goal of improving the readiness of participants to step right into a strict military training in the event of a threat and attack on us or an ally.

Considering the values and fairness concerns of the commission, I conclude that the disconnected youth most in need of the experience will participate and benefit. We will not end up with a first class of citizens who have participated and a second class of citizens left behind, thereby furthering the social and economic equality gap. No longer will we expect one percent of Americans to be responsible for our safety and security. No longer will we entrust our social, economic, and political lives to the relatively few dedicated citizens who now serve and govern. Mandatory is not my line in the sand. If all we can get is a voluntary program, a mandatory program not being politically feasible, I will be very happy if that voluntary program is implemented. It will surely help turn us around and get us on the right track.



Ms. Lucy Steigerwald

Thank you for inviting me to speak today on the question of whether mandatory national service should be considered. I am pleased to be somewhat redundant with Mr. Bandow and say, "No." To me, mandatory national service is a solution in search of a problem. An 18 year old has just spent 12 years in school, 18 with their parents, the door to adulthood is opened, and they are urged to step through. Grabbing them by the arm and dragging them to a time and place selected by a bureaucracy will not help them become grownups. Teaching them it's time to leave the hopefully loving arms of their parents and make their own choices in life until the government comes calling and commanding is a mixed message at best. When I was 18, I would have reacted to even benevolent force the same way I would react today; with disgust, anxiety, and anger. The best cause, I could imagine, would turn sour if I were mandated by law to participate in it.

How many hand-wringing headlines do we need about kids today before we realize that, just like any other human being, they're trying to find their own paths. If we believe that younger generations, like mine, millennials, and the younger than that are being infantilized or permanently stunted and lacking in the skills of adulthood, why would we advocate for a program that tells them where to go, what to do, and for how long? Noble intentions don't make great policy. More importantly, is a good idea "good" if it's mandatory? Only individuals make choices. These choices include making families, working and joining civil, social, and religious groups. Social pressure from school, work, or family can influence this, however, the reality is that the individual has the first and the final choice. With respect, nobody; not this commission, not any bureaucracy anywhere knows what's best for anyone else or how they can or should be using their skills, education, or personality. There's a lot of talk about a historically polarized America. Forcing groups of people to work together could mandate a certain amount of cooperation purely by necessity. It will not fix the larger problems and the larger questions that arise about race, gender, sex, politics, and everything else in the headlines. A greater purpose is a lovely, subjective thing. Service itself is a subjective thing, and a purpose is not great simply because it involves a large group of people all doing approximately the same thing. More to the point, individuals need to find their own purpose, and when they don't choose nobly that's okay



too. That's their prerogative; to play too many video games and to wonder where they fit into life. If it isn't, what's the point of having a choice or a life of their own? I have to quote my favorite American, Lysander Spooner, the philosopher, "Man, no doubt, owes many other world duties to his fellow man, such as to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, care for the sick, protect the defenseless, assist the weak, and enlighten the ignorant. These are simply moral duties of which each man must be his own judge in each particular case as to whether and how and how far he can or will perform them."

In its most benevolent interpretation, mandatory national service could look like young people working in homeless shelters or hospitals, maybe some of them even enjoying the process. Yet this is still indentured servitude. How will the practical applications work? Will a certain number have to join the military? Will they be given half a dozen choices of where they wish to spend their time? What stake will industries such as healthcare, defense, or law enforcement have in the process? Will they lobby for the choice of strongest, smartest candidates? Will the less impressive be janitors and ditch diggers? I'll let dissenters at future panels speak on the draft, however, I'll say that the faint possibility of conscription hangs over every young man's head now. So if you stake a claim in a young person's life during peacetime, as this commission is considering, you certainly have them permanently on the hook during wartime or national emergency or any other crisis, such as the endless War on Terror that the government proclaims.

Individuals are not a resource to be picked clean. They will be treated as such under mandatory national service. The government already acts as if it owns people via a thousand laws and punishments. Mandatory national service would be one great way to show that freedom comes with an asterisk, "Your life is your own until the government claims you. You're not an adult until we release you." As Spooner wrote, what we owe to each other is an important question that cannot be answered by government committee. What we owe to the state is easier to answer; nothing. You might argue this contrariness is the kind of immaturity that promotion of national service could have remedied. I would argue that this kind of contrariness is the American spirit if such a thing exists. More importantly, it's the human spirit that relishes



choice, freedom, and opportunity. That kind of freedom breeds greatness and ordinariness in individuals. Millions of people prove every day that whatever they choose, however their lives go, they should remain their own simply because they are no one else's.

QUESTIONS BY THE COMMISSION

Dr. Joseph Heck

As Dr. Galston mentioned in his comments, many say that with rights come responsibilities. Some would say that service to one's country should be an obligation of citizenship. I would ask each panelist if they agree or disagree with that statement, and why or why not?

Mr. Doug Bandow

I think there are obligations and responsibilities which come with citizenship, but I believe there's a very real difference between civil or civic service and military service. Military service is to the state, to the institution, to the nation, to the sovereign -- you know, cleaning bedpans helps people. Shelving books in a library helps people. I don't view it as being an attribute of sovereignty, an attribute of the state or an attribute of the nation. I think it's very dangerous to draw that sense of responsibility so broadly as to assume that the state has that kind of ability and that kind of power to levy that and make that as a claim of responsibility. The one Supreme Court case that we have on conscription was in 1918 and focused very much on the notion that Congress had power to raise an army, and that this was an attribute of sovereignty; clearly something very different than what I think we're talking about with civilian service.

Dr. William Galston

I can answer your question straight-forwardly in the affirmative, without drawing a broad line between military service and civilian service. I think the idea of a political community as a collective enterprise for mutual wellbeing, where we give and we get, the heart of a viable community being reciprocity, my fear right now is that we are much more at getting than we are



in giving. We are much less conscience of the need for some reciprocal balance between giving and getting. I see service as one way of reinforcing reciprocity without violating either moral principles or constitutional restrictions.

Mr. Ted Hollander

I see the need for civilian and military service equally. The country relies on a strong military force for our security, and we've always had that. Different times, it's been more important, if you will, because the threats have been greater. Right now, the threats are extremely great, both from foreign states and non-state entities. I feel that for everything that this country gives us; the security that it gives us; the opportunities that it gives us that everybody should be willing and enthusiastic about giving back. And I would say even if we had a military draft, if it were all military and no civilian service -- and I'm not recommending that, I would still feel the same way. For example, in Switzerland and Israel, I think their mandatory or relatively mandatory military service requirements are very sound and helps make both of those nations great. In short, I feel very grateful to what the country has to offer. We have a lot of problems right now. Fortunately, we are able in our country to stand up and complain about those problems. That's one of the greatest benefits that we get from the country, and I think we all should pay back.

Ms. Lucy Steigerwald

I think you already kind of got my answer, but I will say, no, I don't think that we owe anything. All human beings owe to one another is non-coercion, and everything else has to be up to them or civil institutions without a government bureaucracy.

Ms. Debra Wada

My first question is to Dr. Galston and Mr. Hollander. If the thought of universal obligation was put into place, part of the issue in the past, particularly with the draft, was in terms of fairness, transparency, and equity. How would you address those kinds of concerns that, if we were to mandate service, we would be able to address those concerns that were raised?



Dr. William Galston

As it turns out, I have some direct experience with that very issue. I'm a Vietnam era veteran, and I was exposed to the military draft. I could spend hours talking about the imbalances, inequities, loopholes in that system, the ability for people with resources, material resources, access to legal representation that others less fortunate didn't have; it helped to undermine the felt legitimacy of the military conscription system in the United States. If I thought that a national service program, broader in scope than the one we now have, was going to replicate those inequities, I would be against it. If it can't be done well and fairly, it shouldn't be done at all. If I had another hour or two, I could walk you through in great detail what it felt like.

Mr. Ted Hollander

I don't think the problem is in the way it's a draft or a requirement, per se. In the past, as Dr. Galston has said, there have been problems with the way we implemented a mandatory service; abuses in the exemptions and so forth. Those abuses can definitely be corrected whether we're talking about military service or civilian service. As I said, when we're talking about values and fairness, the disconnected youth in need of the experience will participate and benefit. We will not end up with a first class of citizens who have participated and a second class of citizens left behind. That addresses the fairness issue, I think. As far as the values, our country is founded on the values of freedom, tolerance for others, equality of opportunity, liberty, and when we put all our youngsters together, I know from my experience in the service, living, working, and training together with people from all different backgrounds; that it was a very important experience, and everybody began to feel that they were a part of the American team.

Ms. Debra Wada

Mr. Bandow and Ms. Steigerwald, there's concern about those, we have heard, barriers to service for particularly certain communities and opportunity to youth, and one way to address that is mandatory service. It requires and gives everybody the ability to be exposed to service.



What are your thoughts in terms of those communities who are often denied, through no fault of their own, the opportunities for service?

Ms. Lucy Steigerwald

I appreciate the nuances that Mr. Bandow has drawn about the nature of service and how it's too vague and too broad, according to this panel. I fundamentally think that there's something wrong, if you'll pardon me, with the question when you're saying, "People don't have the opportunity to provide a service, so let's make them." There's a flaw there, and I can't get around that.

Mr. Doug Bandow

If one is concerned about providing opportunity, I don't understand how a mandatory universal program would be the answer. Part of this comes back to design; if we're talking about mandatory service, presumably, it's compulsory. If it's compulsory, it has to have some kind of punishment for failing to participate. Now if that punishment is simply you don't get some cash to go to college, then it's kind of like the draft in the Civil War where you just pay your way out. If you're wealthy, you don't care. Your parents will just pay your way to school. If we're really talking about a compulsory program, we're talking about ultimately, presumably, throwing people in jail if they don't show up. So then the question is: You were denied an opportunity so we're going to threaten you with jail unless you participate in the opportunity we want you to participate in? And I think, how do we decide where they go; give them equal places to go? How do you equalize going to the military and nonmilitary? You can go fight in Fallujah, or you can shelve books in a library? Which do you get? A lot of foreign systems have three years civilian and two years military to try to equalize. If you do that, military officers, typically, will run screaming from the room. They want longer term service, because you train people; they're responsible; you use that knowledge. One of the great virtues of the volunteer military is soldiers want to be there. And the military wants that, because they're better.

There's a lot of things that go with that. So the moment that you move to compulsion, there's a whole bunch of other stuff that comes in. I have trouble imagining what this fair system



will be. What happens to the malingerer? Okay, I'll show up at noon every day for my service job. What do you do? I mean, we may wish they would understand that this is a fabulous opportunity we have generously provided for them, but they might not see it that way. To me, that's the challenge here. We should have no illusions if you're talking about millions of people being compelled to do things, many of which they probably don't want to do. You've entered into a vastly different realm than AmeriCorps and other programs that are relatively small, relatively targeted that are appealing to people who definitely want to be there. These are radically different worlds, I think.

Mr. Steve Barney

It's been previously noted that there's a spirit of service that is very strong already in our nation with many people who do serve. As we're talking about mandatory service and the possibility of an option of mandatory service, then it's appropriate for us to consider what the consequences are and, Mr. Bandow, you've referred to some of them as well.

My question is if we were to have a system of mandatory service, what would the likely impact be to those people who currently volunteer in those organizations that require volunteers for service? Would it tend to, perhaps, increase participation rates? Would it take away from those? Your thoughts, please.

Ms. Lucy Steigerwald

That's a very interesting question. I guess if you're mixing people who want to be where they are; who are passionate about, say, working in healthcare or literature or ditch-digging, adding people who don't want to be there, the malingerers as Mr. Bandow said, I don't think you can fully predict the results. I'm not really comfortable with that, because, fundamentally, making millions of people do something is saying, "I know how well this will work out, and let's do it." I think it deeply diminishes the spirit of charity in volunteerism if it's compelled. I don't even think it's the same thing.



Mr. Ted Hollander

I've wrestled with that same problem with a mandatory program, at least an the outset. I would not recommend imprisonment or severe criminal penalties. I think that penalties that those who talk about mandatory service have thought about, making the nonparticipant ineligible for certain benefits, might help discourage those people, and would be sufficient punishment, at least of the outset of any program that we set up. As time goes by, we hope that this will be more than just voluntary; a culture of wanting to serve or feeling that we must serve; that we want to give back to our country. Once we get to that point where it's really ingrained in our people, I think we can treat it like a military draft. If a youngster refuses to serve, then I think that they would have to pay the penalty, which could be imprisonment.

Dr. William Galston

Mandatory service of any kind has frequently been characterized as a solution in search of a problem. I disagree and let me tell you why; this is the consequence I'm particularly concerned about. As I look at our civil and civic life and political life today, what I see is a level of division, polarization, mutual mistrust, and antipathy between and among groups of citizens at a level that I haven't seen previously in my lifetime, and which there's good reason to believe that people even older than I am have not seen in their lifetimes. A lot of that has to do with the fact that we live our lives in increasingly and hermetically sealed micro worlds, occupied principally by people who think like us, look like us, and act like us and who share the same perspective and understanding. The virtue and consequence of group-based service, as I've described it, is to bring people together across those differences, as happened in World War II. We've all seen those MGM pictures with a Pole and an Italian, a Jew and an African American -- an African American sometimes, because the services were not very well integrated in those days. But we've seen those pictures, and there was some real sociology in the back of those pictures. People who had worked together, shared burdens and hardships together, and who had pursued common goals ended up being closer afterwards. We were a much more integrated country as a result of that experience.



There is nothing like that in today's United States. There are almost no integrative experiences. For me, the most urgent purpose of national service, and I'm willing to pay a price along many other dimensions to achieve this outcome, is to recreate common experiences that can bind us together as a country. If we don't do that, then we'll continue to see the kinds of pathologies that we've been witnessing before our eyes in contemporary America. I'm not willing to settle for that.

Mr. Doug Bandow

I think one of the questions is whether a mandatory program will create an ongoing sense of obligation that people will want to live out through their lives, or if it will create a one-time sense of obligation. "I'm done; I gave at the office. I'm done, I don't have to do this anymore." I think that's a very real danger, and we don't know. I think it's very dangerous to assume that folks in positions of political power can announce young people have an obligation to service, create a program for them, and assume they will walk away with an increased sense of idealism. I don't see any reason to assume that.

I've been in Washington a good bit of time, and the political climate is very ugly. It's not one I particularly like, but it's not as if America hasn't lived through periods where one could make a lot of the same criticisms; the Jefferson-Adams time, the Adams versus Jackson political realm. We had the gilded age after the Civil War and the intense military draft saving the country, and we had the gilded age of corruption and many other things. Indeed, the president who came out of that conflict, many around him enriched themselves; not him personally, but others. I think of the roaring 1920s, think of the politics surrounding F.T.R. and the bitterness there. Think of the 1960s. So I'm a little nervous about the presumption that today we live in this unique age.

In terms of diversity, if you're a white teenager living in Southern California today, you live in a very different world than 40 or 50 years ago. I think that with the World War II diversity, one thing was that many people came from very isolated communities; and second, the intensity of military service. That kind of bonding, it is not the same as what you're going to get out of a 4 million or 8 million person program of civilians. Will people live in barracks, or are



they going to live in their homes? Are we talking about a civilian program that will actually take people off, or are they going to live with their families, live among friends, and in apartments. I think in a lot of these things we're presuming virtues. We're kind of picking from out there. I doubt this program would give it.

Mr. Ed Allard

Several of you have referred to foreign countries. Is there something from which we can learn from those countries that have mandatory service, and to what extent should we value or not value those?

Mr. Ted Hollander

I think we can learn from the situation in Israel that if we have a mandatory requirement, in their case it started off as mandatory, I believe, that we must be careful to avoid the abuses. From what I read, this has been a serious problem over the past recent years in Israel that their mandatory requirement has been abused, and there's a crossover between exemption for religious reasons, personal reasons, or even no reason. Those lines, apparently, have become blurred. I don't know exactly what's being done, but I know the country is addressing it.

I would say that the real poster child is Switzerland. I've never heard anyone say anything derogatory about the program that the Swiss have, and they've had it virtually forever. Now, to be sure, they are a peaceable country. They have not connected, in the Second World War for example, with either side. But they all feel, the men anyway, feel that they have an obligation to their country; to keep their country strong. They have a military service requirement. Theirs is spread not just over two years, but through most of the years of their life where they do a little bit here and a little bit there. I have the statistics in my book, but I don't recall the details. I think that we can really get something positive out of a mandatory program, and I think we can avoid the drawbacks.



Mr. Doug Bandow

I think the difficulty in assessing that is most other countries have mandatory military programs as opposed to mandatory civilian programs. With the Swiss, it's a national defense measure. It's historically been when surrounded by enemies. It's the same with Israel. There are social impacts, but the focus and the intent are for national security. And you see that in many other countries. A country like Germany has a social service as an alternative to military, but the core was always military. And there, they had the problem of then social agencies lobbying for conscription, because it gave them free labor. Most of these are not systems of the sort that we're talking about here of a mandatory universal civilian program. They're based on the military, and the social might come on top in terms of alternative service. South Korea has been struggling with this, due to a lot of conscientious objection and stuff. So a lot of these issues are floating around, but their core issue is military.

Dr. William Galston

I want to comment on Israel, a system I know pretty well. In fact, although the official umbrella for the Israeli system is military, an enormous amount of what occurs under that umbrella takes the form of what we would call civilian service. A lot of language instruction for new immigrants, for example, is performed by young Israelis who have been subject to the draft, etc. So to some extent, this is a distinction without a difference.

What I have noticed in Israel is that a lot of young people who emerge from this experience have a kind of seriousness; a kind of maturity that most of our young people, I think, lack. In addition, there is a sense of having shared a common, civic experience, and, if I may be permitted an editorial note, I find it very troubling as a citizen that so few of our elected representatives have any direct experience of the military, whose votes they direct. I think the quality of our public life would be a lot higher if the share of veterans in the Congress of the United States were significantly higher than it now is. If we continue to have the system that we now have, the chances of that, I believe, are remote, and I think that is a problem for the country.



Dr. Janine Davidson

I want to reverse order here from the mandatory thing. The vision statement of our commission is for "Every American inspired and eager to serve." I'm wondering if each of you could comment on whether that's even a good goal? Some of you have already expressed that it's a valuable enough goal to even be mandatory, but even if not mandatory, every American inspired and eager to serve?

Dr. William Galston

It's such an improbable goal; yes, it is. I'm not a Libertarian, although I am surrounded by Libertarians, but I have to concede that that kind of uniformity of sentiment is not realizable in the real world, and even in the circumstances of World War II, where people screamed to volunteer for the military service before they were even drafted, there were a lot of people whose spirit of service was, shall we say, weak. And I don't think that there's anything about a good country that requires that kind of universality of civic sentiment. I can't think of an educational system that would produce it. I can't think of a feasible social system that could produce it. I think the most we can have is a more widespread sense of reciprocity than we now have, but I wouldn't want the commission to think it would have failed if it didn't end of recommending programs that might arguably achieve that goal, because I don't think it's achievable.

Mr. Ted Hollander

I think whether it's a goal or not, it's a very important vision that we have. Surely we never will quite reach that; many visions are never reached, but the effort to get there is important. Making that effort, we achieve at least part of our goal. I think if we start off with something less, we won't get to the point that we want. I think we should shoot for the moon. Yes, make that a vision. I think once this program starts up, like any program of this nature, it's going to have a lot of stumbling blocks as we go along in the first few years, or maybe even in the first generation, but I think there's enough good in either a mandatory program or a voluntary program that the country will grab onto this. It may take as much as a generation, but the country will grab onto it and it will go viral. I think the vision is very well worth pursuing.



Dr. Janine Davidson

Ms. Steigerwald or Mr. Bandow, putting aside whether or not it's feasible or starry-eyed, is it a valuable thing for our society to have more Americans inspired and eager to serve?

Mr. Doug Bandow

I look at that there's a very real difference between moral responsibly and civic responsibility. We live in community with one another. Almost all of us, certainly, live in families and communities and go to churches, we have friends. In my mind, these are concentric rings of responsibility, but they start inward and move out. We have very strong responsibilities to our own family members and those around us; those we have a lot of contact with and those we have intimate relationships with. I think these are very powerful, moral relationships, but they're not ones that can be compelled. It strikes me that that's where so much of what we talk about national service is; it's service to others. It's helping others. And I think the mistake is to assume that it can only be fulltime for some kind of agency under government agents. That's where part-time volunteerism comes in, like working through your church; a whole host of stuff out there.

I'd love to have a universal ethic in our society in which people recognize obligations to one another and try to live them out. Their ability to live them out is going to depend heavily on their own circumstances. If you have heavy family obligations, you probably will do less; there's some of these things out there. We need to teach it, and we need to model it. Those who promote programs like this need to be the best at showing why it's good, but the idea that it becomes a political obligation is where I think we want to be very, very careful. In my mind, that's where the military is very different. I think that the volunteer military is the way to go. My nephew is a Seal. He chose to be there. This is a man of extraordinary accomplishment who wants to be there. I'm glad he is, because he's very good at it. A volunteer military gives us a lot in terms of security, and I think that volunteerism helps. What we want to do is have a system in which there is a lot of variety of outlets for service. We shouldn't presume there's only one. The



idea of mandating it turns it around more for me. Moral obligations are not the same as political obligations that are going to be imposed.

Ms. Lucy Steigerwald

I echo Mr. Bandow, but I also think, and I hate to imply it, that your whole reason for being here is flawed. Military, national, and public service, to me, is putting an odd hat on disparate things. If, say, my tax dollars were going to a mandatory program, I obviously would have an objection to the mandatory nature, but say it was this widespread, inspired, optional, but let's encourage everybody type of service, I would rather fund the young people working in homeless shelters or helping immigrants, and I would rather not fund the military or things that I think might increase government. Again, this generalizing of service, it's vague, but you're trying to put a federal bureaucracy hat on something that doesn't fit under it.

Ms. Jeanette James

I'd like to start with Ms. Steigerwald. You argued in your testimony and again today that mandatory service would be an infringement on personal liberty, however, as mentioned before, currently folks in this country are required to serve on juries, to pay taxes. We live by a set of established laws for the common good. Can you talk about what makes mandatory service different from these requirements that are already established as mandatory?

Ms. Lucy Steigerwald

If you've ever talked to a Libertarian, you can find one who would be able to argue against mandatory jury duty, but more to the point, I have yet to hear a suggestion from this commission that doesn't sound grand. Yes, a jury can be sequestered for months if it's some dramatic, giant trial, but I would argue that you could find people who want to serve on juries. The selection process we have right now is rather flawed in that way. But you're talking about a year of someone's life, and it's a more extreme example of something that I fundamentally don't believe in. People do commit crimes, and you need some way to deal with that fact and a jury seems like a good one. But people are generous and help others. They do join the military and



do all sorts of other things. The idea that the compulsion is needed is not based on anything substantial. It's just you trying to find something to do.

Ms. Jeanette James

Continuing on that line, you mentioned that it's a year of someone's life. One of the other recommendations in discussion that's been brought to us is to make some kind of service a part of your school time. For example, a semester of your high school is required for a service-learning option. How would you feel about something along those lines; instead of a year of service where you're taking them out of their choices of what to do with their life, it's part of a school program?

Ms. Lucy Steigerwald

High schoolers are not independent adults, although I do have some problems with the way they are treated by public schools. I think that's not as problematic of a suggestion. The idea that high school students should be more out in the world and out of the classroom is a good one. But this idea that service as a political thing is always going to be good, it's still faulty. I mean, what are they going to be doing? Are they going to be helping build sanitation in Appalachia, or are they going to be out learning that it's their job to be part of the collective military force? This sort of program is a generalization, but it also defies the ability to predict what it would look like. It's such a wide-sweeping idea that would affect millions of people's lives, no matter what it looked like.

Ms. Jeanette James

Mr. Hollander, the mandatory service program that you envision includes a list of educational requirements, such as civics, personal finance, and media literacy. I'm curious to know why you think these skills should be included or learned through a service program as opposed to through our current education system?



Mr. Ted Hollander

I think it would be ideal were it sufficiently part of our existing system, but I think we're seeing for the most part that those lessons in living are not really being learned in secondary education. In primary education and secondary education, we're getting exposure to the liberal arts, to science. We're learning the basic three Rs. In technical schools, we get technical training to develop a skill to put us into one of the trades. That section of learning that we all need badly doesn't seem to fit into any part of our existing secondary and primary school situations. To be sure, it's being taught in some, but I don't think it's general enough. The focus on civics goes without saying that the more we know about government, history, and our constitution; the better informed we are of those, the better off all of us and our youngsters will be to make decisions and evaluate political decisions. But I think we're finding that a lot of the youth, when they drop out of high school or complete and graduate high school and even go on to college; when they get out into the free world, they run into a lot of roadblocks. One is obviously the college graduate who didn't realize what was going on over the past four years, as he was developing increasing debt over those 4 years. He gets out of college and is like, "Whoa, what am I going to do now? Not only do I find it difficult getting a job, but for every day I don't go to work, the costs are adding up." They end up with this unmanageable college debt, or they get into a situation where they start to build a family and have no idea what's involved in supporting a family, primarily the financial supporting aspects of it. They don't have any idea about insurance, healthcare, finances, savings or how much to save, and so on. If we look at the American population right now, as I understand it, the amount that's saved for retirement is very inadequate for the average person out there working in their 40s or 50s. The average person has not put aside anywhere near what they need to for retirement. These are lessons that should be learned early in a career, because if you don't learn them until later in your career, it's too late.

Mr. Tom Kilgannon

Dr. Galston, I want to pose a question to you. I was interested in what you see as the compelling need for a mandatory service program. In an earlier answer, you were talking about the injury to social fabric and the idea that we're not getting along; we're not as connected as we



used to be. What I've heard as we've gone around the country and talked to people is that the need for service programs is a practical need. We have the military, because we need to win a war. We have a police force, because we need to neutralize a threat or clean up after disasters. A benefit of serving in those is we come together in ways we hadn't before. But in your answer previously, you seemed to indicate that the primary reason for service is connectedness. Did I misunderstand that?

Dr. William Galston

I think it's an important question. First, there's no question about the fact that if service is not directed towards meeting an important and otherwise unmet need, then it's not worth doing. And if service is not worth doing, then people, especially young people whose "BS" detectors are quite acute, I've noticed, will see that quickly. They'll see through the program. So the presupposition of everything I'm talking about is that there is a very wide range of unmet needs in our society.

I was focusing on the distinction between individuals going off and doing service on their own as opposed to the format that I stressed in my remarks; mainly, doing it together. In my view, on top of all the individual unmet needs that we have in our society, we also have an overarching civic and political problem; our inability to deal in terms of respect and compromise with a very fragmented society made up of a lot of people who seem very distant and alienated from one another. On top of meeting needs, there is also, and I'm being blunt, a civic and political objective to the idea of group service involving people who are very diverse and who might not spend a lot of time with each other afterwards or in any other way. Making up opportunities for people to have Kumbaya experiences is not what I'm talking about, but coming across our differences has to be one of the consequences of the kind of service we need now more, I think, than we did 30 years ago.

Mr. Tom Kilgannon

Mr. Hollander, in your testimony, you talk about the need for a mandatory service program, and one of the reasons you stressed it should be mandatory instead of voluntary is that



if it were voluntary, those who would most benefit from it would not partake in it. There are a lot of activities that an individuals would benefit from: exercise, healthy diet, regular attendance at religious services. Should those be mandatory as well?

Mr. Ted Hollander

Those problems are not quite the same. The problems I mentioned, and there are crossovers, have a direct cost to society. Take the extreme cases of the inner cities where the underprivileged, those who are left behind and struggle, make their own way, make bad decisions, and a certain element of those who do not have the same opportunity for natural resources, the same education opportunities that the rest of us have. They are struggling and they turn to, understandably, a lot of behavior that has very bad social costs like criminal behavior. And extreme example would be someone who joins a terrorist group. Others are drug trafficking, human trafficking, drug use. You can go on and on of the difficulties that arise in the underprivileged areas, because those who live and toil there don't have the opportunities that the rest of us have. So I see the difference being the social cost. Obesity, for example, or lack of exercise and poor diet doesn't turn you into a poor citizen really, but if you are resorting to very antisocial behavior in an inner-city situation, I don't think it's unfair to say that you are being a bad citizen.

Mr. Alan Khazei

I'm going to start with asking Dr. Galston a question. I appreciated what you said about you were one of the architects for the creation of AmeriCorps and that it hasn't lived up to the original aspirations. The good news is we have had 30 years of the modern national service movement, as you've said, and it now does have, at least at the AmeriCorps level and on a smaller scale, strong bipartisan support as witnessed by the past two years of a Republican Congress funding this program with even small increases.

Now we're at a different stage, and I think you're right about an even greater need. Reflecting back, what can we learn from those lessons from the creation that if we as a country



now tried to embark on a renewed commitment to national service that we could have a better chance of success this time?

Dr. William Galston

I'm sure you'd be the first to agree we shouldn't undervalue what we've achieved, even though the civic consequences have been somewhat disappointing. I was part of a small team in the White House that helped put it together and sell it to a divided and reluctant Congress, and what I learned is that people are always going to be of many different minds about the idea of service, particularly when it's publically sponsored and funded. As I think we've seen from today's panel, that diversity of viewpoints has by no means disappeared in the 30 years since the modern national service movement began. We've also learned that there are many competing fiscal needs, even if the importance of service is granted in principle. It was more difficult to get appropriations for AmeriCorps than it was to get it authorized in the first place. The fiscal pressures haven't diminished either. I believe that we have learned that scale matters. I think that the original aspiration for 250,000, which corrected for population growth would be in the area of 300,000 today on an annual basis, made a lot of sense, because it would have created a situation in which a tipping point would have been reached. There would have been much wider consciousness of service opportunities throughout the political community and particularly among young people.

I would say to the commission as a whole that, setting aside the issue of mandatory versus voluntary, if you were able to create an agreement across partisan and ideological lines for a dramatic expansion of the kinds of programs that have already proved their worth and workability for over a quarter of a century, that would be a substantial achievement. I've given you my reasons for believing that a mandatory component would yield additional civic benefits that are appropriate to the times in which we now live, but I would throw my hat in the air if you did something less than that but much more than what we're now doing.



Mr. Alan Khazei

Mr. Bandow and Ms. Steigerwald, you've made very articulate, passionate arguments against a mandatory program, which I think are very thoughtful. We had a prior panel where a lot of folks talked about the crushing student debt crisis for young people, for example. How do you feel if it's not mandatory, but we had a system that was voluntary that would provide, not exactly the same as the GI Bill that we have for the military, a way people could earn more than what is available right now, which is essentially just the Pell Grant? What do you think about a voluntary system that had some incentives for young people who decided on their own to serve their country; nonmilitary?

Ms. Lucy Steigerwald

Of course, that's a less objectionable suggestion. I think that there are other solutions to student debt that I would love to see explored. People in need, which is what I care about; charity and needs to be met, that kind of thing can be remedied by considering getting rid of some laws. Restrictions on being able to have your own soup kitchen or homeless shelter; there are small, clever solutions beyond this grand planning. I have less to rant about when it comes to your suggestion, but I'm not comfortable with the idea of a universal, sort of aggressive campaign and schools full of an endless mandate, "Volunteer, volunteer, volunteer." Simply telling people what's available now, what they could be doing, talking in a class about helping people; people, not the nation and civic responsibility. Talk about people you know who might need help in your neighborhoods. The problem is not this lack of civic anything. It's that there are people, even in this country, who don't have things they need, and there are a lot of lovely, generous people doing things about that. Encouraging young people to be also doing something about that is great, but that's all. That's all.

Mr. Doug Bandow

Certainly a volunteer program of any sort I think is far better than a compulsory program. I worry about it in the sense that it becomes an answer to everything. There are a lot of issues out there where I think the fundamental problems lie elsewhere. The whole issue of financing,



there's a lot of evidence that the influx of student aid encourages tuition increases. Colleges and universities are quite aware of an ability to pay, and one study suggested every \$1,000 in extra student aid yielded a \$600-dollar increase in tuition. If you're concerned about the affordability of college, the question is, is the way to do that to throw more money into it and create an obligation so now students need to get more money? It's kind of a bootstrap, there.

I think there are an awful lot of areas of healthcare and other things where we have extraordinary problems, but the question is does a program like this, a million volunteers, is that a good answer? In essence, you're throwing untrained people at the problems. Does it make more sense to target narrowly? If we have the money, should we have a particular program for, say, oncology? Some of these are extraordinarily important, but it's not clear to me because it seems we're marrying this desire to encourage young people to service, which is a good thing, plus doing some good stuff at the same time.

I also think the idea about federalism is very important. Ms. James's question about high school requiring service, my reaction is school should be relatively independent and make any requirements they want, but I would hesitate to say let's have the Federal Department of Education or Congress try to mandate that every high school in America do this. To me, this is the kind of thing in a diverse country of 330 - 340 million people, 50 states, and multiple communities, let people make those choices. Let them experiment. To me, the more you ratchet up, I'd like to see more experimentation at state and local level. I'd like to see that as opposed to having a federal approach and a macro program.

Ms. Shawn Skelly

For Dr. Galston and Mr. Hollander, as proponents of universal service, what do you conceive some degree of early attainment of maturity with the universality of service would do to the economy? I think Mr. Hollander talked about how there would be some lessons and failures on the path to establishing some kind of universal service. What are your appreciations of what injecting this period of universal service for several million Americans a year would have on the current path or our economic growth?



Mr. Ted Hollander

Do I understand that your question is what it will do for the country as a whole as opposed to what it will do for the individual serving?

Ms. Shawn Skelly

Yes, the economy as a whole when you take 4 million people out of it; how you pay for it and what it does.

Mr. Ted Hollander

I think the most important thing that it does is it brings up the level of knowledge and understanding of what goes on in the country; why each individual's social, economic, and political situation is what it is. As Dr. Galston said, it brings the togetherness, gets everybody on the same plain of understanding the opinions of others. Even sitting here, I'm having the opportunity to understand the opinions of others who don't agree with me. I think that's very important, and it has to start at a young age. Youngsters in high school are already influenced by what's gone on before, by their primary education, parents, church, maybe by their friends who may not be a good influence. We've got to get the young not necessarily turned around but more attuned to what makes a good society, economy, and citizen. If everybody realizes that after a certain amount of time with a program like this and then continues into more education or the labor force with that background, we build up a society of caring individuals who will help make this country great and help overcome the problems I discussed in my written testimony and the problems I discuss in *Step Forward, America*.*

Dr. William Galston

You've asked an interesting question that I haven't thought through before. Let me do something dangerous and think out loud, live an unrehearsed, on C-SPAN. Let me try to answer your question in strictly economic terms, which I think you intended. As I think most of us are aware, norms of participation in the paid workforce among adolescents and young adults have

**Please see page 56 for the amendment regarding Mr. Hollander's response.*



changed dramatically in the past two generations. Now the norm, statistically, is you will not be in the paid workforce full time until you are significantly older than was the case in the 1940s or 1950s. Now let me speculate. Under the kind of program that I favor, young people doing a year of service would earn a living stipend and credits toward post-secondary education and training. Quite possibly, that would make it more likely that they would finish up their post-secondary education and training on time and with less debt than they would have otherwise. That would have a range of economic consequences.

I can also imagine the sort of thing that one sees in Israel that if you enter college or post-secondary training when you're a little bit older as opposed to straight out of high school, you'll be more serious about it, more likely to put one step in front of the other and finish on time. That too would have beneficial economic consequences. On one hand, you would have a certain number of people withdrawn from even membership in the paid labor force for that year. On the other hand, you might get compensated or more than compensating returns from improved college completion rates and lower student debt. I don't know how to do the sums live and unrehearsed, but it's not clear to me that it's a slam-dunk, deadweight loss for the economy; not at all.

Ms. Debra Wada

Mr. Bandow, in your testimony and written testimony, you talk about how you could support a military draft because it's directed and managed by the state for the benefit of the state. As you know, the Army is having difficulty as of last year in meeting its recruiting requirements. The propensity for young Americans to serve in uniform is declining even greater. If there came a time when we required all Americans of a certain age to serve in the military, what would your position be?

Mr. Doug Bandow

I want to make very clear that I'm not an advocate of the draft. In my time in politics, I worked for Ronald Reagan in the White House under Martin Anderson, who was the father of the all-volunteer military, a man who I greatly admire and whose position I greatly admire. The



only argument for mandatory service of any kind strikes me as a national security emergency. I don't see any argument that can justify civilian mandatory service, because I think it's an element of necessity; the question of is your society under threat? That's the critical issue, and in American history, when has that threat been met? In my view, it's pretty hard to find that. For example, in World War I, if we wanted to have a credential argument, I would argue that nothing would require conscription; it was not that kind of a threat. So I would argue that if you see something that extraordinary need, then you can make the argument for military conscription. To me, that's the only case you can make for military conscription. What I would say on any circumstance that we are living through today, number one is conscription will almost certainly not help you in the sense that the military does not want to conscript military. People who do not want to be there have been discipline problems. They want out. They don't want to stay in. They don't want longer terms. They don't want to train. The whole tenor of military service is radically different if people want out as opposed to want to stay in. Military officers remember what it was like before; my father was one. He served under a draft military and afterwards. That would not be good, especially if we're doing stupid wars; nation building, spending 17 years bringing democracy to Central Asia, trying to do things I don't understand in other countries, civil wars with multiple parties. I don't see how on earth one can justify conscripting young men and now women. If we're going to have women in combat arms, one would have to conscript women as well as men.

To me, this is a question of where is the necessity? We have to be able to argue that whatever that current need is, is significant enough. That's where we have to go the other way and say, "Wait a minute." To draft somebody into military conditions where they fight and die, to risk their lives and risk what it brings to our society; 4,500 dead out of Iraq, tens of thousands injured and some very severely, what was the price we paid? So I see conscription as a very last resort, and I don't see any current circumstance and any current threat that could justify that. The military's problem of recruiting would be exacerbated, would argue, by a civilian program, because suddenly there's a new service alternative with money for college. The military's no longer unique. It's competing with programs that provide easier service yet similar benefits. I think the military would view that as a problem.



Mr. Steve Barney

Mr. Bandow and Ms. Steigerwald, at the risk of a potentially gross understatement of your views, at least part of your objections to mandatory service is the idea that the federal government wouldn't be particularly effective at selecting what types of service would be appropriate for particular individuals. Earlier today at our earlier panel, we had testimony from Professor Grimm from the University of Maryland, who talked about some very creative programs where the individuals who have some experience in how to think about service can generate some very interesting, innovative types of things. Would you be more inclined to support, maybe even a generation out, an idea of mandatory service if it were something that enabled individuals to design and to implement service in a way that would be responsive to things that they are passionate about and that are needs in their communities?

Ms. Lucy Steigerwald

Again, you're stressing the more voluntary, choice-based side, but as you've gathered by now, I have an objection to this on principle. Your idea sounds nice and very self-directed, but high school students don't even get to do that now with their general education. I sort of can't believe that it could be as self-directed, independent study-like as you optimistically describe. I'm not seeing it work out that way. Fundamentally, I don't think the lessons being imparted are ones that young people should learn. They shouldn't learn that they belong to the state, even in a more gentle capacity.

Mr. Doug Bandow

I can certainly imagine that a process could be developed that would be more efficient. If one sees how the military assigns people and where they go, this is, at times, a very arbitrary process. You put in your preferences; there's ranking and points. My father ended up as a meteorologist, because his half-brother showed in in the room where they were doing assignments and said he shouldn't be in the motor pool. "Why don't you try meteorology?" And my dad ends up as a weather man. Maybe the process under this kind of a program would be better, but we're talking about 4 to 8 million people. Who's running it? It's not just assigning.



It's every NGO and state agency. Are we creating new agencies? Are we relying on existing NGOs? How do they change their operations knowing that they may get free labor in? To me, however well designed, I'm skeptical that it will turn out.

But I don't see an argument for mandatory service. To say that mandatory service might be less burdensome does not change the fact that genuine service needs to be voluntary. There is no compulsory compassion. This is not something that should be forced. There are moral duties that we should teach, but these are not political duties that should be enforced by the state, whether that means cutting benefits or throwing people in jail. Again, consider the idea of throwing people into jail because they refused to show up and shelve books at a library. Is that really what we view the reach of the state should be? That is what we're talking about if we're talking about the ultimate sanction of the criminal law.

Mr. Ed Allard

We do have pros and cons, and I would love to get your opinions as to are there areas of service: military, national, public, wherever, where you could potentially see mandatory service, and are there areas you four could agree upon being voluntary service?

Mr. Ted Hollander

We were not talking about making any specific part of the program mandatory. I think we were all, at the outset, talking about options. I wouldn't make the civilian service option mandatory. I wouldn't make the military service option mandatory, but I would make something mandatory. For example, in the program I espouse, the civilian service also includes humanitarian aid overseas. I don't think anyone could argue with the fact that, if properly done, it's money well spent. To me, sending our most valuable resource, our youth, over to help a foreign country outside of our own nation with any threat or problem that they have is a lot more important than just sending money, which usually gets side-tracked to autocrats who run the country or is just inefficiently used. I wouldn't make the humanitarian aid part of it mandatory. The only part that would be mandatory, the way I see it, is whatever the military at the time



needs to suit their requirements. Right now, as it was mentioned earlier, the military is hurting. They're not getting enough volunteers now, and one of the reasons they don't have enough Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines is that so much of our youth is not qualified to serve now because of mental and physical deficiencies and so on. So I wouldn't make the military mandatory. The mandatory part would be you have to do something.

Dr. William Galston

This is an analogy that I think is helpful. In principle, we could probably staff all of the juries in the country with volunteers, and some of the same people would show up over and over again. But we don't do it that way for good and sufficient reason. As to the civil consequence for not doing it that way, if I could assign one piece of reading for this commission, it would be Alexis de Tocquerville's analysis of the civic consequences of mandatory jury duty. So as a general proposition, anything that is sort of like jury duty has a *prima facie* case for being distributed through the population in ways other than simple voluntary choices would produce.

Mr. Doug Bandow

To me, the only claim for mandatory service would be attributes of sovereignty of the state, the essential framework of a free society. America needs to be defended in a dangerous world. The good news is the U.S., in my view, stands apart from everyone in extraordinary geographic position and extraordinary military. So I don't see what that need would be. I'm pressed hard to find a circumstance where we would face an existential threat that could be stemmed by mass conscription. It strikes me the only argument for mandatory service would be that kind of an existential threat to U.S. society.

I think jury duty, you could argue, is another attribute of sovereignty in terms of a judicial system that is necessary for the United States. I don't believe one can make that argument on civilian service which again, to me, is service to individuals. It's worthwhile. I think it's moral, but I don't think it's an attribute of sovereignty. I don't think it's the business of the state to make that a political obligation.



Dr. Janine Davidson

At the end of the day, a lot of this comes down to what one's personal views are about the role of government and about civil society; what it takes to have a robust and healthy and strong civil society and democracy. Ms. Steigerwald, you said something about people helping people. I'm assuming you meant it in a good way. I'm wondering is there a role for education or/and government in promoting the idea of people helping people, whether it's civic responsibility, more obligatory in its connotation, versus civic engagement, which is more voluntary. Either way, we raise our children with a certain set of understandings about the way our government and society works. So what would be a good role for education in helping our children understand the value of civic engagement or people helping people, or do you not think those two things are the same?

Ms. Lucy Steigerwald

I definitely don't think those two things are the same. You also asked that question of somebody who was homeschooled, to show my former education hand. Theoretically, of all the things that public schools do and all the problems that I think they have, if you could impart that charity is good, that's nice. But, you know, churches do that; the golden rule. There's a lot of Christian-types who live up to what they believe is their religious duty. People are very generous, and I don't think we really talk about that enough. We should talk about the people who are going without, but we should celebrate all the good things that people do without being forced to do it. Parents are the first influence in most children's life, and you have to hope that they are imparting values that gel with charitable goodness and generosity. But if you don't have the right to be a selfish jerk, you don't really have your rights at all. It has to come down to a choice and a level of engagement. If we were all the most generous people possible, we would all be working for Doctors Without Borders right now or we would have given all of our money to charity. Everybody draws a limit somewhere to their generosity. It's sort of self-evident that that has to come from an individual whose money and time it is.



Mr. Doug Bandow

It certainly makes sense to ask schools to do more on civic education. I think the challenge becomes who is in control, and how centralized is it? I feel like in American education there was a time where American states wanted to make sure that you didn't have private education, such as Washington State, because all those papists who were showing up were undesirables who were going to suddenly have their own communities and teach their own religion. The dominant religion was kind of white Anglo-Saxon Protestantism. We wanted that specific religion, and, boy, that is going to be taught by public schools. We will do exactly as much as we can to ensure there are no alternatives. That was part of the ethos. The case went to the U.S. Supreme Court that said, "You cannot band private education." That is a critical element of saying you've got to have alternatives in opportunities. So I would say that when we're looking at education, I don't like the idea of it starting in Washington to dictate where it goes out. To me, what you want is an educational system that is diverse, where there are opportunities. There may be some schools out there I don't like, in terms of the approaches they take. But as long as we have an open system and competing opportunities, then I think this is where a lot of the education is going to have to come from. It is a challenge, because if the right people are on top, then we're very happy with the education that is taught. But if our friends aren't in power anymore, then suddenly we find that other values and other views are being taught. This is one where we want to be very careful. This needs to be part of a larger civic process of socialization, which is family, community, church, and a lot things. And we do have problems in the breakdown of institutions that makes it harder at times.

Dr. William Galston

I'd like to note for the record that Mr. Bandow and I have just reached a point of agreement that *Pierce versus the Society of Sisters* was correctly decided by the Supreme Court. To return to the education question for just a minute, granting the importance of a diversity of educational opportunities, public and private, and sectarian as well as secular in the private sphere, which I've argued for passionately; I also think there is an argument for a general, national requirement of a certain basic knowledge of the American political system, the way it



works, imparted through all primary and secondary schools, private as well as public. When I was in the White House, I tried to get the National Assessment of Educational Progress broadened to include an annual or a biannual test in basic civil knowledge. I'm not talking about indoctrinating anyone with libertarianism, or my form of liberalism, or Bernie Sanders's form of democratic socialism, but just knowing the basics. I think that that is a legitimate goal of education, public and private, and if the government were to require the same kind of assessment of civic knowledge that we now require for English and math, I don't think that that would be a deprivation of liberty that we ought to worry about, but perhaps a Libertarian point of view it is.

Mr. Doug Bandow

There's a difference, I think, of values and of facts being taught.

Dr. William Galston

Well, I agree with that, and that's why I'm stressing the cognitive factual dimension of the American political system.

Ms. Jeanette James

Mr. Hollander, my question is for you. Most mandatory national service proposals, including your own, I believe, envision a cohort of young people serving the country for a period of time. It's been suggested to us through research that there is some tangible benefits of service on an individual's health, for example. It has a positive effect on an individual's health. How do you envision including other-aged cohorts in service proposals; for example, children and seniors, not just the younger cohort that we've been talking about?

Mr. Ted Hollander

That is a negative in the program as I have presented it, and I think we definitely have to address it. Lets' take a look at the situation that exists now, and the situation as I have espoused it; 18 and 19 year olds will not be qualified to serve, for example, in the Peace Corps for obvious



reasons. They could get a temporary exemption if they wish to go right into college, assuming they could commit in a legal fashion to the Peace Corps or some other qualified service that wouldn't take somebody who only has an 18-year-old education. So with that type of approach, you could step it up from the 18 year olds and get up into the lower and mid 20s and so on. That's one approach to broadening the availability of the service opportunities. The available opportunities that the commission currently envisions if we get into a program of this nature would be broadly advertised to the population in general and, therefore, would encourage those beyond their 18th and 24th birthday to serve. If we have a universal program of some sort, organizations such as Senior Corps would be involved, and they would be positioned financially or other ways to offer more opportunities for seniors. If there is a culture of service that starts with the youngsters, it will automatically bleed out to other age groups. If we just offer it to 18 and 20 year olds, eventually everyone will have served in some fashion, and therefore their youngsters will want to serve. A program that perhaps got off to a slow start would grow and be available to more age groups. That will take a generation or a couple of generations.

Getting back to the seniors, if we look at a lot of small towns, and I'm from a small town in Connecticut, I think a lot of the towns have the same problem our town has. The commissions and organizations that are providing services to the town as an elected official or in a more likely voluntary position, those positions are pretty much being filled now with older folks like myself. And we find that other towns have the same problem that young folks are not stepping up or not volunteering. Their time is spent raising their family or getting involved in other youth sports and activities. Those youngsters are not getting involved. Seniors are involved, and I think we've got to get all the youngsters involved, including those in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, and I think if we get a program like we're talking about, it will bleed out to these other folks.

Mr. Tom Kilgannon

Mr. Bandow, as we traveled around the country, we met with a lot of military. Like you, they voice support for the all volunteer force, however, many of them did voice a concern that they felt that they were doing more than the average citizen; pulling their weight more than the



average person. Is that something that we should be concerned about, and what should we do about it?

Mr. Doug Bandow

They certainly are. You go back to the Iraq war, we turned the reservists into substitutes for active duty, pulled them repeatedly out of their jobs, communities, and family situations, and it's really not what they signed up for. Multiple tours of duty; we turn lieutenants and captains into basically borough chiefs in local townships that are supposed to negotiate with local, tribal leaders. We're expecting them to run societies and rebuild countries. Our military has been trained very well to do what needs to be done in terms of winning very serious wars. I think there are two issues, one of which is the lack of decision makers having military experience. Of course, part of that is simply the reality we take in under 200,000 recruits every year. If you have 4 million people turning 18, the vast majority of your population won't have military experience. Even if we had a draft that doesn't mean that everyone would have equally serious military duty. The historic experience is if you have a college education, you're more likely to be the company clerk than you are to be out in combat arms. If you have military connections and influential parents, then you're much more likely to find yourself out of harm's way than in harm's way in those situations. There's no easy answer in terms of that. It certainly would help to have politicians whose ethics were not, "Well, I had other priorities when the war was going on." But then, when they are in power, they're quite busy with coming up with places to send American forces, and we certainly have had that with a number of officials.

I think the real issue is what we use the military for, and we've got to ask is it worth the sacrifice of lives, injuries, what it does to families, in terms of the goals we have set in some places? To me, we no longer view the military and the war as a last resort; we view it as a first resort. We have a very good hammer, and everything around the world looks like a nail. Ted mentioned our allies, well, Germans spend 1.2 percent of GDP on the military. Why do we defend them, if they can't be bothered? The question is, why do we, 70 years after the end of World War II, have to carry a burden for people who seem somewhat less concerned about some of the issues.



I think the question you've raised is an extraordinarily important issue, but I think we have to look at it from the other side. Conscription would not be the answer. It's a question of what are we doing with young people? Why are we putting them at risk? As I mentioned, my nephew is a Seal. My family has had a lot of military service. I want these people to have sufficient manpower and material behind them for anything we send them out to do, but let's make sure if we send them out it's for an extraordinarily important purpose.

Mr. Tom Kilgannon

Are you suggesting that if we did not intervene militarily, that more young people would be inclined to join the military?

Mr. Doug Bandow

I'd say we'd actually need less people in the military. The more you want to do, the larger the force structure you have to have. Military spending is the price of your foreign policy. If you want an activist foreign policy, defend rich allies, rebuild failed societies, intervene in civil wars, and other sorts of things, you need force structure. You can't do it on the cheap, and I think that's kind of what we've been trying to do; cut military spending but still do everything. If we're worried about the burden on forces, and we're worried about some of the decision makers not having that experience and putting a lot of pressure on the military, let's ask what they're having them do and if it's really necessary. We've got to look at both ends. We can't just look at one end; we've got to look at the second end.

Mr. Alan Khazei

Mr. Hollander, you stated in your testimony that you would step back from your position that service had to be mandatory if you were convinced that a program like Serve America together with and effort by the Service Alliance pushing universal service really could accomplish the goal through benefits and penalties. In your opinion, what benefits would be



necessary, or penalties, to accomplish a goal of universal service that isn't mandatory, but would really encourage people to participate.

Mr. Ted Hollander

I'm really not sure where we would have to draw the line. Obviously, if you gave everybody free college with service, you would give more encouragement, and if you gave them a \$100-dollar credit toward their tuition, you'd get less. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that those who are less fortunate and come from a less educated social situation don't really have the pathway, if you will, to take advantage of the benefits that we might offer. If you took somebody who is now on the street corner struggling to make a buck and support himself, let alone his family, getting into all sorts of antisocial behavior and what not, if you said to him, "You know, if you volunteer and get into the Army," or some civilian service program, "we can help you out with your college education, or we can make sure you get additional credits or when you stand in line, trying to get a job with this industry, our program can see that you get to the head of the line." I don't think that would sink in at all. It would probably be like speaking another language to a certain group of the underprivileged in this country.

So I don't know where the benefits would be. They would certainly help if the benefits were sufficient. It would help a good deal of society, but it wouldn't help everybody. It would help get to the universal service aspect, but it wouldn't really get us there. As far as the penalties, obviously, when we start out, if the penalty was imprisonment that would certainly be a deterrent. I'm not suggesting that. Again, I don't know where we would draw the line.

Mr. Alan Khazei

Dr. Galston, do you have thoughts on this? AmeriCorps originally had an educational award, which now is roughly for a semester. It's now the equivalent of a Pell Grant. Would you change the benefits at all for a service program? Also, it doesn't really appeal to young people who aren't college bound, which there are a number.



Dr. William Galston

I'm not going to sit here and masquerade as an expert on how AmeriCorps has changed over the past 25 years, but I will take your word for it that the educational benefit is now the equivalent of a semester. If so, that's too small. I don't think it's fair compensation, and, secondly, I don't think it's a very effective incentive. By analogy, in many think tanks in town, there's a debate about unpaid internships as having a class skew; that only certain kinds of people are going to be able to take up that opportunity. I'm in favor in the voluntary service sector, of which AmeriCorps is a part, of doing everything that is reasonable and in our power to make sure that opportunities are equally available and attractive to young people up and down the income spectrum. Otherwise, you're just replicating advantages that people come in with, and not only that, but you're making it much more likely that your service is going to be conducted by the same stratum of society that you've been a member of all your life. If I can add a note of personal experience from my military service, I was drafted into the Marines; yes, they did that at the height of the Vietnam War. I ended up as a clerk in an office, but I spent two years with people that I never otherwise would have met. It was a transformative experience, not because I was in a foxhole with them, but because I was with them 24/7. So I wouldn't underestimate the consequences of this kind of mixing for the broadening of the experience base of members of the elite, which, somewhat to my surprise, I turned out to be.

Mr. Doug Bandow

Of course, that was a benefit as opposed to a reason for having conscription at that time.

Dr. William Galston

Yeah, on the other hand, I think you would probably agree with me that one of the consequences of the AVF is to make the political costs of entering stupid wars much lower than they otherwise would be.



Mr. Doug Bandow

Ah, but you can stop stupid wars by not reenlisting. If the military has trouble maintaining the size of its force while fighting a stupid war, it is paying a direct price as opposed to in conscription, where the machine just moves on for years and years providing Soldiers.

Ms. Shawn Skelly

Mr. Bandow, once or twice you expressed concern in regard to things that impact primary and secondary education; demonstratively, federal government reaching down into localities, and how, my word, "fraught" that is. I don't disagree. I also think there's a degree of expected impracticality with a rigidity of federal control at the local level. From that concern that you have, are there examples of programs where the federal government facilitates things that occur at a state and/or local level where you find it to be beneficial, well done, or suitably done?

Mr. Doug Bandow

The objective of trying to increase the equity of funding among the school districts makes a lot of sense. It's very hard to do for a whole host of reasons. Using property taxes to fund local schools is awful, because it's very much, in terms of how the funding goes, the wealthier area is going to spend a lot more than the area with lack of wealth. Certainly, there are federal programs that attempt to direct resources at those schools, especially in inner cities and elsewhere. The thing that strikes me about education is that it is so much more a state and local responsibility, but to me that a sort of thing I would say, yes, there is a specific problem where there is a targeted attempt to reach it and to deal with it.

Ms. Shawn Skelly

How about areas beyond just education, where the government extends its reach to a local level.



Mr. Doug Bandow

One of the problems is that there is a mass of funding programs that for the most part -- localities, you're happy to use for their own use, and they're very political. So I think there's a lot of good intentions expressed, but in practice -- if you look at some of the economic development programs, I think for the most part they're pretty awful in terms of how they turn out. In terms of social services, take Medicaid; how do you try to ensure a level of healthcare for the poorest citizens in America, especially in states that are poorer than others. You have a program that shares funding. I think, again, conceptually that makes sense. Unfortunately, poor people don't get good care out of it, but that's an attempt at meeting a specific need that's very clear, very real, and it's hard for states to manage; would be hard for localities to manage. The feds come in at least as a partner, and there's a shared responsibility. I think that makes some sense.

Dr. Joseph Heck

I'd like to thank Mr. Bandow, Dr. Galston, Mr. Hollander, and Ms. Steigerwald, for being here. We greatly appreciate your time today and thank you for providing valuable information to the commission.

I will dismiss the panelists and will invite the public to provide comments.

The commission is committed to transparency and openness with the public. In keeping with these principles, the commission intends to provide the public with an opportunity to deliver public comments during our hearings. As a reminder, in order to provide the greatest opportunity for as many participants to offer a comment, public comment is limited to a 2-minute period per person. As is noted on our website, sign-up for public comment took place between the opening of registration and the start of this hearing.

When you signed up, you received a numbered ticket. To ensure fairness, tickets were randomly drawn. We will call out five ticket numbers at a time and today we only have four, so it will be easy. We ask that when your number is called please line up to my right, your left, along that wall. The numbers in order are ticket number 4, 1, 3, and 2.



Additionally, if you have any written comments that you would like to submit for the record, please provide them to staff at the registration desk. During your comment, please be aware of the lights that are in front of you on this table. The light will turn yellow when you have 30 seconds remaining and red when time has expired.

Please introduce yourself to the Commission with your name and affiliation before starting your comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ticket #4

My name is Joe Schuman, and I work for a Department of Defense innovation organization that's promoting national service across DOD. I'm actually here in a personal capacity as a National Guardsman, who struggled during the military admissions process to get into service. So I was happy to hear the panelists talk about expanding access to service, because I know the military's medical admissions process keeps tens of thousands of interested applicants who want to get into uniform out every year. For example, in my case, I was a MIT engineer by training, always wanted to serve, had service in my family, but had a history of spinal fusion surgeries for scoliosis, which is obviously a medical condition that the military might want to keep out. It doesn't affect me in any way, but basically because of that red flag on my record, I had been rejected three times from service; from the Army, Navy, and Army Guard. I only mention this, because I have met since then dozens of other applicants personally with similar situations who could serve, who are ready and willing to serve, but are unable to because of the military process.

Ticket #1

My name is Paul Jacob, and I'm president of Liberty Initiative Fund, although they're not necessarily affiliated with my remarks. Americans need to know that their Congress, through this commission, is considering the possibility of drafting young Americans, young people, my kids, and forcing them against their will into government service. We are here today, I think,



sadly, tragically, and frighteningly, because the subject of this hearing is should service be mandatory? My answer is emphatically no. No involuntary servitude, period. I feel like deep down, this commission agrees. You as commissioners agree with that view. Why do I think this? Because I noticed your website says, "inspired to serve." That's your web address. I know the excellent people you have working for you that I've communicated with, their emails come in, and that email address says, "inspire to serve." That's noble and good, but I suspect you wouldn't want an email address that said, "forced to serve .gov," or said, "draft to serve .gov," or, "conscript to serv .gov," or, "dragged out of their homes and forced them into service to do routine government work .gov," which, of course, is probably too long anyway.

Provided this commission decides to recommend no draft, then "inspired to serve" is a perfect web address. It fits; it makes sense. But if this commission has any thought to suggesting to the congress that they should pass a compulsory law to force young people into labor in the government against their will, that web address does not work at all. That web address would be a lie. I beseech this commission foreswear any forced service whatsoever. That shouldn't happen in America. And I ask you before you consider recommending that we have forced service for young people, change your web address. Change your email addresses to, "forced to serve," even for a week or two. See what it feels like to be part of a commission that is no longer, "inspire to serve," but is, instead, "we are going to make you serve against your will." That will not be inspiring.

Ticket #3

My name is Kendra Bradley, and I'm the executive director of Quaker House in Fayetteville, North Carolina, home of Fort Bragg. When I talk about this mandatory service requirement, I assume that you're referring to some sort of paid service; at least a stipend, living arrangements, something. There's a lot of value in unpaid, but I assume you're talking about that. America loves their market driven economy. These sectors are driven by pay, benefits, stability, and the work environment. Yet our civil government service members have been furloughed recently. Military housing has been in the news recently for being in shambles. It's a shame. There are military families that are on SNAP benefits, because they cannot feed their families



otherwise. Those are all disincentives. If you make service mandatory, you're taking out that market incentive. There's no incentive to improve these conditions, and I would anticipate that the conditions would only continue to get worse.

I attended the public hearing in Harrisburg last year, and we heard the list of volunteers tell you that the way they were able to do that is because they were subsidized by their families. They were privileged enough and lucky enough to be born into a family that they were able to do that. It was noted in your executive summary of what you've heard so far, and I was happy to see that. It was kind of laughed at when someone mentioned a free education. Maybe education benefits are benefits afterwards. However, if you don't have a free education, or at least interest free student loans, then some people can enter the Peace Corps; some can enter AmeriCorps or Teach For America, maybe. The rest are forced, whether they want to or not, to enter the biggest, largest employer in the public sector that will take them, which is the military. Now, as a Quaker, violating somebody's conscience because they literally have no other choice to fulfill your mandatory requirement, I don't think you understand how deeply that sense of conscience is held. I would argue to respect that.

Ticket #2

My name is Paul Seiger, and I am a retired federal employee. On January 14th of this year, I had an op-ed published in the New York Daily News on my support for mandatory and national service. I feel very strongly on the issue. I submitted a copy to the commission at that time.

I'd like to split my commentary today into two sections; one philosophical and the other practical. Philosophically, there's nothing that unites Americans today, no shared common experience. To me, that is a recipe for division and ultimately the fracturing of this country into several different entities. Demographic changes, if nothing else, will be the principle drivers of this fracturing. One way to forestall this development is to introduce a common, shared experience, mandatory national service; the type of activity that has long been demonstrated to bring people together and expose more people to more opportunities. On the practical side, with



regard to program specifics, 1 to 2 years of service between the ages of 18 to 28 will provide flexibility for all participants to select the timeframe that best meets their circumstances. To address the question of what's in it for me, I believe all participants should be eligible for benefits to help with education and other expenses, similar to the GI Bill. Implementing a program of this size can probably best be accomplished over a period of years to allow for periodic reviews and adjustments. President Kennedy, who famously encouraged people to serve their country, also proposed the extraordinary challenge of putting a man on the moon. He allowed for nearly a decade to achieve this, with numerous milestones to be met along the way. This program could also be structured in that way.

Mandatory service would be a public-private partnership. Corporate America should be asked to fund a majority of the costs to be administered by the corporation for national and community service. Many corporations already contribute to service programs, as we heard this morning from IBM. Retired baby boomers could serve as valuable mentors to program participants. Challenges and objections, there are none that are insurmountable. Mandatory national service is not a panacea, but it has the power to be transformational. We need to think big and plan long term to help bring us together as a nation, as we face the challenges ahead. I believe mandatory national service will move us in that direction.

Dr. Joseph Heck

We have gone through all the tickets we had for public comments, but still have time remaining for this hearing.

At this time, if you were unable to put your name on a ticket because you arrived late or have been inspired to share a public comment during our hearing, please come up to the mic. If you have already shared a public comment during this hearing, please do not come up to the mic. This time is intended for individuals who were not accounted for during the ticket drawing. Comments will be taken upon first come first serve until the end of our allotted hearing time.



ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT

My name is Li Young. Actually, I tried to get in contact with the front desk, and he just asked me to come here. I actually came to the United States in the mid 60s, after I got a B.A. from Taiwan, and I passed the three distinguished tests, so I should have a very promising career. And I thought if I could come to the United States to get a M.A. or PhD, then I could travel around the world and help. Unfortunately, or should I say maybe fortunately, there's already a million to do that. So I got stuck in the United States, and so I have had an opportunity to observe the problem. I hope this commission will devote your effort to educate people to unite your family. The problem now is the family is taken apart, so their productivity is diminished. Even if you are volunteering for the VA and your promised all the benefits, those social benefits are not going to benefit them. They are victimized to benefit those who I call -- you can link these words: robbery, selfish government, gang, abuse, murder, fraud, crime, it does not work. This is in combination to all together system wide.

So I really hope, in order to find this, you have to increase not only those youngster's productivity, bring the family together so your effort will be to stay together, so you will not be robbed. So long as racial profiling, police brutality, or any mental health problem, those are really basically the force. So if we can do this together, we help the productivity, we really change the system, otherwise there's no hope. So I really think the effort should benefit all of society, and because I am a victim, my family's a victim. My family is supposed to be very happy and healthy, but now we're penniless and my two children, though although they are now going through MIT, before that, they were labeled inferior and unhealthy. I think this society is very sick. You must do something.



CLOSING STATEMENT

Dr. Joseph Heck

I again want to thank our panelists for providing their testimony today and all of those in attendance to took the time to be here during these proceedings. We have heard from thousands of Americans over the course of the last year, as we've traveled around the country. We need to hear from thousands more. We want to make sure than any recommendations we put forward to the President, Congress, and the American people truly are reflective of the diverse demographics that make up this great country.

If you have other comments that you would like to provide after leaving here today, we invite you to submit them via our website: www.inspire2serve.gov. We will be collecting public comments through December 31st of this year. It is only with your help and input that the commission will achieve its vision of every American inspired and eager to serve.

There being no further business before this commission, this hearing is adjourned.

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AMENDMENT

Mr. Ted Hollander submitted the following regarding Commissioner Skelly's question on pages 33 and 34:

The return on this investment will include a better educated, motivated and skilled youth to go on to higher education and the work force, and to generate more of the innovation that has contributed so much to the growth of our economy. And this more enlightened youth will also play a much more significant role in guiding Congress and the President and steering them away from involvement in the type of costly unjustified wars of the types in which we have been involved over the decades following World War II.

We will provide human resources instead of money to combat oppression and poverty in failing societies, money that ends up being directed to the corrupt officialdom of those societies or, if it is used for the intended project, used inefficiently.

And we should dramatically reduce the financial costs related to gang membership, drug and human trafficking, association with terrorist groups, and other anti-social behaviors, as our most marginalized youth are directed away from these behaviors and toward participation in national service.

Excerpted from *Step Forward America! – A Case for a National Service Program* by Ted Hollander