

Warning Letters are Junk Mail

You'll probably get letters from the SS telling you to register, or saying your name has been sent to the Justice Department for "investigation and, if appropriate, prosecution." Don't believe them. These letters look official, but they're only junk mail. The SS sends millions of these letters to lists of people it gets from the IRS, drivers' licenses, and other mailing lists (including members of an ice-cream parlor's birthday club). None of these people have been prosecuted.

In 2004, for example, the SS sent 162,000 names and addresses of suspected nonregistrants to the Justice Department. Nothing was done to investigate or prosecute any of them.

Everybody who was prosecuted was sent at least two certified letters offering them another "last chance" to register late. The return receipts they signed for these letters have been used as evidence against them in court. (The government must prove you knew you were supposed to register, which isn't as easy as it sounds.) Make them work: don't register unless they track you down and order you to register in person.

Don't sign for any certified letters from the SS or the Department of Justice, and don't talk to the FBI if they come looking for you (not that any of these things are likely – they haven't happened in more than 20 years). See a draft counselor or a lawyer immediately.

Even people selected for prosecution have been encouraged to register late. If they registered before they were actually indicted, the case was dropped and nothing more happened.

Nothing has happened to over 99.999% of all nonregistrants. Think about this before you register: since the start of registration in 1980, a soldier's chances of being killed in combat have been many times higher than a nonregistrant's chances of going to prison. And most of this time has been "peacetime"!

But What If I Already Registered?

If you've already registered, you have fewer choices, but you can still choose to resist. If you don't tell the SS where you live, or if you ignore an induction notice, the same legal risks we talked about for nonregistrants would apply. In order to prosecute you, they would have to prove that you actually knew you were breaking the law. That will be very difficult without proof that you got their notices.

What Do You Believe?

Deciding whether to register or to resist isn't easy. This may be the most difficult and important decision you have faced, and it's not a choice anybody else can make for you. Talk to a draft counselor, your parents, family, friends, and other people whom you respect.

Get as much information as you can before you decide. Don't be pressured into making a hasty decision. Remember: you have until you are 26 to make up your mind whether to register.

**It's your life.
Don't sign it away.**

www.Resisters.info

Visit our Web site for more leaflets:

- What To Do If You Don't Want To Be Drafted
- Making a Choice: Conscientious Objection or Refusing to Register
- Parents and the Draft
- The Draft and the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan
- Health Care Workers and the Medical Draft

Updated July 2006.

Draft Registration Is No Joke!

**Registration is a tough decision.
It's not quick. It's not easy. And
it could cost you your life.**

Don't Register For War

**We've chosen not to register for
the military draft with the
Selective Service System.**

**We wrote this leaflet to share some
of our reasons for not registering,
and to give you some information
about draft registration that the
government won't tell you.**

Will the Draft Come Back?

Politicians like those who started registration in 1980 still want the draft. They could try to use any "crisis" as an excuse. If Congress approves a draft, the Selective Service (SS) has claimed it could start drafting people on 10 days' notice.

You probably wouldn't be reading this if you believed that "It's only registration." The reason we "only" have registration, and not a draft, is that so many of us have resisted registration. We have made the government afraid to draft us.

Many people who registered, and many of their parents, have told us they regret that decision, and wish they could "un-register" themselves or their children. Many of these people will resist the draft if they are called. But resistance is harder if you've already registered or gone into the military.

Whether or not there will be a draft depends on whether we continue to resist registration. As you decide whether or not to register, you and your friends are helping decide whether Congress will dare to bring back the draft.

What will you do if you register and there is a draft?

Many people think they won't have to go to war because they are conscientious objectors (COs). A CO is someone who registers, convinces his draft board that he "opposes war in any form," and does unarmed military duty or poorly-paid civilian "alternative" work instead of fighting.

If you're planning to try for CO status, and you want to help prevent a draft or a war from happening, you might want to think twice about registering. A conservative think-tank reported that the SS wants to "accommodate with minimum divisiveness those who would seek CO status." The government gives COs special status within the system to keep them busy, quiet, and helpless to resist a war.

COs have to register first, and then take their chances with a draft board. Many genuine COs won't get CO status, or will "conscientiously object" to their alternative service jobs. You can't "un-register" if your CO claim is denied. But if you don't register now, you can always change your mind, register late, and try for CO status if you get an induction notice. Conscientious Objection is *not* an easy way to beat the draft.

You should talk to a draft counselor if you have questions about conscientious objection or resistance. Whatever you do, you won't be alone. All over the country, people are finding ways to oppose registration and the draft.

What About the Law?

Since 1980, millions of young men have refused to register. Millions more have broken the draft laws in other ways (by not reporting address changes, not giving their Social Security numbers, or encouraging others to refuse to register).

The government tried to enforce registration -- and failed. Nobody has been indicted for refusing to register since 1986. The government couldn't prosecute a million people anyway. Instead, they used a few token trials to try to intimidate us. But in cities where trials were held, the registration rates went down, not up.

People who are quiet about resistance have been safe. 19 of the 20 nonregistrants who were prosecuted in the 1980's were outspoken public advocates of resistance. Most of them wrote letters to the SS saying they wouldn't register. The 20th man indicted didn't speak English, didn't know he was supposed to register, and was indicted by mistake. The government dropped the charges in embarrassment.

Even for those of us who speak out publicly, the risk is small. Thousands of people publicized their resistance, but only 19 of them were indicted.

Most people do register eventually. But often they register several years late, when they are too old to be drafted anyway. People who register are supposed to notify the SS whenever they move, but most people don't. If the SS can't find you, they can't draft you. In one test, the SS could find fewer than 1 out of every 4 registrants!

Jobs, Training, and Financial Aid

Anyone who wants Federal student grants or loans, job training, or certain Federal jobs must sign a statement saying that they registered, or (for men born before 1960 and for women) that they don't have to register. There are other ways to pay for an education, but many students find it hard to resist these loyalty oaths. Unfortunately, if you don't register and you're not rich, finishing college will probably take you longer. It's up to you to decide what's more important. Don't forget that students will not be exempt from the draft!

In some states, the government registers you with the SS if you apply for a drivers license. Once again, it's up to you to decide if being able to drive is worth the risk of being drafted.