Let’s run Selective Service up the flagpole and see if anyone salutes

Longtime activist wants to see an end to draft registration

As the only person to the end of the draft for the Vietnam War has been prosecuted to Massachusetts for refusing to register with the Selective Service System, I was pleased to see Jeff Jacoby’s column calling for an end to draft registration (“Women don’t register for the draft, and men shouldn’t either,” June 20).

Prosecutions of draft registration resisters were abandoned as ineffective after after a handful of show trials in the 1960s served only to encourage resistance. Bernard Rott- er, former director of the Selective Service System, testified to the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service in 2010 that widespread noncompliance makes the current database so inaccurate and incomplete to be “useless to nothing” for an end to a draft. As I pointed out in my testimony to the commission, a national proposal to expand draft registration “is a fantasy unless including a credible enforcement plan and budget,” and current proposals don’t.

The bipartisan Selective Service System Act of 2021 is pending in Congress, and this issue is likely to be taken up by the House Subcommittee on Military Personnel next month. Several previous proposals to end draft registration have been supported by organizations like the Massachusetts Alliance for the Rights of Barren Brant, Democrat of Massachusetts, and Ron Paul, Republican of Texas. Senator Rand Paul, Republican of Kentucky, is one of the original sponsors of the current bill, along with Representatives Peter DoFazio, Democrat of Oregon, and Democrat of Massachusetts.

New England has long been a center of draft resistance activism, and there are many New England numbers on the House and Senate Armed Services Committees to which these bills have been re- ferred. But no New England representative or senator has yet endorsed the current proposals to end draft registration.

As other anti-draft activists and I sail in an open boat to the Armed Services Commit- tee leadership this year, calling for a con- gressional hearing — which has yet to be held — on this topic, “End draft registration to women would bring about a sem-

A year or two of service is good for those

In the face of coercion, he listened to his conscience instead

I appreciated Jeff Jacoby’s column “Women don’t register for the draft, and men shouldn’t either,” and my thoughts are not

Edward Hasbrouck, who refused to register for the draft, talks with reporters outside a federal court in Boston on June 14, 1983.

A new era of national community service would be great

Jeff Jacoby’s solution to ending the discrimi- natory practice of registering only men for the draft is short-sighted. Morally compulsory military service can’t be made available for involuntary (military) conscription should be eliminated. That said, I would like to propose mandatory na-

This could be a vital rite of passage

I am not in disagreement with Jeff Jacoby that the “requirement that young people be made available for involuntary (military) conscription” should be eliminated. That said, I would like to propose mandatory na-

Period of national community service would be great

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