Strengthening AMERICAN DEMOCRACY through SERVICE.

Interim Report
January 16 – 17, 2019
About the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service

With all combat roles opened to women in 2015, question arose over requiring all Americans to register with Selective Service System

- Idea of extending military conscription in a time of crisis led to broader questions around service
- Senators McCain and Reed saw the need to promote the notion of service above self

Commission created through the FY2017 National Defense Authorization Act to:

- Review the military selective service process; and
- Consider ways to increase participation by all Americans in military, national, and public service

Our Mission
This Commission will listen to the public, learn from those who serve, and recommend to the President, Congress, and the American people ideas to foster a greater ethos of military, national, and public service to strengthen American democracy

The first holistic and comprehensive review of the Selective Service System along with military, national, and public service
The 11 Commissioners bring a diversity of experience
Appointed by the President, Congressional leadership, and HASC/SASC leadership

The Honorable Dr. Joseph Heck
Commission Chairman, former Member of the House of Representatives (NV-3)

The Honorable Mark Gearan
Vice Chair for National and Public Service, former Director of the Peace Corps

The Honorable Debra Wada
Vice Chair for Military Service, former Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

Mr. Edward Allard III
Former Deputy Director of the Selective Service System

Mr. Steve Barney
Former General Counsel to the Senate Armed Service Committee

The Honorable Dr. Janine Davidson
Former Under Secretary of the Navy

Ms. Avril Haines
Former Principal Deputy National Security Advisor

Ms. Jeanette James
Former Professional Staff Member of the House Armed Services Committee

Mr. Alan Khazei
Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Democracy Entrepreneurs

Mr. Thomas Kilgannon
President of Freedom Alliance

Ms. Shawn Skelly
Former Director, Executive Secretariat, U.S. Department of Transportation

Deliberative and Pre-Decisional
The Commission developed 7 key questions to guide its deliberations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Does service have inherent value? If so, what is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>How does the U.S. increase the desire for Americans, particularly young Americans, to serve?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>What are the barriers to participation in military, national or public service?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>How can the U.S. increase participation in military, national, and public service by individuals with critical skills to address national security and other public service needs of the nation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Is the military draft or draft contingency still a necessary component of U.S. national security?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Are modifications to the selective service system needed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Is a mandatory service requirement for all Americans necessary, valuable, and feasible?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 2018, the Commission embarked on a listening tour, visiting 24 cities and towns around the country...

The Commission selected urban and rural communities in each of the nine Census divisions, factoring in population, geography, economics, and racial and ethnic diversity.
And met with military service members, government officials, non-profit volunteers, and business leaders

Commissioners met with over 300 organizations around the country in 2018
The Commission has sought public input through multiple channels...

Public meetings and targeted conversations

Comments submitted through the Commission’s website

Social media platforms
...and conducted extensive research, engaging experts inside and outside of government

The Commission’s research staff has conducted thorough literature reviews for critical interest areas
- Commissioner meetings and deliberations are informed by memos and research primers

Working with the Commission’s engagement team, the research team has met with hundreds of service practitioners and academic experts
- Provide invaluable input into policy development

In collaboration with the NSC, the Commission hosts a regular Interagency meeting
- The Interagency meeting includes more than 25 federal departments and agencies
- Provides a well-attended forum for debating potential policy recommendations
The Commission began by defining “service”

The Commission defines service as “a personal commitment of time, energy, and talent to a mission that contributes to the public good by protecting the nation and its citizens, strengthening communities, or promoting the general social welfare.”

**Military Service**
Nearly 1.3 million service members on active duty and 1.1 million serving in the National Guard and Reserves

**National Service**
75,000 AmeriCorps members, 220,000 serving in Senior Corps, and 7,000 Peace Corps volunteers

**Public Service**
Nearly 2 million federal employees, 5 million state government employees and 14 million serving in local & tribal government
Universal Service
Universal service has long been debated in the US

Concept of mandatory national service has a long history in American debate
- In 1906, American philosopher William James advocated “a conscription of the whole youthful population” into civilian service
- Viewed as a way to maintain social cohesiveness and inculcate civic responsibility without military conscription or the destruction of war

Support for mandatory national service can be summarized in four arguments:

1. **Social Glue** – Strengthens the ties that keep society together
2. **Civic Engagement** – Encourages engagement by exposing people to their communities
3. **Satisfies unmet needs** – Increased scale and resources can meet more needs, more effectively
4. **Civic Responsibility** – Promotes and reinforces idea that rights come with responsibilities to others
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 Obligation**

A requirement for all Americans to serve
- Choice in how to satisfy the requirement
- Sometimes influenced by Americans’ overseas travel where universal service is prevalent

**Universal Expectation**

Service is voluntary but some form of service is the norm
- Expectation for young people to devote at least one year
- Choices would include military, public, or national service

**Universal Access**

Those with a desire can participate in some form of service
- The country would commit enough resources to provide opportunity for all
...but we also heard from many Americans who oppose making service mandatory

**Spirit of volunteerism**
Some Americans believe that a spirit of volunteerism is necessary for service to be effective
- Universal service obligation could dilute this critical aspect of service
- Some evidence that mandatory service reduces propensity for future volunteerism

**Constitutional and civil liberties concerns**
Some Americans see mandatory service as a violation of personal civil liberties
- A universal obligation directly contradicts to the American values of liberty
- Some argue that US Constitution only requires that citizens obey the law and summons for jury duty and military service, if required

**Implementation challenges**
Others cite multiple challenges in implementing a national program
- Mandatory service could be ineffective without valuable, fulfilling service options
- Maintaining oversight over programs and ensuring their effectiveness is already an issue for existing national service agencies
- Ensuring transparency across programs could prove difficult
The Commission has studied international models

The Commission researched several international models of mandatory military and national service
- Conducted a global survey of national-level programs
- Conducted deeper analysis of the structure, history, and impact of programs in nine nations
  - Russia, China, Brazil, Sweden, Israel, South Korea, Nigeria, Germany, and Denmark
- These countries included nations where conscription was abolished and reintroduced and nations where mandatory service enables readiness and serves as a primary deterrent

In November 2018, the Norwegian Embassy hosted the Commission and military attachés from Norway, Estonia, Colombia, and Nigeria to discuss how those countries currently employ voluntary or compulsory service programs for their citizens.
We are considering several possible ways to implement universal service

We are exploring what such a program would look like, asking key questions:

• What unmet needs of the nation could be addressed through a formal program?
• What approaches could foster a new norm in which at least a year of service becomes an expected rite of passage?

We are considering how service could be integrated into high school

• Should high schools transform the final semester of senior year into a hands-on service learning experience?
• Should schools offer service-oriented summer projects or a year of service learning?
• What benefits could such programs bring to students, our communities, and the nation?
• How would such programs be structured to ensure they are inclusive and open to all?

Young Americans’ interest in service is evident given their appetite to volunteer: Over 28% of millennials report volunteering in 2017, performing roughly 1.5 billion hours of community service.1

Selective Service
Conscription has long been used to fill U.S. military ranks

U.S. has relied heavily on conscription during wartime and to augment its professional military
- Citizens conscripted for service in the Civil War and World Wars I and II
- Congress passed legislation in 1863, 1917, and 1940 authorizing military drafts
- Conscription continued from 1949 onward through the Korean and Vietnam wars

The Military Selective Service Act (1948) established the modern Selective Service System (SSS)
- SSS created to deliver appropriately qualified civilian men for induction in the US Armed Forces, as authorized by Congress

U.S. ended conscription and registration in 1973 but registration resumed in 1980
The Selective Service is a mystery to many Americans

Many Americans don’t understand the Selective Service System
• Don’t distinguish between registration and “the draft”
• Don’t understand the implications of registration
• And some don’t know that young men must register when they turn 18

Today, the U.S. requires men ages 18 to 25 to register with the SSS
• Some register online or through the mail
• Most young men now register incidentally – when they receive a driver’s license or apply for federal student aid
• Registration has become a passive process, with many unaware of the obligation for which they’ve registered
We are considering significant changes to the Selective Service registration system

Expanding registration to all Americans, to include women

- Commissioners have solicited opinions from the American public through public meetings, submission of written comments, and individual conversations
- We’re carefully considering this crucial question and will continue to actively seek input

Modernizing the Selective Service System

- The Commission is tasked with better identifying critical skills and with whom those skills reside
- We are examining ways in which individuals could share updates about their education and skill sets
- We are studying ways to leverage the current SSS system to call upon volunteers for national emergencies
- We are exploring reasonable changes to identify, evaluate, and protect those with deep personal, ethical, or religious convictions
Polling indicates that American opinion on women’s registration remains divided

Polling largely conducted in three distinct time periods between 1980 and 2016
- 1980: President Carter reinstated the SSS
- 2003-2006: Height of Iraq and Afghanistan conflict
- 2016: All combat roles opened to women

Overall results show that opinions remain divided, however, a slight majority support women’s registration
- Men more likely to support
- Surveys do show that most Americans do not want to reinstate the draft
- Differences in question wording, order, and context, however, preclude generalizing polling results
2017 JAMRS data show an increase in overall support for women’s registration

Requiring Women to Register for the Draft

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dec-16</th>
<th>Dec-17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supported</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Supported/Opposed</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did Not Know/Refused to Answer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n= 1,000; Margin of error: ±3

“The opening of all U.S. Military combat positions to women could change the law that currently requires only men to register for the Selective Service System, commonly referred to as the military draft. Would you support or oppose requiring women to register for the Selective Service System, commonly referred to as the military draft?”

2016 Rasmussen results show a distinct difference in support by gender

Support for the Draft and Female Registration

- Female Registration Support
  - Men: 61%
  - Women: 38%

- Draft Support
  - Men: 36%
  - Women: 21%

\( n = 1,000; \text{Margin of error: } \pm 3 \)

“Should the United States have a military draft?” and “All males in the United States are required to register with the federal Selective Service System when they turn 18 in the event there is a need for a military draft. Top military commanders now say that with women gaining access to all combat roles, they also should be required to register for the draft. Do you agree or disagree that women should be required to register for the draft?”

2016 CNN/ORC poll shows overall support but divisions remain (1 of 2)

"If a draft were to become necessary, should young women be required to participate as well as well as young men, or not? [Note: Prior questions asked about support for returning to the draft and whether women should get the same combat assignments as men.]

2016 CNN/ORC poll shows overall support but divisions remain (2 of 2)

By Views of Tea Party/Religion

By Party/Ideology

By Geography

n= 1,001; Margin of error: ±3

“If a draft were to become necessary, should young women be required to participate as well as well as young men, or not? [Note: Prior questions asked about support for returning to the draft and whether women should get the same combat assignments as men.]

2016 poll by *The Economist* and YouGov showed support for registration

Women and the Draft

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n= 2,000; Margin of error: ±3.1

“*Under current law, men are required to register with the Selective Service System (the military draft) when they turn 18. Do you think women should also be required to register with Selective Service when they turn 18?*” [Note: A previous question emphasized that women in combat units would be directly in ground fighting and may have led respondents to assume that drafted women would be involved in ground combat as well.]

Service Barriers and Pathways
The Commission used an analytic framework to assess the barriers to more Americans serving

**Awareness**

The knowledge or understanding of opportunities to engage with, participate in, or join military, national, and public service programs or organizations

- Awareness relies on a common understanding of such service and exposure to programs and participants

**Aspiration**

The hope or ambition of engaging, participating in, or joining military, national, and public service programs or organizations

- Aspiration is driven by intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, such as the desire to be a part of something bigger, a sense of adventure, or career development

**Access**

The means to engage, participate in, or join military, national, and public service programs or organizations

- Equal and broad access to service opportunities is influenced by service knowledge and the supply of opportunities
Barriers to participation exist across all lines of service

Over the past year, we saw firsthand the commitment of Americans who serve in many capacities

- We discussed what motivates them to serve
- We learned that barriers too often prevent inspired and eager Americans from serving

We heard many similar stories about barriers to serving

- Many were not aware of opportunities to serve
- Many were not eligible for the service options they sought
- Some want to serve but cannot afford to participate economically and socially
- Others discovered that there are not enough opportunities for all who want to serve
Military Service
Military service is a responsibility borne by few
Americans’ connections to the military are limited

Geography plays a strong role in recruiting
- 45 years ago, about 56% of enlisted recruits came from the American South and West; today that number is nearly 70%\(^1\)
- A survey of first-term Army soldiers indicated that 55% come from small towns or rural areas\(^2\)

Family ties and exposure to military service play a strong role in recruitment
- Family members of current or former service members are more likely to show an interest in joining the military
- 88% of surveyed first-term soldiers identified a relative who served\(^2\)

A lack of awareness regarding military service opportunities impacts recruitment

Many are concerned that as the gap between the military and the American public widens, awareness about military opportunities decreases

• Opinion shared by both military members and those who haven’t served
• Limits otherwise qualified young Americans from gaining the experiences and benefits of military service

Military members are concerned by false narratives and perceptions from TV, movies, the internet, and video games

• Focus on the most dangerous jobs
• Depictions often inaccurate

Compounded by inability of recruiters to engage students

• We heard from recruiters who are blocked from schools
• Many students know little about the military’s college opportunities
• High school guidance counselors unable to help navigate service academy applications
Surveys of Army ROTC cadets demonstrate an increasing lack of awareness

The 2018 survey indicates that students are “less knowledgeable about ROTC than at any time in the past.” The knowledge level of influencers is also lacking.

Sources of information about ROTC for HS students

Parents’ knowledge of ROTC – reported by participating students


n= 4,342 Down from 2017
Eligibility for military service continues to be a significant barrier to recruitment

Under current standards 71% of Americans ages 17-24 do not meet the qualifications for military service:\(^1\)

- Disqualifications include medical issues, weight, body art, a history of drug use, educational attainment, and a criminal record

These barriers reflect:

- Major societal challenges (e.g., nutritional choice, physical activity)
- Changing attitudes (e.g., tattoos, legalized marijuana)
- Increased rates of diagnosis and treatment of mental health issues

Number of Youth Interested in and Eligible for Military Service

- 17- to 24-Year-Old Population: 31,795,000
- Military Eligible Population: 9,100,000
- High Academic Quality, Military Eligible Population: 4,410,000
- High Academic Quality, Military Eligible, and Propensed Population: 465,000

Source: U.S. Army

We’ve heard many suggestions for addressing these barriers to military service

- Formally ask all young Americans to consider military service
- Invest in education for parents, teachers, and counselors on military service opportunities
- Increase the number of high school students who take a version of the military entrance exam that identifies strengths and career interests
- Reinforce laws that ensure recruiters receive equal access to high schools, colleges, and other postsecondary opportunities
- Create new pipelines to military service (e.g., financial support for studying toward technical certifications in exchange for a military service commitment)
- Develop new pathways in areas of critical need to access and develop those with the affinity, interest, training, education, and/or certification in exchange for a military service commitment
- Encourage more mid-career civilians to enter the military at a rank appropriate to their experience
National Service
National Service landscape is complex and decentralized

National service opportunities are distinguished by service within “service corps” identified positions that are:

- Termed (at least 1 year)
- Full-time
- Financially supported
- Done in conjunction with an organization

National service relies on a network of:

- Community-led initiatives
- Philanthropic partnerships
- State service commissions
- Federal support
National service is America’s best kept secret
Awareness remains the most prominent barrier

Awareness of national service is impeded by a number of barriers

- **Terminology** – “National service” means different things to different people
- **Lack of exposure** – Americans interact with national service volunteers infrequently
- **Decentralized marketing, branding, and recruitment strategies** – Uncoordinated, poorly resourced, and limited campaigns relying on individual organizations, alumni, and current volunteers

In 2018, the federal government sponsored 332,000 national service volunteers, representing a ratio of 1 volunteer for every 622 working age American

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth (Ages 14-17)</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennials (Ages 18-24)</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents of Youth &amp; Millennials</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A number of programmatic barriers inhibit national service

**Awareness**
- Lack of a clear “after service” pipeline that demonstrates the long-term and lifelong benefits of national service

**Term-lengths**
- The required term (1,700 hours for full-time AmeriCorps volunteers and 27 months for Peace Corps volunteers) can deter some
- Others are concerned that a year of service may have limited impact

**Compensation**
- Though intended to be modest, the living stipend, limited healthcare benefits, federal student loan forbearance, and $400 child care allowance deters many
  - Annual AmeriCorps stipends range from $13,732 to $27,464, typically near or at the poverty line

**Post-service benefits**
- Modest educational awards vary from program to program
Access barriers among underrepresented populations remain a significant concern

Equitable Access for All Populations

- Eligibility requirements, policies, or operational procedures often deter participation by underrepresented groups
- Majority of AmeriCorps volunteers are white females with some college experience between the ages of 18 and 24
- 69% of opportunity youth surveyed want to improve the lives of others but only 3% report volunteering¹
- AmeriCorps tribal grantees report difficulty securing match funding due to a lack of donors and partners
- Rural national service programs described how the costs or lack of transportation remains a barrier

Access to Funding Opportunities

- More than 600,000 apply for AmeriCorps and Peace Corps positions but more than 80% are rejected due to lack of positions
- Though authorized for 250,000 members, AmeriCorps sponsors 75,000 volunteers


³9
We’ve heard many suggestions for addressing the national service barriers

- Formally ask all young Americans to consider national service
- Create a national marketing campaign to advertise opportunities about national service
- Promote service learning to tie kindergarten through higher education curricula to community service
- Encourage or incentivize colleges and employers to recruit individuals who have completed a service year and to award college credit for national service experience
- Offer a fellowship to 18-year-olds who want to serve, covering their living stipend and post-service award for a year of national service at any approved not-for-profit organization
- Integrate a semester of service into the high school curriculum
- Fund additional national service opportunities
- Increase the living stipend for those who participate in national service programs
- Exempt the existing education award from income tax or allow it to be used for other purposes
- Explore possibilities within the Peace Corps to meet host country needs with volunteers who have not completed a college degree
- Provide an expanded educational award for each year of national service completed
Public Service
Public service sector is a diverse but aging workforce

Public service – defined as civilian employment in federal, state, local, and tribal governments – is critical to the health of civil society and national security.

The public service sector employs more than 21.6 million Americans

• Though most prominent, federal employees make up less than 10% of the public service sector
• Local and tribal government employees comprise over 65% of the total public service

Public Service Employees

Federal 2.087
State 5.129
Local and Tribal 14.407

Government agencies face challenges in recruiting younger workers

Generational change is coming to the public service sector

- 30% of federal civil servants will be eligible to retire in five years

But, the federal government is struggling to attract the younger generation

- Americans under the age of 35 make up 35% of the nation’s workforce but only 17% of federal civilian employees
- A 2017 survey by the Harvard Institute of Politics of 18-to 29-year-old Americans found that only 25% of respondents found public service to be appealing

Hiring programs designed to attract students and recent graduates are failing

- The newly reorganized and rebranded Pathways Programs accounted for 14% of permanent agency hires in FY2014
- Previous programs to hire recent graduates accounted for 37% of such hires in FY2010

Awareness and Aspiration barriers are harming government agencies’ abilities to hire...

**Lack of familiarity**
- State and federal jobs tend to be concentrated in certain geographic areas, limiting American’s interactions

**Diminished recruiting activities**
- Most state and federal government agencies do not operate centralized, organization-wide recruitment campaigns commonly used by the private sector
- Notable exceptions include the Central Intelligence Agency, General Accountability Office, and the Office of Management and Budget

**Career preferences**
- In a 2013 survey of college students, only 5.7% identified the federal government as their ideal career and 4.8% indicated state or local government

**Perceived Public sector stigma**
- Negative perceptions of government employees can discourage potential recruits
- Commission roundtable discussions have confirmed this concern

Access is the most significant barrier to public service

**Hiring practices**
- Government employees who spoke with the Commission agree that hiring practices are out of touch with the realities of the modern workforce
- Many cited a federal hiring process that is too slow, fails to accurately assess job applicants, contains a variety of inflexible hiring preferences, and many times fails to hire anyone for open positions
- Many employees felt that USAJOBS fails to meet the needs of either applicants or hiring managers

**Hiring authorities**
- The competitive examining process has been largely replaced by other hiring authorities
- In FY2014, competitive examining accounted for less than 25% of new hires; a senior federal agency executive noted that this has likely decreased to 15%\(^1\)
- In FY2014, federal agencies used 105 separate hiring authorities to hire new employees\(^1\)

**Skills gap**
- Government officials at all levels indicate that it is difficult to recruit and retain workers with high-demand skills such as cybersecurity and health care providers

We’ve heard many suggestions for addressing the public service barriers

- Explore models in higher education that seek to raise the profile and attractiveness of public service and prepare outstanding high school graduates for careers in public service
- Give agencies better tools to recruit and hire interns or fellows and transition them to permanent positions
- Establish a Public Service Corps program, like Reserve Officers’ Training Corps, that would offer scholarships and specialized coursework to students at colleges throughout the nation in exchange for a commitment to work in civil service
- Retain programs to forgive student loans for Americans who work in public service careers for at least a decade
- Offer a new, optional federal benefits package to allow for greater flexibility in career progression
- Use modern tools, such as relevant online writing and quantitative tests, to assess candidates
- Test new approaches to hiring, classifying, and compensating STEM personnel throughout the government
- Establish a civilian reserve program for former federal cybersecurity employees, who could be called up to help agencies in an urgent situation
- Establish a single, streamlined personnel system for health care professionals throughout the government
Civic Knowledge
Civic knowledge is critical to democracy

While meeting with Americans across the country, we were struck by how often we heard people speak about the importance of a strong civic education.

Studies show that a robust civic education improves civic health in many ways

- By increasing voter participation
- Reducing school dropout rates
- Encouraging constructive community engagement
- Students who receive effective civic education are four times more likely to volunteer and participate in their communities

Sources:
We are exploring how civic knowledge can be strengthened across the country

- Adopt national standards or a national civic education requirement
- Encourage or require schools to include an experiential component, such as a community service requirement, for high school graduation
- Improve youth cadet programs to inspire more young Americans to pursue an active lifestyle, increase awareness of military, national, and public service opportunities, and develop practical skills and civic knowledge
- Send out the resources and talents of the private sector to assist schools in delivering civic education
- Report civics metrics as a separate subject on the nation’s report card
- Prioritize and fund professional development for civics teachers
- Encourage states and local schools boards to implement best practices in effective civic education, covering elementary, middle, and high school
- Offer existing citizenship and civic knowledge resources from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and other government agencies to any educators or schools for free
Backup
Overall, 49% of Americans support a mandatory service requirement
But, support varies considerably by age, gender, and political party affiliation

“Would you favor or oppose requiring all young men and young women in the U.S. to give one year of service to the nation -- either in the military forces or in nonmilitary work here or abroad?”