To the members of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service:

We understand that your commission has been charged with making recommendations on the Selective Service and Draft Registration. We are adding our support to the statements, recommendations, and requests submitted on September 19, 2019 to your committee by representatives of 13 Mennonite and related denominations.

We are also writing to express our own opinions, strongly held beliefs, and recommendations for your consideration. Below are several reasons for our recommendation that the Selective Service Registration should be ended. If it is continued, we ask for continued consideration for people of conscience who object to military participation.

Costly
The full cost of Selective Service registration exceeds the $25 million Selective Service budget. Schools have the burden of verifying registration compliance for students. Various state laws requiring registration compliance for state benefits add costs to a state's budget with no return on the investment. Extending the registration to women would increase those costs.

Unreasonably and Inequitably Punitive
The current system is unreasonably punitive to men, who fail to register unintentionally or intentionally. Gil Coronado, the former director of Selective Service said in the 1999 annual report,

"If we are not successful in reminding men in the inner cities about their registration obligation, especially minority and immigrant men, they will miss out on opportunities to achieve the American dream. They will lose eligibility for college loans and grants, government jobs, job training and for registration-age immigrants, citizenship. Unless we are successful in achieving high registration compliance, America may be on the verge of creating a permanent underclass."[i]

Failed System
Selective Service registration is a failure. When given a choice, most men don't register. The SSS reports only 88% compliance with registration meaning millions of men are permanently burdened and punished by failing to register.

Unnecessary
Registration is unnecessary. In times of "emergency," such as after 9-11, the military had more than enough volunteers. Activating the draft was never seriously considered.
Alternatives
In the event of a true national emergency requiring more military personnel, it
would not be a challenge, with today's technology, to generate a pool of names for
a potential draft. It would certainly be less costly than maintaining the current registration.

Provisions for People of Conscience
We as members of a historic peace church have strong conviction that would apply
to any implementation of a Selective Service registration.

We believe that there is always a better way to solve disputes than to resort to
violence. In particular we believe that killing violates the teachings of Jesus and is
fundamentally immoral.

Any selective service system must provide a pathway for people to register as
Conscientious Objectors. Doing so would enable people of conscience to both be in
compliance with the law and true to their conscience. If a draft were ever
implemented those registered as conscientious objectors could be assigned to
alternative service for the peaceful benefit of others.

Though failure to register is a felony, the government has not prosecuted anyone
since 1986. Almost all who had been prosecuted were conscientious objectors who
publicly asserted their non-compliance as a religious, moral, or political statement.
As a result of this public witness, non-compliance with registration actually increased.
By allowing people to register as conscientious objectors, the government may come
closer to reaching its goal of increased compliance.

Because of the selective prosecution of people of conscience who have chosen not
to register in the past, we believe that their lifetime punishments should be
overturned and all other penalties eliminated.

In Peace,

Karen Winter
Janet Smucker
John Metzler
Jane Harder
Rosemary Reimer
Jesus Peters
Mary Peters
Marina Brubaker

John 
Judy Goetz
Carol Reimer Decker
good
Pastor

Mary

Valerie Prindle
Barbara Bennett
Barbara Beebe
Bret Harnish
Signatures – continued

Dwight Miller
Jenny Foster
Rebecca Miller
Micki Marsh
Marc Miller

Marettta Butler
Dwight J. Fleming
Dona Schroeder
Augusta Uno
Marvin Voth
Delene Esau
Fenton Voth

Pelward Flory
Anthony Esau
Cheyenne Miller
Bryant Miller
Amy Fleming
Margaret Shoemaker

Joaquin Fisch