

September 20, 2018

To the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service;

My name is Kathleen Hernandez and I appreciate your courtesy in hearing my opinion in regards to Selective Service Registration.

A military draft or draft contingency is not a necessary component of U.S. national security. By the United States increasing participation in military, national, and public service to address the national security and other public service needs of the nation we are expanding militarism in civil society and denying the use of the rule of law in place of perpetual war at home and abroad. I would support voluntary public service that provides community workers to uplift and better those communities through positive non-violent means to be determined by the communities themselves.

It is imperative that Congress abolishes the Selective Service System. I do not support any kind of draft, and I myself as a mother, grandmother and certificated teacher will do everything in my power to inform others to resist draft registration whether it be my daughter a registered nurse or a neighbor's son who just received a letter demanding that her son register.

Draft registration is not an act of free will and serves up young people as potential canon fodder. Currently, denying young males access to federal aide such as student grants and loans so they can attend a college or university when they don't register for the draft registration, charging them with a felony for refusing to register, or sending them threatening letters telling them that if they don't register they will not be able to get a state drivers license is equivalent to holding a gun to their head. It is morally wrong for the United States of America, land of the free to force anyone to sign up to be called to war or any other misnomer erroneously called "voluntary service".

Many young folks comply against their will fearing the consequences of being charged with a felony for not wanting to sign ones life away, and or relinquishing their free will as a result of financial need. If a military recruiter doesn't get you to enlist for the poverty draft – Selective Services will make sure you make the poverty selective service list regardless. Of course, those that have the means to be supported financially through higher education may choose not to register and not be prosecuted, as the chances are truthfully slim to none of being charged with non-compliance. Those that are financially solvent are more likely to do so. But most of our country, the 99% are forced to register if they want to get a higher education.

Requiring women to register would not justify the means of putting that gun to young people's heads. Education should not hang on the balance of registering for the Selective Service. Education should be a fully funded human right in a civilized society. Conscription is wrong at any age. Being young should not entitle one's country to demand a pound of flesh, to have to risk your life for your country. Compulsory service is not service. It is slave labor at the will of the power holder. This is not democratic whatsoever and in fact is archaic practices of oppression.

Your commission asks **'Does service have inherent value, and, if so, what is it? In the words of Elliott Adams, a Viet Nam veteran paratrooper who enlisted;** "Yes, service (real service, not military "service") is essential to our country and any democracy. It helps citizens feel the connection between individual acts and the nation. Being involved in building the nation can become part of a life long understanding that democracies require (require not just allow) citizens to be active in directing the nation to be, or to become, a democracy. We, as a nation, desperately need a revitalization of that vital connection of the people to forming their government. If it has to be compulsory we have already lost the battle. Something is wrong if people don't understand that democracy is cooperation, it is people working together for the greater good."

Sincerely;

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