

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 23, 2021

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Rogers:

We write to express our strong opposition to expanding military draft registration and urge you not to include language that would do so in the upcoming Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

As you know, the Senate Armed Services Committee included language in its recently-marked up NDAA to expand military draft registration to women. Proponents of this change argue that it would end discrimination in the Selective Service System (SSS). We believe that a better way to achieve equality under the law would be to end military draft registration altogether and scrap this needless and expensive bureaucracy.

The United States has not relied on military conscription since 1973, when Congress declined to extend authority to continue the draft. President Ford ended draft registration in 1975, yet President Carter reinstated draft registration in 1980 under dubious rationale. Since then, the Pentagon and administrations of both parties have consistently agreed there is no military or national security imperative to reinstate a military draft. Our professional, all-volunteer military is the finest fighting force in the world. Recruits must compete under exacting standards in order to enlist, which is why U.S. military leaders have said time and time again they believe in and prefer an all-volunteer military. Even so, the government continues to require men between the ages of 18 and 25 to register with the SSS.

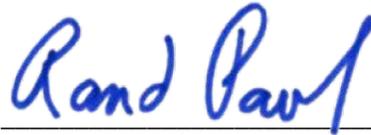
There are a number of problems with this system. For starters, some of the rules currently in place aren't even followed. Registrants are required to notify the SSS if they change their address, a requirement that is almost universally ignored. Indeed, experts have called into question the accuracy and reliability of the SSS's database, raising real questions about whether the SSS would be effective if called upon. Additionally, the SSS subjects men to unnecessarily punitive, lifelong penalties, many without due process, if they do not register by their 26th birthday. Finally, the SSS has cost taxpayers \$800 million over the last 35 years, money that could be spent solving real problems rather than planning for a draft that the military doesn't want and Congress will never reinstate.

The four of us recently introduced the Selective Service Repeal Act, a bill to finally put an end to the expensive, wasteful, outdated, punitive, and unnecessary military draft registration system. We urge you to include our bill, or similar provisions, in the FY 2022 NDAA and to oppose any efforts to expand military draft registration or the costly and obsolete SSS. We thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



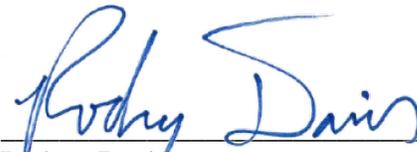
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Rand Paul, M.D.
United States Senator



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



Rodney Davis
Member of Congress