



End draft registration.

Abolish the Selective Service System.

Don't extend draft registration to women, and don't replace draft registration with a compulsory "national service" requirement or a "special-skills" draft of health care or tech workers.

The U.S. is having its most serious debate about draft registration in decades – but so far, the debate has ignored the peace movement and the history of the draft, draft registration, and draft resistance.

A "National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service" has been appointed to study and report back to Congress and the President by March 2020 on whether draft registration should be ended, extended to women, replaced with a compulsory "national service" requirement, or augmented with a special draft of women and men of all ages with health care, STEM, and other skills wanted by the military.

If we don't speak up, we will miss our best chance to put an end to preparations to reinstate the draft, and to put an end to the fantasy of military planners that the draft is always available as a fallback if the military runs short of troops. Even if the "poverty draft" and the outsourcing of war to civilian contractors obviate the need for a draft, draft registration indoctrinates young people that they have a "duty" to fight.

All male U.S. residents are required to register with the Selective Service System when they turn 18, and notify Selective Service every time they change their address until their 26th birthday.

The Selective Service System maintains contingency plans for a general "cannon fodder" draft of young men (based on the current list of registrants) and a separate "Health Care Personnel Delivery System" for men and women in medical and related occupations. Congress has ordered the National Commission to study drafting men and women of all ages with health care, foreign language, cyber/IT, or STEM skills.

Few young men comply fully with the draft registration law. In 2016, Selective Service officials finally admitted what had long been obvious: The government abandoned enforcement of draft registration in 1988.

Men are supposed to notify the Selective Service System every time they change addresses until they turn 26, but almost nobody does. Most draft notices sent to the addresses in Selective Service records would wind up in the dead letter office. Passive resistance made registration unenforceable, and has made the registration list useless for a fair or inclusive draft. Enforcing a "national service" requirement would be equally impossible.

Most men who register for the draft do so only if it is required for some other government program. Men who haven't registered for the draft are ineligible for Federal student aid, naturalization as U.S. citizens, and some other Federal programs. In some states (although not in California), men of draft age are required to register in order to obtain a driver's license, or are automatically registered when they get a driver's license.

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Will women be required to register for the draft?

Will the “National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service” recommend a compulsory “national service” requirement?

In June 2016, the U.S. Senate approved a “defense” bill that would have required young women to register for the draft on the same terms as young men. After the November 2016 elections, a House-Senate conference committee removed this provision from the final version of the bill. That means men, but not women, are still required to register. A separate bill, H.R. 4523, which would have ended draft registration and abolished the Selective Service System, never made it to a vote and died at the end of the Congressional session.

Instead, Congress voted to appoint a “National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service”. The Commission plans to issue a preliminary report in January 2019, and final recommendations by March 2020. The Commission has been secretive about its work, but records released in response to FOIA requests suggest that the Commission is focusing on a compulsory “national service” requirement for all young people.

Why are Congress and a National Commission talking about this now? In 1981, the Supreme Court upheld requiring men but not women to register for the draft. The court based its decision on "deference" to the military policy which, at that time, excluded women from combat assignments. Now that this policy has changed, it's likely that continued registration of men but not women will be found unconstitutional.

Most members of Congress would prefer to avoid the issue of the draft. President Trump has not yet announced any position on draft registration. But if Congress does nothing, court rulings are likely to invalidate the current male-only draft registration law. Congress will soon have to decide whether to expand draft registration to women as well as men, or to end draft registration entirely. Congress can no longer avoid this issue.

This is our best chance in decades to put an end to plans and preparations for one or another type of draft, and to restore the eligibility of men who didn't register for the draft for student aid, government jobs and training, naturalized citizenship, and other government programs from which they are currently excluded.

- **Don't register for the draft. Oppose both the draft and draft registration, for women or for men. Spread the word that the Selective Service System has admitted that enforcement of the draft registration law ended in 1988. Nobody has been prosecuted for nonregistration in 30+ years.**
- **Support continued resistance to draft registration as long as it remains the law. Support resistance by young women to the expansion of draft registration to women. Tell Congress that resistance will make draft registration of women unenforceable, as it has for men.**
- **Support Federal legislation to end draft registration and abolish the Selective Service System.**
- **Tell the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service to recommend that Congress end draft registration, and recommend against any compulsory “service” requirement.**

For more about the draft, draft registration, draft resistance, and the “National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service”, see:

www.resisters.info