The Selective Service System (SSS) is a Federal government agency that plans and prepares to draft people into the U.S. military.

FAQ:

Who is supposed to register with the SSS?

The law says that all men who live in the U.S. and are between 18 and 26 years old must register with the SSS and notify the SSS every time they change their address.

Will there be a military draft in the U.S.?

Maybe. The military says it doesn't need a military draft now, but wants to keep it as an option in case there is a war that not enough people volunteer to fight.

Are women supposed to register?

Women are not now required to register, but this might change: A National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service appointed by Congress and the President has recommended that SSS registration should be expanded to women as well as men. Congress will probably make a decision on this in 2021.

Are immigrants, citizens of other countries, dual citizens, and people living in the U.S. without papers supposed to register?

Yes. All men between ages 18 and 26 who live in the U.S., including undocumented people, are supposed to register, regardless of citizenship or immigration status.

What happens if I register? Will I be drafted into the military?

If there is a draft, it will be based on the list of people who registered with the SSS. Registrants will be chosen by lottery and sent orders to report for military service.

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National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth
Frequently asked questions about the Selective Service System and the military draft

The Selective Service System (SSS) is a Federal government agency that plans and prepares to draft people into the U.S. military.

If I don’t register with the SSS, will I go to jail?

Probably not. Nobody has been prosecuted for refusing to register since 1986. So many people have not registered that the government gave up trying to enforce the law.

What if I get a letter saying I will be prosecuted if I don’t register?

The SSS sends out hundreds of thousands of threatening letters every year, but they are legally unenforceable, and you can ignore them.

Are there other (non-criminal) penalties for not registering with the SSS?

Yes. Men age 18 and older who haven’t registered with the SSS are currently ineligible for Federal financial aid, Federal government jobs, or U.S. citizenship. In some states (but not California) men ages 18–26 must register with the SSS to get a driver’s license. The law making nonregistrants ineligible for Federal financial aid has been changed, but the change has not yet taken effect. Not later than the 2023-2024 school year, you will be able to get Federal financial aid for college even if you never registered with the SSS.

Will registering with the SSS make me eligible for U.S. citizenship?

No. Even if you are drafted or enlisted in the military, that won’t make you a U.S. citizen. Many soldiers and military veterans remain ineligible for U.S. citizenship, and some have been deported from the U.S. after their military service.

Most importantly, tell Congress to end draft registration, not expand it to women, and repeal all of the penalties for people who didn’t register.

Let’s not expand draft registration but abolish it.

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