End Selective Service registration!

Tell Congress to end draft registration, not expand it to women or try to “automatically” register all young people for a future draft.

- Repeal Presidential authority to order draft registration.
- Repeal all Federal sanctions for nonregistration.
- Preempt all state sanctions for nonregistration.
- Abolish the Selective Service System.

In 2016, 2021, and again in 2022, Congress came close to approving legislation to expand the requirement to register with the Selective Service System for a possible military draft to include young women as well as young men. In 2024, that proposal is moving forward again in Congress, along with a proposal to try to register all young people “automatically” for a possible draft. Meanwhile, Congress has avoided any floor vote or hearings on the continuation or expansion of draft registration.

An alternate proposal to end draft registration entirely has been introduced several times in Congress, including again in 2024, but has never gotten a hearing in either the House or the Senate.

Why should we expand or “automate” draft registration, rather than ending it?

The choice is not between continuing male-only draft registration and expanding draft registration to women. The real choice is whether to expand registration to women or to end it entirely.

This is a choice about militarism, not about gender equality. Expanding draft registration to women would bring about a semblance of equality in war (although women in the military would likely still be subject to greater sexual harassment and abuse). Ending draft registration would bring about real equality in peace and freedom. It would put an end to the fantasy that the draft is always available as a “fallback” option if the military runs short of troops – a myth that enables planning for larger, longer, less popular wars without concern for whether people will volunteer to fight them.

Male U.S. citizens and 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.

Few young men comply fully with the draft registration law. Most men who register for the draft do so only if and when it is required for some other government program, and almost nobody tells the Selective Service System when they move. Most draft notices would be returned as undeliverable. Even the former Director of the Selective Service System has testified that the current Selective Service database is so incomplete and inaccurate that it would be “less than useless” for an actual draft.
Will draft registration and planning for a military draft continue?

The expansion of draft registration to women, and the new proposal to try to make it “automatic”, are bad ideas that won’t go away until Congress ends draft registration entirely.

In the 1980s, the government prosecuted a handful of vocal nonregistrants whose public statements could be used to prove that their nonregistration was “knowing and willful”. Those “show trials” proved counterproductive, showing other nonregistrants that there is safety in silence as well as safety in numbers. The government abandoned enforcement of the registration law in 1988.

In recent years, the failure of draft registration has become too obvious to ignore. In response, the Selective Service System has proposed that it be authorized to obtain any other Federal records that might identify or locate young people, and “automatically” sign all young people up for a future draft.

This is a recipe for a privacy-invasive fiasco. No Federal agency has up-to-date addresses for all U.S. citizens or residents, or the other information needed to determine who is eligible to be drafted. “Automatic” draft registration would be expensive and would produce an incomplete, inaccurate list.

But without hearings or public scrutiny, this proposal by the Selective Service System for “automatic” draft registration has been included in the versions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) adopted by the House and under consideration in the Senate in 2024.

Lobbying for an end to draft registration and repeal of the Military Selective Service Act, organizing against the draft and draft registration, supporting resistance to draft registration, and calling public attention to the extent of noncompliance with draft registration can help make the difference in whether draft registration is ended soon, or whether another generation of young people – this time including young women as well as young men – is “automatically” registered for a possible draft.

Congress could end draft registration entirely, rather than trying to extend it to women or make it “automatic”. A bipartisan “Selective Service Repeal Act” was introduced in 2020 and 2021, and has been reintroduced in 2024 as an amendment to the NDAA. This bill would end preparation for a draft, and restore the eligibility of men who didn’t register for the draft for government jobs, naturalized citizenship, and those Federal and state government programs from which they are currently excluded.

The perception that the draft is always available as a “fallback” enables planning for larger, longer, less popular wars, without regard for whether people will volunteer to fight them. By preventing a draft, draft registration resisters are helping to protect us all against war. We can support them by asking our Representatives and Senators to support the Selective Service Repeal Act.

Tell your Representative and Senators to support the Selective Service Repeal Act!

➔ Support reintroduction, hearings, and a vote on the “Selective Service Repeal Act”.
➔ Oppose proposals to expand draft registration to women or to try to make it “automatic”.
➔ Oppose new or expanded state laws linking drivers’ licenses to draft registration.
➔ Don’t register for the draft. Speak out about your refusal to register.
➔ Be an ally to young people in their resistance to draft registration.
➔ Educate, agitate, and organize against the draft and draft registration.

For more about the draft, draft registration, and draft resistance, scan the code at the right with your phone, or see:

www.resisters.info