

The Commission ... has been charged with making recommendations concerning the future of military service. Following are my comments and opinions related to this.

Registration for a potential draft should be eliminated entirely, for men, women, or those in any other category. In fact, the whole selective service organization should be eliminated. We have repeatedly been told that a volunteer army, i.e. military service, is sufficient in the USA because its current military is doing well with the supply caused by enlistments.

Requiring women as well as men to register for the draft would be downright insulting to women. They have continued to be treated and regarded as lesser beings in spite of alleged "women's lib". They still receive less pay than men in comparable jobs if they are given such jobs. They are criticized if they have chosen to be "stay-at-home moms" rather than going to work – how often do you hear a man who has chosen a similar role be seen as not doing what a man's responsibility is? Being "liberated" has been taken as getting women to be just like men – even in such ways as making their jeans have fly fronts, like a man's; neither necessary nor as comfortable for many women as side-fastened ones. Adding women to draft registration just pulls them down again to be "equal to" men. They, too, can enlist if they want to and hopefully get jobs in the services also at least equal to men's. And adding individuals who perform certain kinds of work that are considered essential in war implies that they are not essential to those who serve the rest of us and that war is more essential than keeping the USA peaceful..

It is patriotic to want there to be no draft registration. Requiring registration for a potential draft implies that the USA is not just willing but expects to go to war. Citizens should be able to support their country's adherence to principals that never approve attacking another country. Many of the current recruits enlisted simply because they could not get a job, not because they wanted to join an army. If this country had really been attacked and was in real danger there would be quantities of spontaneous enlistments.

It is essential for you to consider all the implications of a regulation for "voluntary national service". First, it should not be called "voluntary" when it is required by a government regulation. It is important that people know that there could be a requirement for national service. Many people who oppose war or the ideas of conscription don't realize what such a requirement could mean. They may think that national service is a term that would mean work in some government agency or office rather than in the military. Or that it would require some of the kinds of work that are needed for the country as a whole -- like rebuilding the bridges that had been done under FDR. Maybe they don't realize that it could include actions that are constantly being done voluntarily for others in the USA. That would be insulting as it would indicate that citizens whose work is needed for the country are needed more for the military than for the rest of us; that we are lower class.

What needs to be done in a compulsory national service:

– Specify for how long in one's age, or during what specific ages, one is liable to do their service.

“Open-ended” leaves everyone free from doing anything at all considered to be national service by simply doing nothing, because the requirement is just that they must do something during their life.

What is the age at which the requirement begins? In this computerized age, it should be possible to record everyone when they are born, basically register them, and then track them until they reached the age / date when you have decided when it be possible, or best, for an individual to begin doing “service”.

Must it be done between two specific ages (i.e., between 9 & 20 years old)?

Should there be a cutoff age after which one is no longer required to do any service?

Are there individuals who should be exempted from the requirement because of physical or mental handicap? Are there criteria for them?

Who makes those decisions?

What are the criteria for those who fill the various personnel positions? Who makes the decisions and the job descriptions for hiring personnel and provides for their continuing supervision and support?

– Should there be registration for national service, just like draft registration as it now exists? To evaluate existing and suggested regulations regarding that question and making a report on and recommending government action concerning them is at the core of the commission's assignment.

Need to organize a system to replace the current Selective Service system for national service registration, as there is for the present draft registration and potential draft.

Need one central space with personnel to keep complete files; records; and information on all residents, what service they are in the process of doing and how much of their required service had been completed, and how much more they had to do.

Need to make and maintain a list of what approved service actions there are and how much each of these would count towards completion of a required service. (For example, at one meeting or your commission a person giving testimony reported that she had had a boy scout troop. Is this function approved as a national service? Must it be done more than once or, if a number of times, how many?) What ratings would appointed or elected individuals for local, state, or national work be given? Who would research potential activities and give each of them value to be included on the list?

Need to create draft boards to receive, track, and keep records of names and addresses of those been deemed eligible for service, and make sure that recruits are fulfilling the requirements for one of their age. They must have some means of enforcing the regulation.

Who would select and monitor these boards?

– Evaluate universal service. What qualifies as such? Should each be rated accordingly by amount of time needed; by numbers of people who are helped; by type of work done? Must decide on the value of a service and get together a list of services with the value of each one. When a person registers to do a specific service, the person signing them in must be able to have something to refer to and make a decision as to its value and how it meets the requirement. For how long, or for how many times, does it take to fulfill each specific requirement?

A list, with descriptions, must be made of approved services. Who would collect all these descriptions? Who would select and monitor the boards with this responsibility? Beyond existence of this list, would there need to be a mechanism for informing everyone what their options for service are before they register for one? After the early, required registration, when should a choice be recorded? (This relates to the first paragraph of these observations of the proposal for a national service.)

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