

Dear National Commission on Public Service,

1/31/19

I whole heartedly support your goals and aspirations, but I have a couple of points of view I wanted to share with you.

The first is that I don't think that you go far enough. I am not an accomplished word smith, but I honestly don't think that we need a feel-good campaign to get people to take an interest and put some effort in keeping this country in good shape. In the simplest of terms everyone needs to deal with the care and maintenance of their lives, why should their country be any different?

We should return to Universal Conscription, and that is what it needs to be, Universal. I have yet to speak to anyone who is not willing to listen to the idea if it could be implemented fairly and properly. All seem to agree that it might be a method to start to tie our country back together again. To return our country to some reasonable place where all of us are more willing to tolerate others if we are all pulling in the same direction of trying to make our country a better place.

If you are LeBron James, you are going in, if you are Mitt Romney's son, you are going in, if you are in a wheel chair, you are going in, if you have three babies, you are going in, if you just got out of jail, you are going in. Everyone goes, with very few exceptions; there will be allowances to adjust the timing of your service, but everyone before some cut off age serves.

Once explained properly it is hard to see how anyone who has any regard for this country or concerns about our future would be opposed to it. Most people live a little bit of this obligation, but it mostly local. Being in the PTA, helping at the food bank, coaching a youth sport. It is done every day in every location, we want to do our part. Someone just needs to ask more of us. I am sure that structured properly it is the one sure way to pull this country out of its fracturing nature.

I think that you would be surprised at the level of support UC might garner. The key is always "Universal", rich, white kids go too. For those that have conscientious objections I would like to point out that when we did have a draft, people with centuries long documented objections such as Mennonites, routinely committed to serve two years of public services such as working in a hospital. I have always been amazed at how many folks feel that not having served in the military was an experience that they are sorry they missed and feel that UC would be good for their kids and the nation. There are no good rational arguments against it because at the end of any debate the question always comes back to "why shouldn't every citizen have some sort of public service obligation? There are no free riders anywhere in the universe. Beyond philosophical terms though the net saving to the public sector and growth and development of the private sector will provide an ongoing stimulus program for decades.

In my mind the closing arguments for UC are:

- If the political parties are against it, the average citizen, who now does the serving, will look at both chambers and conclude that they think that they are good enough to rule us, but too good to serve with us.
- Living in this country is a privilege and everyone I have ever talked to ascribes to the notion that some sort of service to the country is reasonable. We need to stop thinking of the military as the only location for valuable public service. The entire public space can be served by universal conscription: TSA, Border Patrol, National Parks, National Highway System, hospitals, schools and on and on. The active branches of the military: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard should

be joined by the Border Patrol in being able to have first choice of each year's candidates and draft them for service. There could be a deferred service provision. Perhaps a draftee for the Marines would like to get his degree in Computer Science or play football first and then serve with them. If they agree, this person would go to school, on the GI bill, join ROTC and then the Marines upon graduation or completion of their professional career. This reverse pipeline would be greatly beneficial to all parties. The draftee would get their education and then move directly into a challenging real-world job in their chosen field. Upon completing their service, they then move into the private sector twice as qualified as they would have been in the school to work route. The other side of this is that with many getting deferred service there will be a new crop of skilled and experienced, slightly older individuals entering the military every year bringing their improved skills and knowledge with them. This also means that the nations best and brightest will always be as exposed to war as the rest of us. Undrafted conscripts will be given a myriad of options to choose from in addition to joining any of the active duty military.

- UC creates a much stronger nation, and this would be more feared and respected in the world than the addition of any high tech and expensive weaponry. With everyone having to serve in some fashion, and all are available for call to active military duty if necessary, it makes the strongest possible statement to the rest of the world about how we will protect our interests in the future. Because of the nature of universal conscription, we will all have skin in the game in the future because some person of your family will probably be serving, no matter what your age. That means if we are upset enough to want to come and kick your ass, you need to understand that we are all behind the effort, not 50-50 (with 2% engaged) as in the past several wars. The other positive side of that is that it is much less likely we will engage in wars as political tools rather than as life defending measures. A strong and united country is much scarier and more formidable, than all the nuclear weapons that we have that everyone knows that we will never use. This will also mean that politicians who feel that war is the answer for everything, international duct tape if you will, they will know that their family and friends are now just as exposed to dying for their beliefs as your family is.
- It is clear, that for most Americans now, where you start is where you will finish in life, UC will reset the starting line for everyone at the beginning of their productive years. Those that have all the advantages will have some delays but mostly beneficial effects on their life outcomes. Those that don't have all the advantages will be taken into environments where they will have time and the opportunity to catch up and stay caught up to where they should be in 21<sup>st</sup> century America.
- It is the road to Universal Education Benefits. Everyone serves; everyone is entitled to the GI (DNS) Education Benefits. If you don't use them, they just get credited to your Social Security Account for use during later parts of your life if you want to use them for some educational or improvement need, or they just continue to accrue and become part of your retirement payouts. The assumption being that if you didn't use them for education it is likely that you earned less money in your life and thus paid in less and will consequently need more assistance in retirement. A more secure retirement through Social Security is now accessible to all.
- It is the road to Universal Health Care. Everyone serves, everyone is part of the VA, the VA is dismantled, and other people sort out how to best adjust the health care market and generate savings in the hundreds of billions.
- There is approx 2 – 3 million new 18-year-old people in the US each year and with an active duty military already absorbing 700,000 people under 25 there is not an enormous pool of people to work with and they can be easily absorbed in the nation's service infrastructure. For many of the services that the govt supplies it evolves into a permanent, entrenched labor force that can continue to extract ever higher costs for the same services. The majority of union members are now govt employees and the spillover effect of these unions into other parts of the economy is small. I

believe that much of what our govt does can be done by the available pool of 18 to 32 years old that will come into the DNS. If we can train an 18 yr old to be capable of going into combat I am sure that we can train other young people to inspect bags at the airport, inspect cargo containers, do border patrol work, protect our parks, and whatever else we need. These are all things that all of us need, we should just take care of them ourselves and cut out the middle man. There is no shortage of areas of our public life that we can't use more manpower. Schools, parks, roads, beaches, forests, hospitals and on and on. The military will go back to making their own food, doing their own maintenance, cutting their own grass. We don't need to have outside, expensive labor for every govt chore; we should be smart enough to get the work done and at the same time get valuable job and life skill training done for those that need it so they can build better lives for themselves. I know that each group that will be displaced will have their facts and figures why they should continue to stay on as they are, but they can't. Let's not forget all of this will take time to implement and much of the displacement of workers that will come will be through attrition. Also, since we will now have universal health care many will leave for better jobs on the outside since they won't have to sacrifice those benefits. Governments have to get more for what we pay, and an entrenched employee force is not a way out of our fiscal problems. We as a citizenry need to solve the problem in an ongoing and permanent manner.

- Everyone will have to pass through a boot camp the same as is standard for the army. Here everyone will have to meet minimum standards for several areas before being able to move onto further training and assignment. Some of these standards will be physical others will be more functional such as basic money management and minimal technology proficiency and most importantly everyone that can will have to stay until they pass the minimum learning skills tests and have at the very least a GED if possible. This alone will make many drop outs stay in school which has its own useful effects. Everyone will start their adult hood with training in basic hygiene and public health. They will also have basic first aid skills. Those that can, will have at the very least a GED and an introduction into how large organizations and small groups of committed people work, what is expected at work. An intensive life skills training course that lasts for at least two years for those that need it, and perhaps tedium for those that don't. If we are going to lessen the cost to all of society for those that don't or can't work as hard as the rest of us, we have to give everyone the necessary skills and understandings to be able to be contributing members. We have to lift everyone into the boat and give them an oar even if it is a small one.
  - *I would like to restate the meaning of the above paragraph in cruder, but more realistic terms.* There are a lot of dumb ass people in this country and they then have dumb ass children and there is no mechanism to help these folks get and be better. Nobody wants to be a failure, live on welfare, not be smart, not be able to take care of your family properly. But for many folks there is simply no road map and no possible way of following the map if they find it. UC could be the force that breaks that cycle for a lot of our less fortunate citizens.
- Everyone will start with a clear understanding of how to get and stay physically fit and because of their continuing obligations to a ready reserve they will be required to stay physically fit after being discharged from the DNS or US Military. A fitter, healthier population is the only way to get ahead of the health care train wreck, and this will start the nation firmly down that path.
- By design, the passing through the military or DNS will make everyone smarter and better prepared to move into the future we are creating for ourselves. Think of it as more of a national finishing school. Everyone will have a certain level of skills and knowledge that should make everyone more employable. I would expect that we would see a minimum growth of at least 1% in GDP once the first waves of the DNS discharges start hitting the streets since that will now be a million much better prepared healthier and smarter citizens then the million before them.

- Because of the ability to give everyone the same physicals and collect the same health data on everyone we will begin to develop the kind of data base that will allow future medical entrepreneurs the raw materials to root out new and useful information to make and keep our society healthier and our costs lower going forward.
- The collection of DNA for every entering member will allow for a number of advantages as long as we deal with the appropriate privacy concerns. But those should be small since your potential health cannot be held against you for insurance or work. Science will be able to take advantage of all this data to move towards a health care system of prevention and genetic interventions rather than repair and replace or treat and die.
- The age window for UC will disrupt the cycle where young men fall into crime and young women into unintended motherhood. By gathering up large numbers of these unfortunate ones at any one time it will reduce the total number of folks that can be recruited into crime at any one time and hopefully will give the returning ones the skills and tools necessary to not need to turn to crime. Having children before joining the DNS won't stop you from having to serve. Let's find ways to give people a chance to have better lives, it is cheaper than just expecting them to do it and then having to pay for the damages anyway.
- If we can keep an additional 100,000 people from going into a life of crime over the 10 years the avoided cost of imprisonment alone will save taxpayers over \$ 10 billion a year and turn those individuals into productive citizens paying their way with as much as another \$ 5 billion in taxes. If you factor in the increased economic benefit of all these folks being in the economy, it probably generates a \$ 100 billion swing to the positive side freeing up that money to fund the things like health care and pensions
- Our society is now mostly completely segregated based on class and in many ways, neighborhood. We need to have a compelling reason to meet others that are also citizens and now we have one.
- For the vast majority of those entering DNS it will be their first time away from home and into a world of new experiences. I believe that the value of NS for many young will come for those just leaving high school and with no clear ideas of what they want to do or how to do it. Perhaps many will get experiences there that will help them form ideas about what they want to do and set forth on much more productive lives filled with more satisfaction for them and their family. You can only do the things that you are aware of.
- Very few of our citizens that are facing retirement are equipped financially to do so and so large numbers of them will have to continue to work. Universal conscription will have a beneficial effect in as much as it delays the introduction of a few million new faces into the work force each year, thus leaving space for these older workers.
- We must also face the fact that there are many in our society that are good people, fine to be friends with, good workers but every so often they go off the rails because there are no structures to help them maintain a balance in their lives that does not include the justice system at frequent intervals. We need to find a place in the NS for these folks and help them be the best people they can be and move them into the asset column rather than being a drain on society. A structure inside of the military is much more adept at keeping people propped up rather than locked down.

This is not the best place for a detailed analysis for what would be the hardest part of selling such a plan is how does it get paid for, but the following highlights show that it would be economically positive.

1. Cost shifting – Some of the money needed for the influx of as many as 2 million new faces each year will come from the transfer of the costs of the work that is currently being done by contractors. All the manual labor such as landscaping, laundry, building maintenance, data entry and other low-level entry type jobs will be filled with those who have the least skills and need the most assistance. Most will not have any useful job experience or any ideas on what it is like to have a job. These jobs will be a net savings to the nation's budgets.
  - a. The avoided/transferred costs of the former private contractor doing the chore (many of these private contractors will probably be draft eligible so they will not be net job losses)
  - b. The avoided/transferred costs of any job training that might occurred
  - c. For those that will in effect become wards of the system where they are working there will be the savings associated with welfare and police costs.
2. Avoided Costs - Societal
  - a. The avoided costs of any welfare payments to individuals that might need assistance
  - b. The avoided costs of violent crimes that won't occur by the 18-year old's that will be in the military. With as many as 200,000 violent crimes committed by this group a 10% reduction would save the police/judicial/prison systems over \$ 2 billion annually
  - c. Long term Reduced welfare costs associated with old age. Since everyone will be brought into the workforce via UC at an early age everyone will get started earlier on making contributions to Social Security so that their benefit amounts will be larger.
3. Avoided Costs - Medical
  - a. 10% reduction in the medical costs associated with these violent crimes would save another \$2 billion annually
  - b. Summary of youth health status
    - i. 30% of young adults couldn't meet military fitness standards for entry
    - ii. 18% of 18-year-olds are obese
    - iii. 12 million children are obese
    - iv. By 2030 half of the population will be obese
    - v. Obesity consumes over \$ 350 billion in medical costs, 20% of total health care
  - c. \$100 billion in medical costs could be saved annually due to better health of the citizens after the first five years of Universal Conscription and then continue to grow
  - d. \$100 billion in system savings due to single payer system
4. Increased Revenue
  - a. 16% of kids don't graduate from high school, if that is cut to 5% the additional money that someone makes with a high school diploma vs without one will generate \$ 300 million in new income taxes in the first 5 years
    - i. Some % of these kids will also continue their education further increasing their value

I wish you the best of luck in your campaign

Regards,

Richard Lane

