

Inquiring Minds- May 26, 2017

Should the U.S. Reinstitute the Draft?

Eve Aron - Moderator

In 1940, the Selective Training and Service Act was passed. It has as a mission “to serve the emergency manpower needs of the Military by conscripting untrained manpower, or personnel with professional health care skills, if directed by Congress and the President in a national crisis.”

The United States abandoned the draft in 1973 under President Nixon, ended the registration requirement in 1975 under President Ford and reinstated the registration requirement in 1980 under Present Carter. The Selective Service System remains today as a contingency, should a military draft be reintroduced.

Under current law, all male U.S. citizens, and certain male alien residents, including those here illegally, are required to register with Selective Service within 30 days of their 18th birthday.

Prosecutions of draft resisters proved difficult because the government had to show that noncompliance with the law was “knowing and willful”. The last case for not registering was in 1986; they are no longer prosecuted.

Women not being required to register have spawned several law cases. In *Rostker v. Goldberg*, in 1981, several men claimed that the Selective Service Act violated the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment. The Supreme Court upheld male-only registration stating that, since women are excluded from combat by statute or military policy, men and women are simply not similarly situated for purposes of a draft or registration for a draft”.

As women now serve in the military, Congress debated a law mandating equal registration. In 2016, led by John McCain, the Senate approved women registering but the House did not. The change did not pass.

Our country has been fighting wars in the Middle East, Afghanistan and Iraq, using volunteer, reserve and national guard troops. Many have served several tours of duty. Possibilities exist now are for troops to be sent to North Korea, China and more troops to fight Isis in Syria.

Questions:

- 1. In view of the active involvement of our military around the world, with the possibility for more conflict, should we consider an active draft?**
- 2. Should women be part of Selective Service registration and draft? Pros and Cons?**
- 3. If a full draft is not considered, should people who register have to train like our reserves (monthly meetings, a few weeks a year of service) to be ready for combat if needed?**

Why We Need the Draft Back—Noel Koch July, 2004 Washington Post – (edited for brevity)

As a speechwriter for President Nixon, I wrote the legislative message proposing an end to the military draft as it was a target for antiwar protests. The President later regretted ending the draft and urged that it be restored.

The subject of a draft has resurfaced. There are few good arguments against the draft and a surfeit of good ones for restoring it. The most obvious is that we do not have enough men and women in our armed forces. Reliance on reserves and the National Guard is creating strains along the socioeconomic spectrum and is not an endlessly sustainable expedient. If we are to fight elective wars, we need more men and women on active duty.

But there are other good reasons to return to the draft. I joined the army with no high school diploma; my family was lower class and uneducated. The draft shattered class distinctions, mixed rich, middle-class and poor, college and high school drop-outs. Volunteers were mixed with those drafted. The educated learned to value those without college and the uneducated discovered that, with the GI Bill, higher learning was possible.

Class lines and racial lines blurred. The military did more to advance equality than any other law, institution or movement. “Bro” came into common usage in Vietnam. The draft furthered the work of the Civil War advancing the business of making us one people.

America needs this experience to expand the pool of people likely to find their way into power and to bring an appreciation of the true costs of conflict. Thus, we might reduce counsel from those who never have learned the difference between a war and a cakewalk.

**A New Military Draft Would Revive a Very Bad Old Idea -
Doug Bandow, Forbes, July 16, 2012 (edited for brevity)**

Throughout their history, Americans have defended this nation from domestic and foreign threats without conscription. The AVF, All-Volunteer Force has been a success as standards are higher.

The end of a draft has improved commitment and morale in the armed forces. Recruits who want to serve succeed and perform better than draftees who want out. The AVF has higher reenlistment rates, which reduce turnover and enhance experience.

Shifting to conscription would weaken the military as soldiers would be less bright, less educated and less motivated. They would be less likely to stay in uniform. resulting in a less experienced force in

combat, one costing more lives and achieving fewer objectives. It also costs money to manage and enforce a draft.

Compelling service is a violation of individual liberty. A society which no longer wins the voluntary allegiance of its people has no moral authority to coerce them into service.

The Vietnam War showed a draft gives the government virtually limitless manpower to keep fighting an unpopular war. The reduced willingness of Americans to volunteer for both active and reserve forces in Iraq and Afghanistan impacted the military. A voluntary military ensures a free people are defending a free society – as it should be.

List of 12 Possible Pros and Cons, Connect – Global Issues Blog, Connectusfund.org (Edited for brevity)

List of Pros of Military Draft

Assures national security, contributes to building character, reduces unemployment in the long run, is a way to travel and learn new cultures, creates equality and diversity, cuts down expenses of paying extra money to soldiers to convince them to join all-volunteer force., helps stop politicians from making abrupt decisions to fight wars if their children and grandchildren will be in the fighting force.

List of Cons of Military Draft

Takes away precious time from youth, drafts some men who are incompetent, creates more expenses for government, imposes militarism on our society, leaves families left behind suffering.

Women registering for the draft

9 Reasons Women Should Have to Register for the Draft- Kelly Francis, The Huffington Post, July 2, 2016 (edited for brevity)

There is no such thing as selective equality – Equality means shared burdens as well as shared opportunities.

There are a number of ways for women to contribute without combat - A draft doesn't mean that women will be air-dropped into enemy territory.

Your daughter is not a princess – Physical fitness, discipline and tests of endurance enhance one's sense of pride and independence.

Equal participation fosters a sense of community, responsibility and civic engagement – Every citizen should be involved in a war. The burden should not just be on those with little resources or opportunities.

Equal Pay – Military pay is tied to rank and pay scales are publicly available.

Leadership Opportunities – Leadership opportunities in the military are tied to rank. The military's goal is to train all soldiers to be effective decision-makers and authority figures.

Women will make the military smarter, more agile and more equitable – Women, as talented strategists, negotiators, critical thinkers can help bring change to policies in the long-standing male culture of the services.

A gender-neutral draft will help broaden perceptions and expectation of what women can do – It will change conversation on women's roles. As a nation, we tell women, girls that we expect the same selflessness, determination, heroism and grit from them as we do from men and boys.

No, Women Should Not be Included in the Draft – Julie Eden, The Daily Signal, February 19, 2016 (Edited for brevity)

Julie Eden served in the Marines from 2004 – 2008

Drafting women is a bad idea on a myriad of fronts - from degraded combat readiness to skyrocketing injuries, risk, expense and danger, to the long-term medical bill and increased casualties. Having equal right under the law does not mean men and women are the same.

Combat is not an equal opportunity for women because they don't have an equal opportunity to survive. Women becoming men's physical equals is not just leadership and training. Testing women shows that it is nature, not nurture, dictating reality. Technology has not lessened the face-to face bludgeoning that our infantrymen are doing when guns jam or they run out of ammo as they fight house to house and cave to cave on foot.

Advocates for the Combat Integration policy claim falsely that women are physically capable of anything military men are while decades of military and sports medicine studies prove the opposite. The Marine Corps' 9-month Gender Integration Task Force was not "flawed". Co-ed teams were better at decision-making but the women were rested and studies were with a mere two of the 134 combat tasks. The all-male teams outperformed coed teams on 69 percent of tasks. Women retained more than twice men's injuries and this statistic was suppressed or hushed up. Negative effects that the sexual dynamic has on coed units, especially those that deploy, have been ignored.

Israel hasn't put women in direct combat since 1948. Britain also has gone back and forth. Both found the same problems -higher injuries and lower performance among women.

