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TRANSPORTATION AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
CHAIRMAN



# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

April 12, 2019

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National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service  
2530 Crystal Drive  
Suite 1000, Box 63  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Heck and members of the Commission,

As the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service continues its comprehensive review of the Selective Service System (SSS) and considers recommendations for its future, I strongly urge members of this Commission to recommend disbanding the SSS altogether.

As you know well, the SSS was established by Congress and President Franklin Roosevelt in the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, creating the nation's first peacetime draft. From 1948 until 1973, both during peacetime and during periods of armed conflict, young men were drafted to fill vacancies in the Armed Forces which could not be filled through voluntary means. In 1973, the draft was ended, and the U.S. converted to an all-volunteer military force.

Our professional, all-volunteer military is the finest fighting force in the world. Recruits must compete under exacting standards in order to enlist, which is why military leaders have said time and time again they believe in the all-voluntary military. In 2014, the Pentagon found that 71 percent of Americans between the ages of 17 to 24 were not qualified for military service. The Selective Service System is a relic of past wars and a time when we needed capacity to quickly conscript men to fight conventional wars.

The Pentagon, Republican and Democratic administrations, and Congress have consistently agreed there is no military or national security imperative to reinstate the draft. Without a draft and no prospects of ever reinstating a draft, the SSS is unnecessary, wasteful, and should be disbanded.

The Selective Service System has cost well over \$800 million over the last 35 years, and taxpayers continue to spend more than \$22 million annually to administer this obsolete program. Eliminating the Selective Service System will save American taxpayers more than \$225 million over 10 years.

Furthermore, the penalties for failing to register with the Selective Service can be severe. A young man could face years in prison, hundreds-of-thousands of dollars in fines, lose access to federal financial aid, and be barred from federal employment and job training programs. More often than not low-income Americans are the ones most adversely impacted by these penalties.

Additionally, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) opposes the Selective Service System, noting that involuntary military conscription is a violation of fundamental civil liberties and our constitutional rights. The ACLU has been firm that coercing Americans into fighting for their country, absent an extreme national emergency, has no place in a free and democratic society.

I wholeheartedly support the Commission's mission to "foster a greater ethos of military, national, and public service to strengthen American democracy." However, the bottom line is that the SSS does not inspire young Americans to serve. It is an unneeded, unwanted, and wasteful program whose funding could be better spent on encouraging and enhancing public service or reducing our federal deficit.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to reviewing future reports and recommendations from the Commission.

Sincerely,



Peter A. DeFazio