

# INTERIM REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service was created in 2017 by Congress amid a debate over whether the selective service registration requirement should be extended to include women. The late Senator John McCain (R-AZ) and Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) championed the bipartisan commission's establishment to also include for the first time a comprehensive review of military, national, and public service.

## OUR CHARGE

### The Commission is charged with two primary tasks:

1. To review the selective service registration process operated by the Selective Service System, an independent federal agency.
2. To examine and recommend ways to increase participation in military, national, and public service to strengthen our nation.

We define **service** as a personal commitment of time, energy, and talent to a mission that contributes to the public good by protecting the nation and its citizens, strengthening communities, or promoting the general social welfare.

Throughout 2018, the Commission researched and traveled across the nation, visiting each of the nine Census divisions. The Interim Report shares what the Commission has learned throughout its first year and reviews options to increase military, national, and public service participation among all Americans.

### How many Americans serve?



About **2.4 million** people serve on Active Duty, in the National Guard, or Reserve component of the military.

About **75,000** people serve in AmeriCorps, **220,000** in Senior Corps, and **7,000** in Peace Corps.

About **2 million** people serve in federal civilian jobs, **5 million** in state government, and **14 million** in local and tribal governments.

## WHAT WE LEARNED

### Americans value service and are willing to consider a variety of options to encourage or require service of all citizens.

Many people strongly believe that the United States should pursue a transformative effort to involve more Americans in military, national, and public service.

### While some Americans are aware of the details of the Selective Service System and the implications of registration, many Americans are not.

Many do not realize the U.S. has a requirement for men to serve the nation if drafted. Further, some Americans are surprised that women are currently neither required nor permitted to register for selective service. Others question the need for the Selective Service System. We are carefully considering the issue and actively seeking input on this.

### Barriers too often prevent inspired and eager Americans from serving.

- **Military service is a responsibility borne by few.** Many Americans have limited interactions with the military community and are unaware of the range of career and service options offered. Further, many Americans are not eligible for military service, yet are not informed of other ways to serve the nation.
- **National service is America's best-kept secret.** Far too few Americans know about national service, which can change the lives of both the individuals serving and the communities receiving service. Some who do know about service options are unable to participate because they cannot afford to do so for economic and/or social reasons.
- **Public service personnel practices need an overhaul.** Public service is critical to the health of civil society and national security—yet recruiting and hiring practices are out of touch with the realities of the modern workforce. Many civil servants are frustrated with how they are portrayed and politicized by the media and government officials.
- **Civic knowledge is critical for our democracy, but too few Americans receive high-quality civic education.** Studies show that a robust civic education improves civic health in many ways—by increasing voter participation, reducing dropout rates, and encouraging constructive community engagement—yet many young people are not receiving effective civic education.

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## WHAT WE ARE CONSIDERING

### We are considering ways to implement universal service, such as:

- **Commit** enough resources so that any American with a desire can perform service;
- **Establish** a norm for every American to devote at least a full year to either military, national, or public service; and
- **Require** all Americans to serve, with a choice in how to satisfy the requirement.

### With respect to the Selective Service System, we are considering options that could:

- **Expand** the registration requirement for the Selective Service System to include women;
- **Identify** individuals who possess critical skills the nation might need;
- **Call** for volunteers during times of emergency using the existing system; and
- **Incorporate** reasonable changes to identify, evaluate, and protect those who object to military service, but are otherwise willing to serve.

### Options to encourage and allow more Americans to participate in military, national, and public service include:

- **Improve** information-sharing and referrals of service opportunities between agencies and organizations;
- **Increase** the number of high school students who take a version of the military entrance exam that identifies their strengths and career interests;
- **Integrate** a semester of service into the high school curriculum; and
- **Create** better tools for federal agencies to recruit and hire interns or fellows and transition them into permanent positions.

### We are also considering ways for the federal government to encourage best practices in effective civic education throughout elementary, middle, and high school.

## Feedback from Americans is critical to the Commission's work



Strengthening  
American Democracy  
through Service

Source: LightFieldStudios via Getty Images



We will continue to conduct additional research and engage the public between now and March 2020, when our final report is due to the Congress, the President, and the American people. We heard from a lot of people but need to hear from more. Let's have a conversation! Submit thoughts/feedback at [www.inspire2serve.gov](http://www.inspire2serve.gov). Contact us via email at [info@inspire2serve.gov](mailto:info@inspire2serve.gov), phone at (703) 571-3742, or mail at:

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