

The All-Volunteer Force Forum Statement

National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service Staff Memorandum: An Infrastructure to Serve America | June 20, 2019

Submitted by MG Dennis Laich, Executive Director

Thank you for inviting me to comment on the STAFF MEMORANDUM: AN INFRASTRUCTURE TO SERVE AMERICA. I will keep my comments/observations brief. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any clarification or follow up.

You state that "The value of such a system rests on a key assumption that the lack of awareness regarding service opportunities is a significant barrier to service." I would suggest that this is an assumption that should be rigorously tested before any registration system is considered. I am very skeptical re the assumption.

Creation of the Service Registration System is inconsistent with the "small government" philosophy of many members of Congress.

Some cost-benefit analysis of the Service Registration System must be part of any recommendation for its implementation. For a nation already \$22 trillion in debt this may be a significant barrier.

Finally, and MOST IMPORTANTLY, I am deeply concerned about conflating the existing SSS registration with the Service Registration System. Although I support both forms of service, I strongly believe that there is a significant difference between military service and other forms of service. Military service requires that an enlistee sign a blank check to the American people payable with his/her life, forfeits certain personal rights and liberties, cannot quit until his/her enlistment period is completed (or beyond....think STOP-LOSS), and assumes the risks of PTSD and suicide at rates higher than the rest of society.

I will take this opportunity, in closing, to once again urge the Commission to recommend that women be required to register for Selective Service and that the Selective Service Registration System be maintained. The system is critical for national security as the US has never been able to achieve a mass mobilization without conscription and war with Russia and China, which have been identified as the two greatest security threats, without mass mobilization is unlikely. I would also note that, in my professional judgement, the current "all-volunteer" system of manning our military is unfair, inefficient, and unsustainable and contributes to the civil-military gap and the militarization of US foreign policy. Maintaining the SSS registration is a critical element in responding to the deficiencies of the "all volunteer" system.

Respectfully yours,
MG Dennis Laich
Executive Director
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