



PUBLIC COMMENTS

[The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service](#) has solicited input from the public about the topics under its mandate since January 2018. Individuals have shared their views by posting comments on the Commission [website](#), emailing info@inspire2serve.gov or national.commission.on.service.info@mail.mil, submitting comment cards at public events, or mailing letters. These public comments supplement research efforts and are one of many factors under consideration as the Commission deliberates its recommendations to the Congress, the President, and the American people.

The Commission is committed to transparency and openness with the public. With that in mind, the Commission will be posting comments received from the public on its website at regular intervals. This document covers all public comments received during the month of October. Future comments will be released on roughly a monthly basis.

There are a few facts about these comments that are important to understand.

- Public comments are posted in the order received with the most recent comment being listed last.
- The comments may address questions or topics posed by the Commission. The views expressed in comments reflect those of the individual or organization who commented and do not represent the official views of the Commission or the federal government.
- Comments are not nationally representative. Additionally, there is no limit to the number of comments a single individual or organization may submit.
- Although the Commission's initial request for comments published in the Federal Register expired (September 30, 2018), the Commission extended the submission of comments until December 31, 2019.

The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service posts comments received in their entirety. The Commission applies redactions in limited circumstances to personally identifiable information, such as personal email address and phone numbers. The Commission reserves the right to redact language that poses a threat to individuals. Posting of public comments does not constitute an endorsement of any views expressed therein or of the content of any external links that members of the public have included in their comments.


The Commission welcomes comments from the public on any aspect of the Commission's mission and feedback on the staff memorandum released prior to the Commission's public hearings. Please submit your comments at <https://inspire2serve.gov/content/share-your-thoughts> by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on December 31, 2019.

Date	Text of Response
10/5/19	<p>I am proud to be an Army Brat, the daughter of a combat veteran, career military. My experience and education includes: Peace Corps Volunteer in Colombia, 1963-65, Headstart social worker, Training Supervisor in a Vista Associates, BA in Political Science, and a MPA. I have been active in partisan political organizations and NGO service organizations for almost 50 years. My comments come from my experience and values.</p> <p>I strongly object to a mandatory service requirement. The government has no constitutional right to mandate "service" other than to "raise armies". The focus on "service" emphasizes the provider of such service and objectifies the "recipient".</p> <p>Absent from your analysis is a consideration of the importance of political organizations and their essential role in our democracy or a consideration of the full range of First Amendment rights of a citizen. Military, Civil Service, and National Service participants can vote but their ability to participate in partisan political activities is restricted. There is nothing more important than the Right to Address the Government for Redress of Grievances. That right is restricted by participation in all three branches of government service.</p> <p>During the Vietnam era, men were drafted at 18 or 19 but could not vote until they were 21. It was the protest marches which led, I believe, to the quick passage of the 26th amendment. When 18 year olds could vote, the draft disappeared and we had 30 years of relative peace and no major involvement in foreign wars until 9/11. Gulf War I was an exception, which needs more analysis than space allows.</p> <p>I support a selective service registration and a draft, only if the United States were attacked or in immediate danger of attack. I support civilian control of the military. I believe the current disinterest in military service is not because of lack of information. It is a powerful statement rejecting the stupid wars without end or purpose and which exact a horrific price to military men and women and their families.</p> <p>I support all varieties of NGO service organizations. Domestic government programs work when they hire people from targeted communities to do needed work. Problems are created when "outsiders" are placed in communities and displace community members or interfere with ongoing volunteer work. I have seen both happen.</p> <p>Peace Corps should be in a separate category. Volunteers do not have the full protection of US Law. They serve in foreign countries without diplomatic immunity and are subject to the laws of host countries. That should change.</p> <p>Young people in this country have financial obligations to help support their families of origin or their own new families. The Commission seems ignorant of the lives of many young people.</p> <p>The government, regardless of the political administration, needs to improve, first, before conscripting its citizens.</p>

10/7/19	<p>1. Does service have inherent value? If so, what is it?</p> <p>Service to the community is that is voluntary and flows from noble motives.</p> <p>2. How does the U.S. increase the desire for Americans, particularly young Americans, to serve?</p> <p>Realize that training to kill is not the best way to serve humanity.</p> <p>3. What are the barriers to participation in military, national or public service?</p> <p>Disbelief in the foreign and domestic policy goals of Republican administrations that seek to exploit resources for the benefit of a few. President who is corrupt and narcissistic.</p> <p>2. How can the U.S. increase participation in military, national, and public service by individuals with critical skills to address national security and other public service needs of the nation?</p> <p>End useless illegal wars that waste lives and resources. Return to values of common good and decency.</p> <p>3. Is the military draft or draft contingency still a necessary component of U.S. national security?</p> <p>No.</p> <p>4. Are modifications to the selective service system needed?</p> <p>End it.</p> <p>5. Is a mandatory service requirement for all Americans necessary, valuable, and feasible?</p> <p>No.</p>
10/7/19	<p>What can we expect by placing healthy young men and women with hormones raging in combat together, with few restraints on their behavior? Sexual acting out behavior would be expected, and the consequences on military discipline are all too painfully obvious</p>

	<p>It's time Americans demanded reform of our military to restore internal discipline, and put a stop to using our armed forces as a political tool for social engineering.</p>
<p>10/10/19</p>	<p>Answers to your questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A life of service involves that person in something larger than self, as I learned in Peace Corps, United Farmworkers Union, USEPA, and community organizing in my own community. There is nothing that compares to give back to our community, nation, the world. 2) Americans have plenty of desire to serve, if given the opportunities. Eg, here are some of the many opportunities for youth to follow their ideals. The National Collaboration for Youth, an interagency council of the nation's 50 major youth-serving organizations, notes that its member agencies serve more than 40 million young people each year, making this system second only to the public schools in the number of youths served annually. Indeed, nearly 50 percent of eighth graders in the nationally representative sample surveyed by the U.S. Department of Education reported participation in programs sponsored by one of these groups. There are more than 36,900 such youth organizations, according to Guidestar.org's web database, including such long-standing programs as 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, YWCA, Girls Incorporated, Camp Fire, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and Junior Achievement. These organizations are creating the leaders of tomorrow who will bring order to the seeming chaos brought about by theBy publicizing our activities and continuing to serve in local organizations, where possible; such as Partnering 4 Peace, the joint PCorps/Rotary collaboration that I belong to. 3) Only barriers are lack of adequate publicity re peaceful public and national opportunities to serve, 4) Greater participation of those with critical skills would happen when our younger public is made aware of the many peaceful ways to serve that enhance national security and other public service needs of the nation! Very little PR done in this area. 5) I would hope not, but some kind of voluntary service draft of non-military avenues to service like an expanded Americorps that also trains for future professions/vocations. We actual need fewer military bodies and more critical thinkers to work in R&D, the environment, critical infrastructure, and education. E.g., we have a public-funded teachers' corps that I believe should be expanded. 6) Not that I know of...no very little about it these days, as I was drafted in the sixties, but chose Peace Corps service instead. 7) Don't believe mandatory would work, unless in greater peace-making opportunities, unless danger of another world war, when every body is valuable? But government can certainly initiate more public service opportunities, especially at home, where we rank near bottom of K-12 education outcomes in developed countries (and many underdeveloped ones), in environmental research and protection, and especially in more economic literacy as a means to mitigate our record income-inequality to bring back the general prosperity of earlier post-WWII decades.
<p>10/11/19</p>	<p>I served in the Peace Corps. My daughter served in the Peace Corps. And my son in law served in the Peace Corps. I highly encourage you to include Peace Corps service as an option instead of military service.</p>

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10/14/19	<p>As long as the selective service system remains in place, then gender should have no impact when it comes to participating in it. Equality should not be exercised solely when it concerns receiving a benefit from the nation. Equality should apply when it comes to providing a service to the nation as well.</p>
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10/15/19	<p>I wish to know if the March 2020 date for the final report is still viable? If not, what is the new date?</p> <p>Thank you. Dan O'Keefe, Milwaukee, WI</p>
10/18/19	<p>Peace Corps Volunteers should receive the same benefits as military veterans, when their service is over. I served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in a dangerous country, where one Volunteer was murdered. I lived under hazardous conditions, much more dangerous than living with the military on a protected base.</p> <p>Thanks for the opportunity to comment.</p>
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10/21/19	<p>I think it is a good thing to have the draft, in case of an emergency situation. But I think that it should apply to everyone in that age range, no matter sex. It's completely sexist that the selective service still only applies to males and I cannot imagine why it still has not been changed. Any person can help contribute in time of war. No one sex is more physically or mentally able than the other. We are all human, we should all have to help. I am a 19 year old woman and I wish I had to sign up for the selective service like my two brothers do. I cannot believe that the US is still so sexist in the 21st century. Please fix this and fast.</p>

10/22/19	<p>Dear National Commission:</p> <p>We have been invited to share our concerns with your commission. We are Old Order Mennonites, a non-resistant church of Anabaptist heritage. Over three hundred years ago our forefathers came to Pennsylvania at William Penn's invitation. They came seeking religious freedom, including exemption from military service. We have been granted this privilege, with at times the requirement of alternate service. Humanitarian Aid to our fellow man is a tenet of our faith.</p> <p>We would like to humbly inform you we oppose the proposed registration of women with Selective Service. If you are going to recommend registration of women, we respectfully ask that you include a recommendation that the women of the non-resistant churches be exempt.</p> <p>It is our strongly held religious belief that women of registration age (18-26) should be, or preparing to be, a wife, helpmate, and mother. Our women are the heart of the home. We believe strong families build strong churches and communities. Requiring women to register, with the possibility of requiring service, strikes at the heart of our homes, churches, and communities.</p> <p>We sincerely thank you for giving this matter your consideration, and wish to close with prayers on your behalf.</p> <p>Respectfully yours, Elvin Zimmerman </p>
10/24/19	<p>The Selective Service System should be abolished, period. Military service should be voluntary both in peacetime and in war. The US needs to downsize its military to roughly half of the manpower it now has. The US should withdraw all military forces from East Asia and only retain a token force in Europe, leaving both its former clients in Asia and in Europe to decide their own security arrangements vis-a-vis any military threats to their security.</p>
10/26/19	<p>Yes, it is long overdue for women to be represented equally in the military. Equal rights is not a buffet to cherry pick what you like and leave the rest. In fact, I believe women should be drafted immediately to replace men who leave the service until 50% of the military is female.</p>

<p>10/28/19</p>	<p>Greetings: In reviewing Selective Service registration; 1. I oppose expanding the registration of all men and women ages 18 to 24. 2. I advocate for including provision to declare one's conscientious objection to war. 3. I strongly support voluntary service to promote peace and goodwill for humanity, and conserving the natural environment. The history of resorting to war and violence to resolve differences has failed. Promote diplomacy. Thank you for hearing my voice.</p>
<p>10/29/19</p>	<p>Dear Mr. Heck: I do not think it is morally right that young men have to continue registering for the draft at this time while it has been declared unconstitutional. I believe there should at least be a moratorium for these men from registering until the courts no doubt, not congress, finally decides this issue. It is time for women to do their fair share or please get rid of this evil system totally. Thanks for the chance to comment. With Respect</p>

10/31/19	<p>Is a military draft or draft contingency still a necessary component of U.S. national security? Yes</p> <p>Are modifications to the Selective Service system needed? Yes</p> <p>How can the U.S. increase participation in military, national and public service by individuals with skills critical to address the national security and other public service needs of the nation? Institute mandatory military service, like Israel.</p> <p>What are the barriers to participation in military, national or public service? A massive lack of unity across the American population. Social media is not being used to create bonds that transcend cyberspace, so we are losing our national identity. Mandatory service will reinvest our people with that national identity. I learned how to help and serve my fellow Americans during my time in service; I cannot imagine anyone that would not feel the same after a 2-4 year time of service</p> <p>Does service have inherent value and, if so, what is it? See above answer. And, I learned how to manage money; how to cooperate with people, even when we are not in 100% agreement; teaches humility; we learn & receive a sense of national and cultural unit, identity, & American brotherhood; leadership is taught, as we learn that to lead is to serve, and to serve is to get our brothers out alive and keep our homeland safe; we learn the love of ur country & how to respect & trust the those by our side, no matter the potential consequences, even should that consequence be our death, to stand by our brother/sisters in arms no matter the cost; we learn courage, commitment, honor, and loyalty to our country.</p> <p>Is a mandatory service requirement for all Americans necessary, valuable and feasible? Absolutely & without doubt. 2 year minimum enlistment.</p> <p>How does the U.S. increase the propensity for Americans, particularly young Americans, to serve? No level of incentive, (save the removal of cellphone privileges until you serve) might encourage our (rather over privileged) youth to serve, as they value their own safety more than the safety & security of this nation over their own lives. Mandatory service, as in Israel, would benefit our country greatly.</p>
10/31/19	<p>I agree with October's issue that going back to the draft can have a effect on our ongoing wars. You want to increase desire for public service you have to start with our leaders; how many have actually ever served in the military? Very few! How do we fix the VA if our leaders have no idea of what a vet goes through? The selective service NEEDS to include women registering. We are in a world where women want to be equal in everything; from pay to job selection etc. Now is the time for women to be registered for the draft. I'm not sure mandatory service is the way to go but as someone once said: "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country"!</p>

10/31/19

#1. In my opinion, military service has arbitrary inherent value: depending on who you ask, each individual will value it differently, which is perfectly okay, because that is the freedom of the US.

Many people believe that it is their civic duty to serve in the Military and fight for the protection of the country and its allies. This is proven in the fact that there are 1.3 million active troops currently enlisted in the military and another 865,000 troops in reserve, all of which enlisted voluntarily. Studies have shown that these people value pride, duty, and selfless service towards helping others as the main reasons they enlist. Military service is important to them, it's what they believe in.

Contrasting those beliefs are people who don't see military service as their civic duty. Take for example, me: I don't believe that war and violence are the way to solve problems and I also don't believe you are truly helping others through violence. If I were to serve in active duty in a war, I would feel absolutely no pride after fighting and killing. Others believe they are protecting their country and I honor their opinions. However, for me, I would only be returning home with shame and a conscious clouded with the horrors I experienced. My opinion is only one of many, all of which are perfectly valid, but it is important to know that not everyone thinks the same, nor should they.

This ability to believe in what you want and choose a life that will be most fulfilling for you is exactly what the "American Dream" is all about. Is teaching any less valuable than service? Shaping the young minds who are to become the leaders of this country and the world is surely just as important as fighting in wars. Is building homes for veterans and homeless less valuable than serving? Is supporting our communities, who in turn support our military, any less valuable than carrying a gun through enemy territory? I believe that everyone should "serve their country" and give back to the society that raised them, but I don't believe that military service is the only way.

Military service certainly has inherent value, but not for everyone. That is okay! We need to be able to choose how to best serve our country. I would be absolutely useless as a soldier. I have no street smarts and would freeze at the first sight of a fight, but I want to give back using the strengths I have. That is what service is all about: using your strengths to better the world around you.