



WORLD **BEYOND** WAR.org
a global movement to end all wars

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November 12, 2019

Statement to the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service from World BEYOND War

World BEYOND War opposes compulsory draft registration for people of all genders.

World BEYOND War believes the then-Secretary of the Army was right in 2016 to suggest ending draft registration.[1]

World BEYOND War strongly supports ending all penalties for past failure to register. Conscientious objection is a basic human right that should not be penalized.

We reject as offensive and nonsensical the idea that equal rights would be advanced by compelling young women against their will to participate in an immoral enterprise that is highly dangerous to others and to themselves. There is an obvious way for draft registration to treat everyone equally: abolish draft registration.

We reject as demonstrably false and ethically perverse the claim that draft registration or a draft helps to prevent war. Currently 16 percent of the U.S. public wants U.S. wars continued.[2] Military recruiters are meeting their goals by targeting young people burdened with student debt.[3] Eliminating student debt is part of the political conversation in the United States, as is the possibility of more wars. The selective service tested its systems at the height of the occupation of Iraq, preparing for a draft if needed. A draft could be imposed in the future. The result would be the continuation or escalation of war making.

The drafts in the U.S. civil war (both sides), the two world wars, and the war on Korea did not end those wars, despite being much larger and in some cases fairer than the draft during the U.S. war on Vietnam. Those drafts were despised and protested, but they took lives; they did not save lives. The draft did not contribute to ending the war on Vietnam before that war had done far more damage than has any U.S. war since.

The very idea of a draft was widely considered an outrageous assault on basic rights and liberties even before any of these past drafts. In fact, a draft proposal was successfully argued down in Congress in 1814 by denouncing it as unconstitutional.

"Where is it written in the Constitution," asked Daniel Webster, "in what article or section is it contained, that you may take children from their parents, and parents from their children, and compel them to fight the battles of any war, in which the folly or the wickedness of government may engage it? Under what

concealment has this power lain hidden, which now for the first time comes forth, with a tremendous and baleful aspect, to trample down and destroy the dearest rights of personal liberty?"

1. <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/opinion-la/la-ol-selective-service-fanning-20161206-story.html>

2. <http://davidswanson.org/what-does-the-u-s-public-think-of-its-government-arming-and-bombing-the-world/>

3. <https://www.newsweek.com/army-uses-student-debt-crisis-not-ongoing-wars-meet-recruiting-goals-2019-1459843>

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Swanson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Swanson".

David Swanson, Director, World BEYOND War