

December 2019

Dear members of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service,

Santa Barbara Friends Meeting (Quakers) considered the questions of the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service regarding the Selective Service System registration. We appreciate this opportunity to make our concerns known to the Commission. Since our founding, Quakers have the conviction that it is our duty as a people of faith to urge world leaders to work for alternatives to war in solving human conflicts.

"We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretence whatsoever, and this is our testimony to the whole world."

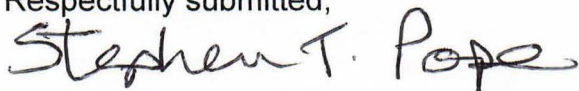
-George Fox, Declaration to Charles II, 1660.

Here are some thoughts for your consideration:

- We call for the abolition of the Selective Service System (SSS) as it currently exists. We call on our political leaders, and commit ourselves to work with renewed dedication to abolish it. We shall oppose attempts to expand SSS mandatory registration, however constructive the alleged purpose. We do not support efforts at reform; the issue is not equal treatment under compulsion, but freedom from compulsion. SSS registration should be eliminated.
- It is especially egregious to have this program continue without a provision to declare oneself a conscientious objector.
- Penalties for noncompliance are not proportional to the harm of the noncompliance. There should not be lifelong disadvantages, i.e. registration linked to the ability to get a driver license, qualify for financial aid in advanced education, governmental employment, etc. Removal of such penalties should be retroactive.
- As a nation with a large immigrant population, we feel it is particularly important to remove the disqualification for residents and undocumented people from the ability to apply for citizenship if they have not registered with the SSS. Many child immigrants are not aware of their legal obligation to register. Removal of such penalties should also be retroactive.

We raise our children to respect the sacredness of life. Training people to kill is inconsistent with this ideal. National service should remain voluntary. Compulsory service, whether civilian or military, is in conflict with the principles of a democratic and free society.

Respectfully submitted,



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