



# Center on Conscience & War

National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors

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## Conscription: Curbing Freedom

*“The most fundamental objection to draft registration is moral...a draft or draft registration destroys the very values that our society is committed to defending.”*

**-- Ronald Reagan**

### Background

Certain signs point in the direction of a military draft. U.S. Troops are stretched thin across the globe with commitments in hundreds of countries. Many National Guard and Reserve units are being used for tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, and with a continual rise in casualty many GIs are saying that they will not reenlist. Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY), who introduced a conscription bill in order to make the Armed Services equitable, has revived his push for this bill by re-introducing it (H.R. 2723). In the wake of another “national emergency” there will be more serious calls for the return of the draft. Bringing back the draft will make things worse for America, in regard to its military strength and individual freedom.

Conscription will take away the fundamental right to individual freedom. It will transfer power from civil society to the state. As a result, America’s youth will loose control of their destiny to the government.

The Military’s problem of troop retention will worsen under a draft. Retention is a problem even under an “all-volunteer” force. Under conscription, the Armed Services will be filled with people who don’t want to be there.

The “War on Terrorism” requires Elite Forces, not mass conscripts. To fight an elusive enemy, a mass army would be counter-productive.

Conscription has never made the Armed Services more equitable – neither racially nor economically. Throughout the draft during Vietnam, minorities disproportionately served on the front lines. The affluent had, and still have, the means to gain medical deferments, or to get positions that will not place them on the front lines of the battle. The draft will never make the military an equitable force.

The draft has never acted as a deterrent to war, as some believe. While the draft was in effect, the U.S. was involved in numerous wars. In fact, during the Vietnam War conscription ensured a steady flow of bodies into the battlefield.

Another way to avoid a draft is by reforming recruitment tactics. Many recruits, after joining, feel that the recruiter has deceived them. There will not be a troop retention problem if recruitment tactics were reformed.

If there is a proposal for the return of the draft, members of Congress should opt against it for the sake of liberty and individual freedom.