



# Center on Conscience & War

National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors

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## Draft? or No Draft? We Say No!

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On May 26, 2005 Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) renewed his call for the reinstatement of the military draft. Rep. Rangel re-introduced his notorious draft bill from the last Congress under the same name with a new number, the Universal National Service Act of 2005 (H.R. 2723). Additionally, on May 18 Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX) introduced a bill (H.R. 2455) to repeal the Selective Service Act. Paul's bill will eliminate the Selective Service System and give a definite assurance that a draft is truly, not coming back.

Through a press statement released by the his office, Rangel said, "I oppose the war in Iraq, but I support the military and the men and women who serve in it, what is happening now indicates to me that the entire volunteer system is in danger of collapse under the weight of the burden being placed on those who are serving." Rangel goes on to talk about the failure by the Army to meet its recruiting goals during the past several months and he says that a having a draft will solve the quantitative problem of having the right number of people to serve in Iraq and other places. Rep. Rangel also states that officials in the White House will be less likely to go to war if their own children and the children of "CEOs in the boardrooms" were serving. Rangel believes that a military draft will solve the problem of social and class inequity in the military and act as a deterrent to war.

Contrary to Rangel's belief the draft has never and will not act as a deterrent to war. And it will never make the Armed Forces a representative force! People of low income and people of color will continue to serve on the front lines, with or without a draft. The wealthy and the powerful have always been able to exploit the system to avoid being drafted. (Click here to view talking points against the draft)

Rep. Rangel is correct in saying that the military is having a much harder time luring fresh recruits and that the "entire volunteer system is in danger of collapse." However, a military draft is not a way to solve the problem. The United States needs to consider seriously a major shift in its foreign policy and not rush to war.

The good news is that (due to lobbying efforts by CCW and others) H.R. 2723 does not have any original co-sponsors. Rep. Rangel, so far, is the sole sponsor of the bill. Furthermore, Rangel's new bill is less objectionable. It gives better provisions for conscientious objectors than his conscription bill in the previous Congress. CO provision in H.R. 2723 reflects the language that is already in law under the Selective Service Act. Anyone opposed to "participation in war in any form" will be exempt from military service and will be required to perform alternative civilian service.

H.R. 2723 was referred to the Armed Services committee, where it is expected to stay.

The majority of Congressional members are saying that they will not support a draft. Now is the time to reaffirm that. Get in touch with your Congressional member and ask them to co-sponsor the Ron Paul bill (H.R. 2455) and tell them that a draft is **never** a viable option and that there is no such thing as a "fair draft."

[Go to [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) to contact your Representative]

[Go to [www.centeronconscience.org/TalkingPoints/draft.html](http://www.centeronconscience.org/TalkingPoints/draft.html) for Talking Points]