

**The original documents are located in Box D7, folder “Ford Press Releases - Draft, 1967-1969” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

### **Copyright Notice**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. The Council donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

SCRIPT FOR 5TH DISTRICT RADIO STATION TAPE, RECORDED WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 1967

This is your congressman, Jerry Ford, reporting to you from Washington.

Today I'd like to talk with you about a topic which is very much in the news--the Selective Service System, or as we call it, the draft.

The Congress must act by July 1 to extend the present draft law in some form. The present law will expire at midnight June 30.

To help Congress decide what to do about the draft, President Johnson has sent us recommendations based on a study by a presidential commission. The House Armed Services Committee, which will handle the draft legislation, also has received the advice of a study group headed by former Gen. Mark Clark of World War II fame.

There seems to be little disagreement that the draft should be changed so that 19-year-olds are called first. In fact, the President plans to put this change into effect by his own order without waiting for any kind of action by Congress.

The President's draft law proposals are arousing controversy in Congress, however. Most of the argument involves Mr. Johnson's plan to start using a lottery system to pick draftees.

What's wrong with using a lottery system? The President knows it's going to be hard to sell and so he has hung a special name tag on it. He calls it FAIR...

F-A-I-R...for "fair and impartial random," a blind system of selecting young American men for military duty.

Maybe that's just what's wrong with a lottery system of compulsory military service. It's a blind kind of justice that dehumanizes the draft. It's been tried before and it just hasn't worked.



A lottery would blindly take some of the best young brains in the country.

It would take some of the best young farmers in the country. It would take some of the best young workers in the defense industries of the Nation.

The President passed over the question of eliminating local draft boards, as recommended by his presidential commission. But if you have a national lottery system for picking draftees, what will local draft boards have to do?

I think our friends and neighbors have been doing a real good job of handling their draft board chores. They have been performing a very important service. I like the idea of giving a local board the discretion to grant deferments in deserving cases. They know each case because they are familiar with local situations. This is important. It preserves what I call "the human element"

in the draft. I'd hate to see the draft made a purely mechanical, computerized kind of operation. Blind justice can lead to much injustice, it seems to me.

The President also skipped over the subject of deferments for college students.

There is no question the present system of deferments needs tightening up.

College should not become a haven for draft dodgers. For this reason I agree with the President that graduate students should not be deferred unless they are studying medicine or dentistry. However, many of these prospective doctors and dentists under deferment should be required to serve in the Armed Forces after completing their medical and dental training.

I would like to see the day when our Armed Forces are made up entirely of volunteers. Unfortunately, we must keep 3 million 300 thousand men under arms today to carry out our mission in Vietnam and guard the rest of our defense line



around the world. Experience indicates that an entirely volunteer force of men would total no more than about 2 million.

Let us, then, see to it that we are as fair and as sensible as possible in imposing on our young men the military obligation which is required of them as the price of our Nation's freedom. I believe Congress will act in that spirit in revising our draft law in the months ahead.

This is your congressman, Jerry Ford, reporting to you from Washington.

I'll be talking with you again next week over this same station.

###





24 May 1967



U. S. HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES

# REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE

REP. JOHN I. RHODES, (R.-ARIZ.) CHAIRMAN • 140 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING • TELEPHONE 225-6168

## HOUSE REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE STATEMENT ON THE MILITARY SELECTIVE SERVICE ACT OF 1967

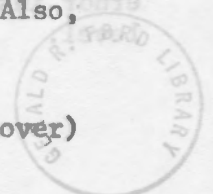
10

We support the Military Selective Service Act of 1967 as it has been amended and reported by the House Committee on Armed Services. This legislation updates and improves the present Selective Service System in a number of important respects.

In addition to extending the present Draft Act and related laws for a period of four years, the committee bill includes the following major provisions:

1. A National Manpower Resources Board is established which in conjunction with the National Security Council will identify those professional, scientific and critical skill areas that justify a draft deferment.
2. Before any change in the existing method of determining the relative order of induction for registrants within the various age groups may be effected, the President is required to advise Congress that such change is in the national interest. The proposed change will become effective after the expiration of a 60-day period unless Congress adopts a resolution rejecting the change.
3. A method of maintaining the authorized strengths of the Reserve and the National Guard is provided.
4. Uniform criteria for future undergraduate college student deferments are established. Students receiving such deferments shall be placed in the prime age group liable for induction after they leave school, receive a degree or attain age 24, whichever occurs first.
5. The President is required to establish, whenever practicable, national criteria for the classification of persons subject to induction. Such criteria shall be administered uniformly by all local boards.
6. Those opposed to participation in war in any form by reason of religious training and belief shall be exempt from service in the Armed Forces. Conscientious objectors will be required, if selected for induction, to perform noncombatant duty or two years of civilian service if they are conscientiously opposed to both combatant and noncombatant training and service.
7. Individuals are prohibited from serving on local or appeal boards after they have completed 25 years of service or attained age 75. Also, women may be appointed to serve on such boards.

(over)



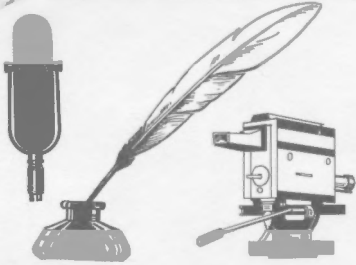
We support the recommendation that the order of call for eligible registrants be revised so that those in the younger age group would be called to active duty first. Under the present system of priorities for induction, the oldest are selected first from the age group of 26 years and under. This system has resulted in considerable uncertainty. An individual classified as available at 18 1/2 remains subject to possible induction until he reaches his 26th birth date. Moreover, the degree of his exposure to induction increases directly with his age and reaches its maximum point on the day before he reaches age 26. The younger men, as a group, are more adaptable to the routines of military training and there are fewer dependents' problems at these ages. Also, a man who is awaiting a draft call has greater difficulty in finding and keeping suitable employment.

We believe that a system of carefully controlled student deferments must be continued. As noted by the American Council on Education, "Students are deferred for the National, not individual interests." If student deferments were abolished, the future supply of doctors, lawyers, college professors, research scientists, graduate engineers and other specialists could be seriously threatened. Moreover, in order to insure a maximum degree of fairness, those receiving student deferments shall not be eligible for another deferment except in extreme hardship cases. And, on termination of the student deferment, the individual shall be immediately liable for induction as a registrant within the prime age group regardless of his actual age.

The proposed National Manpower Resources Board, in conjunction with the National Security Council, will identify those occupations, professions and areas of postgraduate study that are critically required in the national interest and that warrant a deferred status. Under this procedure, the number of deferments presently granted to students engaged in graduate study would be sharply reduced. The board also would identify skilled trade areas critical to the national interest which require continuation of apprenticeship programs. Trainees in such programs would be provided a deferred status similar to that provided college undergraduate students.

In the past, diverse classification actions by local Boards have created certain inequities. The changes in the law embodied in the proposed bill should materially reduce, if not eliminate, this problem. Certainly, the uniform standards for student deferments together with the recommendation that future draft calls concentrate on the younger age group should improve the handling of future registrants. Also, the President is required to establish, wherever practicable, national criteria for the classification of persons subject to induction under the Draft Act.

Although there is an acknowledged need for certain improvements, we believe that the Selective Service System has, for the most part, operated successfully over the last 26 years. The soundness of the system has been proven through its demonstrated ability to meet rapidly fluctuating conditions. During this 26-year period, approximately 14 million men have been inducted into the Armed Services without any adverse effect on the economy of the nation. There has never been a scandal arising out of the administration of this law and there is today public confidence in the basic honesty of the system. The continued use of local Boards and the appointment of individuals to such Boards on the recommendation of the Governor insures that the control of the system shall remain at the local and state level.



CONGRESSMAN  
**GERALD R. FORD**  
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS  
RELEASE**

--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE--  
May 13, 1969

Statement by Rep. Gerald R. Ford, R-Mich., placed in the body of the Congressional Record of Tuesday, May 13, 1969.

In wartime -- and we are at war -- there is no issue more important to a young man and his parents than the draft.

The draft is necessary as long as the Vietnam War continues. It is vital, therefore, that the draft be made as fair as possible. It is also vital that the uncertainty which clouds the lives of young American men under the present Selective Service System be eliminated.

To make the draft fair and to wipe out uncertainty the Congress must reform the present draft law.

President Nixon today has outlined for the Congress the reforms needed to achieve equity and certainty.

The only way to make the draft fair is to spread the risk of induction equally among all who are eligible. The President's proposals would do this.

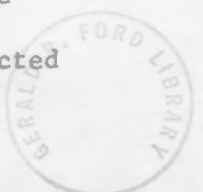
The only way to eliminate uncertainty is to let it be known at an early age whether or not a man has been chosen to serve sometime during his draft-eligible years. The President's reform plan also would do this.

The most important feature of the President's suggested reforms is the plan for choosing by lot those who are actually drafted. Actually, this is the only change which the President does not now have the power to make on his own. It is essential that this power be restored to him, for without this change the others he suggests would not be feasible.

Why not? Imagine for a moment that the President has set up a system in which the prime age group contains younger men and in which each man stays in that vulnerable status for only a one-year period, when he is 19 or 20. How do you then decide who will be called first and who will be called last? Who will be at the top of the draft list and who will be at the bottom? The present law would force the government to list men for this purpose in the order of their birthdates.

Now, suppose that there were 500,000 men available in 1970 but that we only needed 250,000. The only way we could pick out those who would be inducted

(more)



would be to start with those born on January 1, go next to those born on January 2, then take those who were born on January 3 and so on. Everyone born in January and February would always be taken. And no one born in November or December would ever be taken. Those who were born in March and April would run a much, much greater risk each year than those born in September and October.

Now someone will say, "No! We can do it on a month-by-month basis." But once again the same problem arises. And all those born on the first, the second, or the third day of each month would always be called up. Nobody whose birthday is on the 28th or the 29th or the 30th would run a very great risk ever. Moreover, since draft calls are almost always higher in some months than in others, those who happened to have their birthdays in high-call months would be systematically discriminated against.

In the present oldest-first system, these problems are somewhat obscured because everyone who is passed over by the draft during one month or one year moves higher and higher on the list as time passes. But that system has the overwhelming disadvantage of prolonging the time of vulnerability and uncertainty. A youngest-first, limited vulnerability system corrects this evil and, in addition, it provides more easily-trained personnel.

But the only way such a system can work sensibly is if the risk of induction is equally distributed among all who are eligible. This cannot be done unless we change from the order of birthdate system to a random system, as the President proposes.

The draft as it presently operates is terribly disruptive of a young man's life. It generates tensions and divisions within our society. I believe reform of the present Selective Service System as proposed by President Nixon is an absolute necessity.

# # #





U. S. HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES

# REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE

REP. JOHN J. RHODES, (R.-ARIZ.) CHAIRMAN • 1616 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING • TELEPHONE 225-6168

10

91st Congress  
First Session

October 21, 1969  
Statement Number 8

## HOUSE REPUBLICAN POLICY STATEMENT ON SELECTIVE SERVICE REFORM

The House Republican Policy Committee strongly endorses President Nixon's proposals for the reform of the selective service call-up procedures. To implement draft reforms and to facilitate their prompt undertaking, the passage of H.R. 14001 is desirable.

The present draft system contains numerous inequities; it prolongs the disruptive impact on the lives of eligible individuals; it unequally distributes the risk of call among those vulnerable during a given year; and it contains inadequate provisions for proper consideration of college students.

President Nixon has proposed the following alterations to the selective service system:

1. Change from an oldest-first to a youngest-first order of call.

The 19-20 year age group will be identified as the "prime age group" for induction. By concentrating future draft calls on a smaller and younger group of draft registrants, the period of maximum vulnerability will be reduced from seven years to one year. Those who have received deferments or exemptions would rejoin the prime age group at the time their deferment or exemption expired, and would take their places in the sequence as they were originally assigned.

2. Provide maximum nationwide randomizing of call-up risk among eligible individuals. The sequence of induction for those available in the prime age group will be determined by lot, calling registrants by birthdate from a

(over)

"scrambled" calendar. This method of selection would distribute the risk widely and fairly; it would aid a registrant in determining the likelihood of induction; and it would simplify the task of draft boards. The Selective Service Act of 1967, however, prevents the institution of such random selection by the President without specific Congressional authority. The elimination of this prohibition is the purpose of H.R. 14001.

3. Continue limited college deferments to deserving students in selected categories, postponing the period of maximum vulnerability. For men receiving undergraduate deferments the year of maximum vulnerability would come whenever the deferment expired, generally upon completion of their college educations. Graduate students would be deferred for the full academic year during which they were first ordered for induction; graduate students in medical and allied fields, who are subject to a later special draft, would be granted deferment for the full period of their studies.

These new procedures would minimize the impact and maximize the equality of military draft. The reforms are essential and must be implemented as quickly as possible.

Certainly all look forward to that day when military conscription is no longer necessary. Pending, however, the lessening of military requirements, a sufficient number of service volunteers and improved utilization of military manpower, selective service is required. In the interim we must be certain that the system is as equitable and as reasonable as we can make it.

We commend President Nixon for the enlightened revision of the selective service system which he has proposed, and urge that the reforms be effected at the earliest opportunity. To enable the institution of a random selection system, the most critical aspect of the President's total restructuring of draft processes, we urge the enactment of H.R. 14001.