

Statement Opposing the “Automatic” Registration of Individuals for a Possible Military Draft

The organizations listed below oppose the recent change in federal law, buried in the 2026 National Defense Authorization Act, that will result in the Selective Service System (SSS) trying to “automatically” identify, locate, and register men ages 18 through 25 for a future draft.

“Automatic” registration won’t produce an accurate or complete list of potential draftees. But it will increase the likelihood of war and violate the privacy of U.S. citizens and residents. Once implemented, an automatic registration system will deny young men, including conscientious objectors, the opportunity to indicate their opposition to being drafted by opting out of registration.

This change in law was proposed by the SSS because the previous method of relying on men to register themselves with the SSS has, over time, resulted in tens of millions of young men failing to register or report changes of address. The failing record of the self-registration system was underscored when the SSS reported that in 2023 only 39.9 percent of men complied when they reached the mandatory registration age of 18.

While there currently is no active military draft, the SSS is tasked with maintaining the mechanism for one if it is authorized by Congress. Given threats and actions by the Trump administration to intervene militarily in an increasing number of places around the world, it is concerning that, at this time, steps are now being taken to grow the number of people who could be facing the threat of a future draft.

Furthermore, even before a draft is activated, the mere presence of a system to carry it out and enroll men to be involuntarily inducted can encourage politicians and military planners to feel overconfident in planning and carrying out larger and longer wars without having to worry about whether enough people would be willing to fight them. Thus, having a system for a draft in place reduces a critical guard rail for such decisions.

The new “automatic” registration law will give the SSS unprecedented authority, starting in December 2026, to acquire and aggregate information from any other

federal database that might help identify or locate potential draftees. However, whether an individual is required to register depends on factors like their sex as assigned at birth and their immigration and visa status, information that could very well be absent from other federal data sources used by the SSS. Relying on such a wide breadth of federal data sources could, thus, make the SSS database inaccurate and vulnerable to misuse and weaponization, especially against transgender, nonbinary, and immigrant youth.

This potential for weaponization has been starkly demonstrated by recent efforts to grant the Department of State and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services access to the SSS database of registered individuals. The stated purpose for requesting this is to evaluate the eligibility of individuals for U.S. citizenship, but it could also be used to identify immigrants for potential deportation. If implemented, the personal information and privacy of all U.S. citizens and residents would be at risk.

The change to “automatic” registration was enacted with no hearings, no debate, and no budget review. There’s no reason to think that a list constructed from other databases compiled for entirely unrelated purposes will be any more fit for the purpose of provably delivering induction notices than the current “self-registration” list.

In light of these facts, including the failure of the self-registration system, we are calling for Congress to end SSS registration and totally repeal the Military Selective Service Act, for which bi-partisan legislation has been introduced multiple times in the last few years (e.g., S.4881 in 2024 and H.R.2509 in 2022). Lawmakers should act quickly on this issue before federal records are misused and the rights of young men are infringed in an ill-considered attempt to bolster the capacity of the U.S. for endless, unlimited wars.

Statement signers (as of 3/12/26):

- Alliance of Baptists
- American Friends Service Committee
- American Solidarity Party, Indiana Chapter
- Antiwar.com

- Center on Conscience and War
- CODEPINK
- Committee Opposed to Militarism and the Draft (COMD)
- Episcopal Peace Fellowship
- Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR-USA)
- Franciscan Action Network
- Friends Committee on Legislation of California (FCLCA)
- Friends Committee on National Legislation
- Friends of Swazi Freedom
- International Peace Research Association
- Jewish CO Project
- Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
- Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
- Military Law Task Force of the National Lawyers Guild
- National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth (NNOMY)
- Pacific Yearly Meeting, Peace and Social Action Committee (Quakers)
- Pax Christi USA
- Planet VS Pentagon
- Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
- Project on Youth and Non-Military Opportunities (Project YANO)
- Quaker House of Fayetteville
- Resisters.info
- Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity
- Southern California Quarterly Meeting Peace & Social Concerns Committee, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
- Syracuse Cultural Workers
- The Libertarian Institute
- The Peace and Justice Studies Association
- The Truth Project (Palm Beach County, FL)
- United Church of Christ
- Veterans for Peace
- Veterans for Peace Chapter 112, Ventura County, CA

- Veterans for Peace, Phil Berrigan Chapter, Baltimore, MD
- War Resisters League
- WeAreNotYourSoldiers.org
- Winsted Area Peace Action
- Women's International League for Peace and Freedom U.S.
- World BEYOND War