

On Reinstating the Draft

Much has been made by the new administration of the idea of national service and volunteerism. While service to one's community is certainly admirable, it is not the federal government's place to "encourage" or promote volunteerism. Moreover, there are troubling signs that national service could transition from voluntary to mandatory, or de facto mandatory, such as the requirement of service in order to be granted a diploma, or something along those lines.

Involuntary servitude was supposed to be abolished by the 13th Amendment, but things like Selective Service and the income tax make me wonder how serious we really are in defending just basic freedom. The income tax enslaves workers for nearly 4 months out of a year by garnishing what amounts to all their wages in that period of time. A military draft could demand your very life, without your consent. This should be unthinkable in a free society.

Proponents of reinstating the draft claim it is needed to protect liberty from enemies abroad. But what about the enemies of liberty right here at home? I am convinced that there are more threats to American liberty within the 10 mile radius of my office on Capitol

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Proponents of reinstating the draft claim it is needed to protect liberty from enemies abroad. But what about the enemies of liberty right here at home? I am convinced that there are more threats to American liberty within the 10 mile radius of my office on Capitol

Hill than there are on the rest of the globe. If we would get our troops off of foreign soil, those perceived enemies of our liberty abroad are much more likely to stand down and let us be. We have more than enough troops to mind our own business and defend ourselves. It is only for world domination that we have a troop shortage.

Nevertheless, some think recruiting for our military is too low and that the younger generation will not answer the call of duty willingly, and must be drafted by force. I take extreme exception to this characterization of young people today. First of all, I believe they correctly see that foreign policy, as unpopular as it has been under Bush, is not significantly changing under Obama, and has little, if anything, to do with defending the United States, and certainly not the Constitution. Second, many see friends and acquaintances who have voluntarily enlisted, and have taken note of how the soldier, the veteran is treated. Perhaps rather than blaming younger generations for being selfish, older generations should remember their promises to those who volunteer for military service and be mindful of how they are treated. Every homeless vet by the side of the road, every suicide, every report of substandard conditions in veteran hospitals is a sign of how we let our military down. Perhaps we should look to those

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issues if we have problems with military recruitment, rather than to trample freedom in the name of protecting it.

If that is not enough reason, consider that most in the military are against a draft. There is a vast difference between serving alongside another volunteer, and serving alongside a reluctant conscript. Americans need to be on the lookout for any propaganda trying to ease us back into the draft. Too often a flawed foreign policy prompts the need for a draft. Abolishing the Selective Service is one thing we could do to counter those efforts.

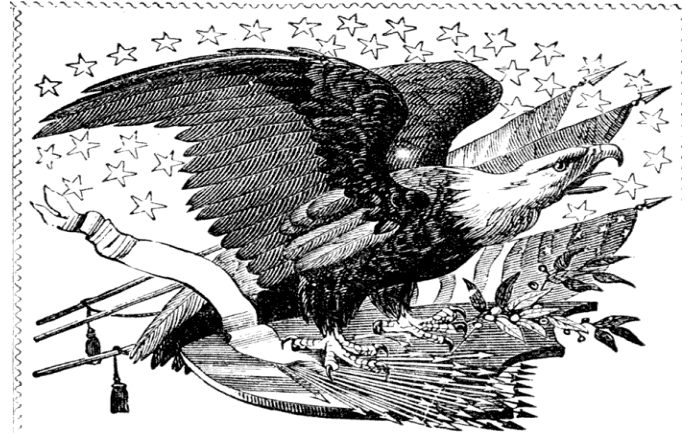
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"Here sir, the people govern." Alexander Hamilton

February 16, 2009



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