

October 28, 2022

Dear Members of Congress,

As the U.S. House and Senate prepare for passage of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, we write to urge that it remain free of any requirement that young women—ages 18 to 25 years old—register with Selective Service for a possible future draft. When the House passed the NDAA this summer, it notably excluded such a requirement. However, the Senate NDAA currently would require women to register for the Selective Service. As such, the groundwork for drafting our daughters is mere months away from becoming law without further action.

We commend Senators Josh Hawley (Missouri), Ted Cruz (Texas), Tom Cotton (Arkansas), Mike Lee (Utah), Marco Rubio (Florida), Roger Marshall (Kansas), Steve Daines (Montana), John Boozman (Arkansas), and James Lankford (Oklahoma) for pursuing an amendment to remove the provision from the Senate NDAA.

Women are ever increasing in number in the ranks of our volunteer military system. We appreciate their calling to the armed forces and are grateful for their service. But Selective Service obligations, including a possible future draft of young women, compromises the welfare of those drafted as well as national security. Independent of the merits of the Selective Service today, it is simply our position that the case for registering for and expanding the Selective Service has not been made. Such a measure cannot become law in the lame duck for passage outside of voters' notice. Last year's successful advocacy by families and legislators to stop the effort to draft our daughters in the NDAA for FY 2022 shows that such a move could not take place without electoral consequences.

The since-disbanded National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service supports women in the draft.<sup>1</sup> And it has been said that women, even if drafted, would not be forced into combat.<sup>2</sup> But the Commission's superficial notions of equity and the expansion of the Selective Service will only create new problems. No part of the Senate NDAA prevents women from being forced into combat. This is despite the fact that years of trials with the Army Combat Fitness Test, for instance, revealed stark differences between men and women's physical capacity for combat,<sup>3</sup> making it necessary for the Army to abandon previous promises that the ACFT would

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<sup>1</sup> "Inspired to Serve," National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service (March 2020), <https://tinyurl.com/Inspired2Serve>.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Barnes, "Biden administration asks Supreme Court not to hear challenge to all-male military draft," Washington Post (April 15, 2021), [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/courts\\_law/supreme-court-military-draft-biden/2021/04/15/0b80c0b4-9d88-11eb-b7a8-014b14aeb9e4\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/courts_law/supreme-court-military-draft-biden/2021/04/15/0b80c0b4-9d88-11eb-b7a8-014b14aeb9e4_story.html).

<sup>3</sup> Marlene Lenthag, "Leaked Army document reveals 84 percent of women have FAILED the new rigorous combat fitness test, slated to become the official physical exam in 2020," Daily Mail (Oct. 8, 2019), <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7551489/Leaked-Army-document-reveals-84-percent-women-FAILED-new-combat-fitness-test.html>.

be sex-neutral. Moreover, a 3-year Marine Corps study showed that all-male units outperformed mixed-sex units in 69% of combat tasks (93 of 134).<sup>4</sup>

Women are full and equal citizens, and women are capable. Requiring women to register for the Selective Service confers no new access to equality. Such action only puts women in the pipeline for combat if our country ever faces a national security crisis demanding a draft. The NDAA for FY 2023 must not include “Draft Our Daughters” language. We strongly oppose any legislation that would have the same effect.

Sincerely,

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<sup>4</sup> Eyder Peralta, “Marine Corps Study: All-Male Combat Units Performed Better Than Mixed Units,” NPR (Sept. 10, 2015), <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/09/10/439190586/marine-corps-study-finds-all-male-combat-units-faster-than-mixed-units>.