

# The Draft Debate

Questions of the Day: Should there be a military draft in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

---

**IMPORTANT:** You can have several activities in 1 lesson. If you identify a resource (URL, File, Ed Tech Tool) in the procedure section, be sure to name the file or URL name within the Materials and Preparation section the same name as seen in the Activities section. Otherwise, we will not understand where the file or URL needs to be linked/uploaded. If we do not understand what you would like us to do, we will send the lesson plan back for clarification.

---

## Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Analyze the effects of fiscal policy on a nation's productivity
- Examine the costs and benefits of a military draft

## Time

60-75 minutes

## National Standards in Economics or Personal Finance

- 2. To determine the optimal level of a public policy program, voters and government officials must compare the marginal benefits and marginal costs of providing a little more or a little less of the program's services.
- 3. To compare marginal benefits with marginal costs that are realized at different times, benefits and costs must be adjusted to reflect their values at the time a decision is made about them. The adjustment reflects expected returns to investment compounded over time.

## Materials and Preparation

- Visual 10.1 – Costs and Benefits of Military Draft T-Chart
- Visual 10.2- Assessment Statements and Questions
- Handout 10.1 – Against the Draft
- Handout 10.2- For Military Service
- Handout 10.3- Group Response Questions
- Pencils (1 per student)
- Document Camera or Projector
- Critical Choices: A Volunteer Military or a Draft? Video from Izzit.org (14 minutes)

## Activities

1. Ask students:

What is a military draft? (*compulsory enrollment into military service*)

When was the last time the United States used the draft to fulfill military service positions? (*Vietnam War*)

Can the draft still be used today? (*Yes. The U.S. Government requires all men living in the U.S. between the ages of 18-25 to register with the Selective Service System so that the government can be ready in case a need for the draft comes up again.*)

2. Watch "Critical Choices: A Volunteer Military or a Draft?" from izzit.org. (Note: This is a free video you can request from their website, or you can view it on their Youtube channel.)
3. Display Visual 10.1: Costs and Benefits of a Military Draft T-Chart. Ask students to brainstorm and state the benefits and costs of a military draft and record them on the visual.
4. Divide the class into 4 equal groups. Give two groups Handout 10.1 and two groups Handout 10.2

5. Give the students time to read silently or out-loud their respective handouts.
6. Have each of the 4 groups select one spokesperson and one recorder. Distribute one copy of Handout 10.3 to each group and have them complete together.
7. Select one spokesperson from each side to share Handout 10.3 and their findings with the class.
8. Explain to the students that these proposals were both introduced after September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. One clearly opposes the military draft and the other calls for mandatory military training/service and national service for objectors.
9. Ask the students:

Some economists have proposed to let the military services compete in the labor market for volunteers- to let the price system work as a voluntary service. What would be the benefits and costs of doing this? *(Benefits- efficiency of labor input, possible lower labor turnover costs due to increased reenlistment, increased motivation resulting in an increase in productivity. Costs- misallocations of resources, reduced productivity in civilian and military sectors, distortion of the pattern of investment in human capital and family planning decisions).*

### Assessment

Ask the students the following:

- How does the military draft impact productivity in society? *(It depends on whom is drafted and their motivations. It could increase or decrease overall productivity in society.)*
- Would it be to the military's advantage to continue to enlist a strictly volunteer force or reinstate the draft? Would it depend at all on other factors? *(Answers may vary.)*

*OPTIONAL READING: "The Wrong Man In Uniform" by Bruce Kerry Chapman or "On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation" by David Ricardo*

How do you get best output for society? Have students select one statement on Visual 10.2 to respond to by either creating a T-Chart of costs and benefits in response to their chosen statement or writing a one-page response in support or rebuttal to their statement. Schedule time for students to present their findings and conclusions to the class.

Benefits of Military Draft	Costs of Military Draft

--	--

Assessment Statements and Questions- Visual 10.2

According to law, every 18-25 year-old male living in the United States must register with the Selective Service. Do you think females should also have to register?

The military draft system discriminates against the low educated, low income and underprivileged members of society.

The United States Government should create a national service program under which every young person would be requested to serve in some capacity, not necessarily the military.

In order to recruit more members into the All Volunteer Force, we need to pay each service member at minimum \$100,000 annually.

Against Military Draft-Handout 10.1

*H.CON.RES.368, introduced on March 20, 2002 by Rep. Ron Paul ® and co-sponsored by Rep John Conyers, Jr. (D), Rep John J. Duncan, J ®, Jr. , Rep Cynthia McKinney (D), Rep George Miller (D), Rep Patsy Mink (D), and Rep Pete Fornay Stark (D):*

*BACKGROUND: The title of the bill states "Expressing the sense of Congress that reinstating the military draft or implementing any other form of compulsory military service in the United States would be detrimental to the long-term military interests of the United States, violative of individual liberties protected by the Constitution, and inconsistent with the values underlying a free society as expressed in the Declaration of Independence."*

*On March 20, 2002 the bill was referred to the House Armed Services Committee, and on April 5, to the Subcommittee on Military Personnel. No further action was taken.*

The text of the resolution reads:

Whereas the Armed Forces have successfully fulfilled the military needs of the United States for almost 30 years solely on the basis of voluntary service;

Whereas the Department of Defense issued a report in 1993 titled 'A Review of the Continued Requirement for Draft Registration', which stated that draft registration could be suspended without irreparable damage to national security;

Whereas each branch of the Armed Forces has traditionally been able to meet or exceed its recruitment targets;

Whereas the recent success of the Armed Forces in Afghanistan has once again demonstrated the ability of the volunteer military to respond to threats to the lives, liberty, and property of the people of the United States;

Whereas a military draft introduces tensions and rivalries between those who volunteer for military service and those who have been conscripted, thus undermining the cohesiveness of military units, which is vital to military effectiveness;

Whereas those individuals who are forced to serve in the military are unlikely to choose the military as a career or to share the same enthusiasm for military service as those who volunteer;

Whereas the most effective method of meeting the personnel needs of the Armed Forces is to increase the pay and benefits of veterans and members of the Armed Forces; ....

Whereas the reinstatement of the military draft in the United States is opposed by leaders and organizations of various political affiliations, including former President Ronald Reagan, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, Noble laureates Milton Friedman and James Buchanan, former Senator Bill Bradley, the American Civil Liberties Union, Minnesota Governor and former Navy SEAL, Jesse Ventura, Americans for Tax Reform, the National Taxpayers Union, Citizens Against Government Waste, the Friends Committee on National Legislation, United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society, Veterans for Peace, the Libertarian Party, the Mennonite Church, and the Conservative Caucus;

Whereas the military draft violates the principles of liberty on which the United States was founded; and

Whereas compulsory military service is a form of involuntary servitude: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that reinstating the military draft or implementing any other form of compulsory military service in the United States would be detrimental to the long-term military interests of the United States, violative of individual liberties protected by the Constitution, and inconsistent with the values underlying a free society as expressed in the Declaration of Independence.



*H.R. 3598, The Universal Military Training and Service Act of 2001, introduced by Republicans Smith of Michigan and Weldon of Pennsylvania on December 28, 2001 and later referred to the House Committee on Armed Services and the Subcommittee on Military Personnel. Rep Roscoe Bartlett ® is a co-sponsor:*

*BACKGROUND: The Title of the bill states it is "To require the induction into the Armed Forces of young men registered under the Military Selective Service Act, and to authorize young women to volunteer, to receive basic military training and education for a period of up to one year."*

Here is the official summary of the bill:

Makes it the obligation of male citizens and residents between 18 and 22 to receive basic military training and education as a member of the armed forces unless otherwise exempt under this Act. Permits female citizens and residents between such ages to volunteer for enlistment in the armed forces, with acceptance at the discretion of the Secretary of the military department concerned. Limits the period of training to between six months and a year. Permits transfers after basic training of such conscripts/volunteers to national and community service programs to finish the term of service. Provides educational services and Montgomery GI benefits to persons upon completion of their national service.

Uses the existing Selective Service System and local boards for induction. Sets forth criteria for deferments, postponements, and exemptions, including high school, hardship, disability, and health.

Entitles inductees to request a particular service branch. Excludes conscientious objectors from combatant training, but otherwise requires them to take basic training before a permitted transfer to a national service program.



Names:

**Directions:** After reading your respective legislative proposal, answer the following questions as a group:

1. Which side of the military draft debate is your legislative proposal siding with?
2. What reasons do they state that supports their side?
3. Would you change or add anything to this proposal? If so, what?

4. What do you think the opponents of this argument would say in rebuttal to this legislative proposal?