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Unfortunately, if you don't register and you're not rich, finishing college will probably take you longer. It's up to you to decide what's more important. Don't forget that students will not be exempt from the draft!

## Warning Letters are Junk Mail

You'll probably get letters from the SS telling you to register, or saying your name has been sent to the Justice Department for "investigation and, if appropriate, prosecution." Don't believe them. These letters look official, but they're only junk mail. The SS sends millions of these letters to lists of people it gets from the IRS, drivers' licenses, and business mailing lists (including members of an ice-cream parlour's birthday club). If you ignore these letters, the SS will add your name to the millions of other "possible nonregistrants" that the Justice Department refuses to prosecute. None of these people have been prosecuted.

Everybody who was prosecuted was sent at least two certified letters offering them another "last chance" to register late. The return receipts they signed for these letters have been used as evidence against them in court. (The government must prove you knew you were supposed to register, which isn't as easy as it sounds.)

Do not sign for any certified letters from the SS, the Department of Justice, or a U.S. Attorney. See a draft counselor or a lawyer immediately.

Even people selected for prosecution have been encouraged to register late. If they registered before they were actually indicted, the case was dropped and nothing more happened.

Nothing has happened to over 99% of all nonregistrants.

Think about this before you register: since the start of registration in 1980, a soldier's chances of being killed in combat have been many times higher than a nonregistrant's chances of going to prison. And most of this time has been "peacetime"!

## What Do You Believe?

Deciding whether to register or to resist isn't easy. This may be the most difficult and important decision you have faced, and it's not a choice anybody else can make for you. Talk to a draft counselor, your friends and family, and other people whom you respect.

Get as much information as you can before you decide. Don't be pressured into making a hasty decision. Remember: you have until you are 26 to make up your mind whether to register.

**It's your life.  
Don't sign it away.**

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Resisters.info

*This leaflet and more are at:  
<http://www.resisters.info>  
Updated February 2005.*

# Draft Registration Is No Joke!

**Registration is a tough decision.  
It's not quick. It's not easy. And  
it could cost you your life.**

## Don't Register For War

**We've chosen not to register for  
the draft. We wrote this leaflet to  
share some of our reasons for not  
registering, and to give you some  
information about draft  
registration that the government  
won't tell you.**

## **Will the Draft Come Back?**

Politicians like those who started registration in 1980 still want the draft. They will try to use any "crisis" as an excuse. If Congress approves a draft, the Selective Service (SS) has claimed it could start drafting people on 10 days' notice.

You probably wouldn't be reading this if you believed that "It's only registration." The reason we "only" have registration, and not a draft, is that so many of us have resisted registration. We have made the government afraid to draft us.

Many people who registered have told us they regret it, and wish they could "un-register." Many of these people will resist the draft if they are called. But resistance is harder if you've already registered or gone into the military.

Whether or not there will be a draft depends on whether we continue to resist registration. As you decide whether or not to register, you and your friends are helping decide whether Congress will dare to bring back the draft.

## **What will you do if you register and there is a draft?**

Many people think they won't have to go to war because they are conscientious objectors (COs). A CO is someone who registers, convinces his draft board that he "opposes war in any form," and does unarmed military duty or poorly-paid civilian "alternative" work instead of fighting.

If you're planning to try for CO status, and you want to help prevent a draft or a war from happening, you might want to think twice about registering. A conservative think-tank reported that the SS wants to "accommodate with minimum divisiveness those who would seek CO status." The government gives COs special status within the system to keep them busy, quiet, and helpless to resist a war.

COs have to register first, and then take their chances with a draft board. Many genuine COs won't get CO status, or will "conscientiously object" to their alternative service jobs. You can't "un-register" if your CO claim is denied. But if you don't register now, you can always change your mind, register late, and try for CO status if you get an induction notice. Conscientious Objection is not an easy way to beat the draft.

You should talk to a draft counselor if you have questions about conscientious objection or resistance. Whatever you do, you won't be alone. All over the country, people are finding ways to oppose registration and the draft.

## **What About the Law?**

Since 1980, more than a million people have refused to register. Millions more have broken the draft laws in other ways (by not reporting address changes, not giving their Social Security numbers, or encouraging others to refuse to register).

The government tried to enforce registration and failed. Nobody has been indicted for refusing to register since 1986. The government couldn't prosecute 1,000,000 people anyway. Instead, they used a few token trials to try to intimidate us. But in cities where trials were held, the registration rates went down, not up.

People who are quiet about resistance have been safe. 19 of the 20 nonregistrants who were prosecuted since 1980 were outspoken public advocates of resistance. They usually wrote letters to SS saying they wouldn't register. The 20th man indicted didn't speak English, didn't know he was supposed to register, and was indicted by mistake. The government dropped the charges in embarrassment.

Even for those of us who speak out publicly, the risk is small. Thousands of people publicized their resistance, but only 19 of them were indicted.

Most people do register eventually. But often they register several years late, when they are too old to be drafted anyway. People who register are supposed to notify Selective Service whenever they move, but most people don't. If the SS can't find you, they can't draft you. In one test, the SS could find fewer than 1 out of every 4 registrants!

## **Jobs, Training, and Financial Aid**

Anyone who wants Federal student grants or loans, job training, or certain Federal jobs must sign a statement saying that they registered, or (for men born before 1960 and for women) that they don't have to register. There are other ways to pay for an education, but many students find it hard to resist these loyalty oaths. Some people refuse to sign the statements, whether or not they registered, while others have simply lied. Only one student has been prosecuted for falsely claiming he had registered; several have been forced to pay back their aid money.

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