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Women Should Not Be Drafted

Testimony by Phyllis Schlafly
To the House Armed Services Committee,
Military Personnel Subcommittee, March 5, 1980

My name is Phyllis Schlafly of Alton, Illinois. I am here representing the Coalition Against Drafting Women, a coalition of Congressional, military, religious, and organizational leaders opposed to the drafting and the draft registration of women. I am the mother of four sons and two daughters, all of draft age or close to it.

I speak against the draft registration of young women. It is contrary to American traditions, laws, morals, and the wishes of the majority of the American people. It is contrary to the Judeo-Christian culture which honors and respects women in their role as wives and mothers. It is irrational because it treats as fungibles men and women, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, which they certainly are not.

Draft registration of young women is unnecessary because America has 16 million young men between the ages of 18 and 26, and there is no conceivable need for anywhere near that many in the armed services. It would reduce the military strength of the armed forces at a time when we need to increase it. It is an emotionally divisive issue which will tear this country apart to a far greater extent even than the Vietnam War.

During the lifetime of the members of this Committee, American mothers and fathers have sent their sons off to battle in three wars. They didn't like it, but they did it from patriotic motives. But American mothers and fathers are not willing for their daughters to be treated the same way.

The purpose of the armed forces is to defend the United States against its enemies. In order to achieve that goal, members of the armed forces are taught to kill and to be brutal and victorious in combat with potential enemies. We don't want our

daughters taught to kill. Women's mission is to participate in the creation of life, not in destroying it. We expect our servicemen to be tough enough to defend us against any enemy — and we want our women to be feminine and human enough to transform our servicemen into good husbands, fathers, and citizens upon their return from battle.

We don't want our daughters subjected to the army environment where there is little or no privacy, where the rape rate is considerably higher than in civilian life, where there is open toleration of immoral sex, where 15 percent of servicewomen become pregnant, and where illegitimate births receive equal honor and financial rewards with legitimate births.

We don't want our daughters treated like men, which is the policy of the armed forces today ever since the separate women's corps were abolished. And we don't want our daughters subject to the sexual abuse which is a frequent reality, as witness the recent hearings on this subject.

I offer as an exhibit and ask to have printed with my testimony two pictures from the newspaper called SSAM, pages 1 and 8-9, which is published by the U.S. Department of Defense. A picture speaks a thousand words. These pictures show how the Defense Department views our daughters in battle. The mothers and fathers of America are not willing to expose their daughters to that kind of treatment. It is bad enough to know that GI Joe is already thinking in these terms in the unisex army now. But to conscript our daughters to titillate their sexual fantasies is religiously, morally, culturally, and socially intolerable.

We all know that, regrettably, there are some women who like to display their bodies for the

lustful eyes of men. The April *Playboy* Magazine features a layout of nude servicewomen: one Marine, three from the Navy, one from the Air Force, and two from the Army. Other national publicity was given to the female soldier who danced nude in a local bar during her off-duty hours.

Some have tried to say that only registration is proposed, not the drafting of women. But it would be wastefully expensive and ridiculous to register millions of young women if there were no purpose in doing so. That would make no sense. We are justified in concluding that the registration of young women would be like being a little pregnant: nine months later, the call-ups would come — after the election, of course.

Noncombat Only?

Some have tried to say that women should be registered for noncombat jobs only. This Committee knows that the Administration and leading feminist organizations are already on record in your hearings of last November as saying they *want* to assign women in combat, and as asking for the repeal of the laws which exempt women from military combat duty. So we have a right to disbelieve the Administration about the combat issue. In any event, we certainly are not willing to deliver our daughters into the clutches of an Administration that talks out of both sides of its mouth on this issue.

“Combat” has become a joker word for which the definition is constantly changing. Since this Committee has refused to repeal the laws which exempt women from military combat, the armed services keep redefining “combat” so now it means only “close combat.” Just pick up any newspaper or magazine and you will see graphic pictures and descriptions of servicewomen doing jobs and serving in units where they will surely be casualties if war breaks out. In any event, the American people do not want our daughters conscripted to defend the Persian Gulf whether the job is classified as “combat” or “non-combat.”

Have we sunk so low that that men of America are willing to send their daughters and sisters and wives out to fight for them — in the Persian Gulf, or wherever we face a crisis? I don't believe it. I agree with General William Westmoreland that “Any man of gumption doesn't want women fighting the battles of this country.”

The only reason we are discussing the idea of draft registration of women is because a strident minority of women, who have great access to the media and high non-elected positions in the federal government, have been demanding that women be treated just like men, and that gender

be removed as a basis for all decisions. But that proposition isn't rational when it comes to the military.

Men and Women Not Fungibles

Many of the problems the military now faces are due to acquiescence in that irrational principle. Servicewomen are not fungible with servicemen because, on the average, women have only 60 percent of the physical strength of men, and it is unfair to all concerned to pretend that the difference does not exist. Motherhood is not fungible with fatherhood, and it is unfair to all concerned to turn the army into a maternity ward and a nursery in the vain pretense that pregnancy isn't any different from other disabilities.

When it comes to the draft, the gender difference is even more compelling. Our daughters are not fungibles with our sons. The drafting of wives is not a fungible with the drafting of husbands. The drafting of mothers is not fungible with the drafting of fathers. There is a different role for males and females and it must start with *not* registering women.

Our young women have a constitutional right to be treated like American ladies, with the respect and the chivalry that ladies are accorded in the Judeo-Christian culture, and which women, wives, mothers and widows are accorded under our fabric of American family law. Our young women have the right to be feminine, to get married, to build families, and to have homes. Our daughters should not be deprived of rights which every American woman has enjoyed since our country was born just because a handful of women, unhappy with their gender, want to be treated like men.

We agree with the National Catholic Conference that “We oppose both the registration and the conscription of women. The past practice of making military service an option for women, but not an obligation, has served us well as a society. We do not see good reasons for changing this practice.”

It is a self-evident truth that the entire experience of recorded history teaches that battles are not won by using female troops. The draft registration of women would send a tremendous signal of weakness to the world. It would tell the world that we are reducing the combat-readiness of our troops to the physical strength of the average female. Worse, it would tell the world that we are more interested in social experimentation and in appeasing political pressure groups than in building a fighting force which can defend America. We cannot allow that to happen, for the sake of the survival of America.

Women Should Not Be Drafted

Testimony of Kathleen Teague to the Defense and International Affairs Task Force of the House Budget Committee, February 20, 1980

I am Kathleen Teague, a resident of Springfield, Virginia. I am the founder and president of a public relations firm, M.K. Teague and Company and currently serve as the Executive Director of the American Legislative Exchange Council, a national organization of State Legislators.

Today, I am honored to appear here on behalf of Eagle Forum, a national pro-family membership organization with 50,000 members and the newly-founded National Coalition Against Drafting Women. Our new Coalition was announced at a press conference here in Washington on February 1 and is a coalition of Congressional, military, religious and organization leaders who strongly oppose any plan to register and draft women for service in the U.S. Military.

During the last few weeks the National Coalition Against Drafting Women has organized a massive petition drive all across America. Already we have collected over 200,000 signatures to Congress opposing the registration and drafting of women and I've brought some of the petitions with me today.

Some of the National Coalition members include General John K. Singlaub, U.S. Army, Retired, former Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army Forces Command; General Lewis W. Walt, U.S. Marine Corps, Retired, and former Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps; Brig. General Andrew J. Gatsis, U.S. Army, Retired; and General Daniel Graham, retired Chief of the Defense Intelligence Agency.

The Coalition also includes many national religious leaders like fundamentalist Baptist Minister Jerry Falwell of Lynchburg, Virginia; Mrs. Winky LeFils, Chairman of the 11-million member National Council of Catholic Women and Rabbi Herman Neuberger representing the Orthodox Jewish Community and Agudeth Israel of America.

Many national pro-family leaders and organizations have joined the National Coalition Against Drafting Women including Phyllis Schlafly, Chairman of the National Stop ERA, which has led the so-far successful defeat of the proposed Equal Rights Amendment; the Conservative Caucus, The Moral Majority, Family America, and Young Americans for Freedom.

Such distinguished Members of Congress as Richard Ichord and Marjorie Holt have also joined

the Coalition.

During the entire 200 year history of the United States, through nine wars, we have never drafted even one woman. Even during the Second World War, when we were fighting powerful enemies on two fronts, it was not necessary to register or draft one single woman.

Now there are approximately 2.1 million people in the armed forces. At the height of the Vietnam War there were 2.8 million. If we were to increase our military to the level it was during the Vietnam War, we would have to draft less than a million men. With 16 million draft-age (18-26) men today, we would have to draft less than 1/16 of those available. Even during the height of World War II, there were 5 million in the military. If the United States were to be engaged today in a War of the magnitude of World War II, we would need to draft only 3/16 of the available manpower reserve.

Today the United States has a greater percentage (8%) of females in the military than any other nation of its size in the world. In the Soviet Army, which is 4 million strong, only a fraction of a percent of the army is female. Even in Israel, where there is a severe manpower shortage, women comprise only 10% of the army. We must remember, though, that tiny Israel has a total population of less than 3 million, while ours is 219 million.

Women are treated very differently from men in the Israeli Armed Forces. All draftees in Israel learn to fire a gun and jump over obstacles, but for women, this basic training is essentially academic. Women have not fought in the army since the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

Artificial Issue

Registering and drafting women is an artificial and irrelevant response to an artificial need. Moreover, supporters of drafting women have portrayed a totally non-existent interest among American women to serve in our military. Of the 65 million adult career-age women in the United States, only 160,000 have even chosen a military career. Therefore, only 2/10th of the one percent of career-age women in the United States have chosen the military.

There are already more women in the Army than it can use effectively. Volunteer women in

the Army choose traditional roles, not jobs traditionally performed by men. Eighty-five percent of all enlisted women choose only 10 of the 31 classifications open to women. Of course, if women are drafted, they would be forced into the non-traditional roles which volunteer servicewomen are doing their best to avoid.

Commenting recently on this aspect of women in the military, a member of your Task Force, Congresswoman Marjorie Holt said, "I oppose the drafting of women. At present 95 percent of the military occupational specialties are open to women and we are recruiting enough capable women to perform in these classifications. We do not anticipate recruiting problems in the future. The military manpower shortages occur in combat arms billets and it is the national policy to exclude women from combat arms."

Women In Military Now

It should be pointed out that servicewomen and servicemen receive equal pay, equal rank, and equal fringe benefits (education, housing, retirement, etc.). But the women now have a priceless benefit: they are exempted from combat duty.

Currently, servicewomen have twice as much lost time as men. When pregnancy is added to these figures, females have three times as much lost time as males: 15% of women in the army are pregnant; 6.1% deliver their babies and remain in the army; 5.3% have abortions; 4.3% are voluntarily separated. The armed forces are not permitted to discharge pregnant servicewomen. They are instead issued maternity uniforms.

The turnover rates in the military show a big difference between men and women: 68% of career servicemen reenlist; but only 48% of career women reenlist. The attrition rate is significantly higher for women than for men: 42% of the women drop out compared with 24% of the men with the same qualifications. Physical standards have been lowered to accommodate women's lower physical abilities. The average woman has only 60 percent of the physical strength of the average man.

Just recently the Secretary of the Air Force and the Secretary of the Navy expressed personal opinions that, for the present and foreseeable future, there is no clear military need for including women in a registration program. The Secretary of the Army and the Deputy Secretary of Defense expressed different views. In fact, the Deputy Secretary of Defense stated that the Department of Defense has "no position" on the issue of registration of women.

Clearly, there is no immediate need for greater numbers of women and there is considerable

doubt as to whether any future mobilization plan would require such additional numbers that would justify a registration plan for women.

I am proud that my Senator, John Warner, has recently joined the growing ranks of those in Congress strongly opposing any plan to register or draft women. As the former Secretary of the Navy currently serving on the Senate Armed Services Committee and Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel, Senator Warner's advice deserves serious consideration: "A determination by the Commander-in-Chief of America's military that women and men should be treated equally for the purposes of registration is a landmark Presidential decision with far reaching implications. Congress rightfully has an obligation to proceed with utmost caution. The President's message to Congress of January 22 clearly implied that the purpose for reviving registration now is to prepare for any draft that may become necessary. Consequently, it would be a senseless waste of taxpayers' money and an invasion of privacy of millions of women to require their registration unless it is President Carter's further intention that women are to be treated equally with men in any future draft."

Conclusion

Registering and drafting women would be a tremendous signal of weakness to our enemies. Drafting women would reduce the combat-readiness of our armed forces.

As General John K. Singlaub, the former Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army Forces Command, has said, "The armed forces of the United States should not be used for social experimentation. That would only lower our national security in a time of military crisis and send a signal of weakness to the rest of the world."

I will conclude my testimony by again quoting your distinguished member, Mrs. Marjorie Holt, "No civilized nation has used women in combat and I believe that this is based on sound reasoning. The ultimate mission of the military is to defend our nation and not to meet some vaguely defined social goals . . . National security must be the final arbiter of our military policies."

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