

Eagle Forum Report

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Ideas That Harm

DO NOT ‘GENDER-NORM’ THE U.S. MILITARY

by Elaine Donnelly, the founder and president of the Center for Military Readiness, an independent, non-partisan public policy organization that reports on and analyzes military/social issues.

A major reason why the Equal Rights Amendment went down to defeat was the “Draft Our Daughters” issue — whether Selective Service should register young women for a possible future draft on the same basis as men.

ERA was never ratified, but members of the Senate Armed Services Committee repeatedly have tried to impose Selective Service obligations on young women, usually with surprise “Draft Our Daughters” legislation sprung behind closed doors. Now comes a new version, and it still is unacceptable.

In June, the House passed its version of the annual National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2025. The House defense bill included an innocuous-sounding provision to make Selective Service registration of draft-age men, 18-26, automatic.

Then SASC Chairman Jack Reed (D-RI) sponsored NDAA legislation mandating automatic registration of not just men, but *all persons* of draft age living in the United States and subject to Selective Service law. (Report on S. 4638, Sec. 598-598D)

Chairman Reed apparently “sweetened” the anti-women “Draft

Our Daughters” proposal with a trade-off to gain more votes. Sec. 529B of the SASC bill purports to exempt female draftees from being “*compelled to join combat roles that were closed to women prior to Dec. 3, 2015 . . .*”

This “combat carve-out” was a false promise that should not have fooled anyone, but three Republican Senators, Dan Sullivan (AK), Tommy Tuberville (AL), and Markwayne Mullin (OK) apparently bought it anyway. (Requests for explanations produced none.)

The Senate Committee approved “Draft Our Daughters,” with its bogus combat carve-out, by a vote of 16-9. Negotiations will consolidate the House and Senate bills behind closed doors, and final votes will come after September 9. Even if Republicans win in November, anything could happen in the lame-duck session.

A Combat Carve-Out is Bogus

Direct ground combat units, such as the infantry, attack the enemy with deliberate offensive action. If Congress wants to exempt women from direct ground combat assignments, they should do so across the board instead of pretending to do so in a ruse involving Selective Service

registration.

The “Draft Our Daughters” legislation’s reference to December 3, 2015 marks the unfortunate day when Obama Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter denied Marine Gen. Joe Dunford’s formal request that some direct ground combat occupations and units remain all-male.



The former Commandant’s request was backed by three years of scientific field test research, which confirmed major sex-related differences in the physical strength, speed, and endurance of male and female Marines performing tasks that simulated close combat requirements.

According to the Research Summary of the Marines’ field tests, units composed of average-ability men outperformed mixed-sex teams with highly qualified women in 69% of evaluated tasks, including hik-

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ing under load and typical combat maneuvers.

Secretary Carter disregarded the evidence and opted for what is now called “diversity, equity, and inclusion.” Pentagon leaders solemnly promised that “gender-neutral” standards would be identical for men and women in the formerly all-male combat positions.

In 2018 the Army announced a six-event Army Combat Fitness Test to replace the Army Physical Fitness Test. The previous APFT had been gender-normed to accommodate physical differences between male and female trainees.

Reality set in when initial ACFT combat fitness trials reported an 84% failure rate among female trainees, compared to 30% among the men.

Several adjustments in test requirements improved women’s scores somewhat, but the Army abandoned promises to make the ACFT sex-neutral in March 2022. RAND data showed that only 52% of the women could pass the test, compared to 92% of the men.

Army policies still pretend that men and women are interchangeable in all ground combat occupational specialties, including physically demanding infantry and Special Forces. Officials keep “adjusting” and “gender-norming” training requirements to accommodate physical differences, simultaneously claiming that standards are the same and nothing has changed.

Pentagon leaders who cannot de-

fine what a woman is cannot be trusted to define what “combat” is.

The NDAA combat carve-out ploy does not protect women. Women forced to join the military in a time of national emergency would have to serve where they are ordered to go — just like the men.

The Purpose of Selective Service

The idea that women must register and could be drafted but excused from close combat is oxymoronic, since the whole purpose of a military draft is to rapidly supply combat replacements in a war that threatens the very existence of the United States.

If “Draft Our Daughters” becomes law, any future Selective Service call-up would be governed by “equity” mandates. Drafting equal numbers of men and women just to find the one woman in four who *might* meet physical requirements would increase administrative demands and jam the system at the worst possible time.

Some exceptional women may be able to meet minimal combat arms standards, but extensive research has shown that most women cannot while most men can. Unrealistic policies ordering all draft age women to register would not be “fair” for anyone or in America’s national security interests.

Right now, however, Selective Service is a low-cost insurance policy (\$26 million per year) to back up the all-volunteer force. It does not exist to advance “sex equity.”

So what is going on here? For many years, Big Government

a d v o c a t e s have wanted to change the *purpose* of Selective Service without any serious, open debate, much

less public demand.

The 2020 Report of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service called for inclusion of women in Selective Service for the lamest of reasons: “*the time is right.*” This vacuous, unsupported recommendation ignored inconvenient facts that did not support the Commission’s pre-conceived social agenda.

The National Commission’s report strongly promoted an interagency Council on Military, National & Public Service, lumping together military conscription and mandatory “national service,” as if young people could avoid the former by accepting the latter.

Once Americans become accustomed to automatic registration, this powerful agency would coordinate national service mandates.

This Big Government bureaucracy likely would use both “carrots and sticks” to commandeer the lives of young “national servants” for politically correct reasons of the government’s choice.

A major question remains unanswered: *Where in the U.S. Constitution is there authorization for the federal government to run the lives of young people for less than compelling reasons?*

The Supreme Court has upheld the constitutionality of conscription for military service, primarily because Art. 1, Sec. 8 of the U.S. Constitution authorizes Congress to raise armies. The Constitution does not empower Congress to conscript anyone for causes like the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, the “Do Good Institute,” or any other government-approved organization.

If Big Government is empowered to control young peoples’ lives for

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reasons other than military national defense, should our sons and daughters be drafted to serve in a “People for the Planet Corps” charged to monitor Americans’ use of gas stoves and lawn mowers?

Since Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has designated “climate change” as a primary concern of the DoD, such a prospect is not far-fetched.

Requiring all 18-year-olds to involuntarily serve in any capacity ignores the guarantees of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness that serve as bedrock principles for our republic.

Congress should not replace Americans’ Presumption of Freedom under our Constitution with a Presumption of Service tracked by the government in a system smacking of “social credits.”

Americans Oppose Drafting Girls

Women have always volunteered to serve in times of national emergency, and it is an affront to suggest they would not do so again. Opportunities are wide-open for women in the all-volunteer force, and capable, brave women have proudly served in many non-traditional occupational specialties for years.

However, servicewomen are far more likely to be injured, to suffer chronic pain, and to suffer health problems such as infertility and higher risks of suicide. Female attrition rates in combat arms units have been twice those of men.


If women were involuntarily conscripted, combat arms units would become less strong, less fast, more vulnerable to debilitating injuries, less ready for deployment on short notice, and less accurate with offensive weapons during combat operations.

There is no evidence that military women want to be forced into the combat arms on the same involuntary basis as men. Nor is this a politically

popular “women’s issue.”

A recent Rasmussen national survey found that 58% of female respondents were “somewhat” or “strongly opposed” to drafting women. (22% and 36%, respectively)

This consequential legislation

such as this should be publicly debated in advance, not dropped like a surprise package wrapped in camouflage and approved behind closed doors. “Draft Our Daughters” is unwarranted, unacceptable, and it must not be enacted in law. 

BAD IDEAS FOR THE ECONOMY

by Anne Schlafly, Chairman, Eagle Forum

Election season is producing a lot of grand promises by the candidates. Let’s look closely at two ideas that are being proposed in order to gain votes.

“No Taxes on Tips”

In current law, gratuities are required to be reported and taxed. If the employee does not earn enough in tips to meet the minimum wage, then the employer is required to make up the difference in earned wages.

If people are given the opportunity to avoid taxes and thus gain thirty percent in extra income, then everyone will work for tips. Doctors, lawyers, accountants, and others will all want to switch to tipped and untaxed income! People find clever ways to avoid taxes.

Consumers do not like forced tipping, especially when the flipped check-out screen offers a choice of 20% or 30% gratuity for no extra service. The forced tipping results in a lack of price transparency. It’s hard to compare pricing if the extra gratuity is added at the end of the purchase. For example, wedding dress vendors are now asking brides for a percentage tip on an expensive purchase. The result is that the mother of the bride feels that the dress alteration will be held hostage in exchange for a generous tip. If tax law is changed on tips, how soon will other industries climb on the tax-free tip bandwagon?


Consumers have always liked to reward good service with a generous

bonus. Changing the tax law on these bonuses will result in a two-tiered economic system of those who pay taxes and those who do not pay taxes.

“National Rent Control”

Anyone who has ever lived in New York City knows about the city’s rent control laws. Where is the incentive for landlords to build and maintain their buildings if they cannot get a return on their investment? The name of the NYC policy was changed to rent “stabilization”, but the policy is the same: the government dictates what landlords can charge. The good intention is to have affordable housing; the result is a large demand with a limited supply. People then do not move but remain in cheaper apartments.

Rent control, in which bureaucrats artificially sets the price of housing with no relationship to supply and demand, produces housing that no one wants to live in. There is no reason for landlords to update or maintain the properties since the lease rate cannot change according to the market. Landlords do not have the financial incentive to build new housing. Anytime that government sets the price, the result is a shortage.

Exporting failed New York ideas to the rest of the country is not good economic policy. Candidates claim that they have good intentions to help Americans in need, but these ideas are doomed not to help anyone. 

MICRO GRID IS A MACRO FAILURE

by Vijay Jayaraj, a Research Associate at the CO2 Coalition, Arlington, Virginia. He holds a master's degree in environmental sciences from the University of East Anglia, U.K., and a postgraduate degree in energy management from Robert Gordon University, U.K.

During his debate with former President Donald Trump, President Joe Biden claimed: “The only existential threat to humanity is climate change.” Climate policies, not climate change, are the real existential threat to billions of people across our planet.

The allure of a green utopia masks the harsh realities of providing affordable and reliable electricity. Americans could soon wake up to a dystopian future if the proposed Net Zero and Build Back Better initiatives — both aimed at an illogical proliferation of unreliable renewables and a clampdown on dependable fossil fuels — are implemented.



Nowhere is this better reflected than in remote regions of India where solar panels are now being used to construct cattle sheds.

The transformation of Dharnai in the state of Bihar into a “solar village” was marked by great enthusiasm and high expectations. Villagers were told the solar microgrid would provide reliable electricity for agriculture, social activities, and daily living. The promise engendered a naïve trust in a technology that has failed repeatedly around the world.

The news media showcased this Greenpeace initiative as a success story for “renewable” energy in a third-world country. CNN International’s “Connect the World” said Dharnai’s micro-grid provided a continuous supply of electricity. For an unaware viewer sitting in, say, rural Kentucky, solar energy would have appeared to be making great strides as a dependable energy source.

But the Dharnai system would end up on the long list of grand solar failures.

“As soon as we got solar power connections, there were also warnings to not use high power electrical appliances like television, refrigerator, motor, and others,” said a villager. “These conditions are not there if you use thermal power. Then what is the use of such a power? The solar energy tariff was also higher compared to thermal power.”

A village shopkeeper said: “But after three years, the batteries were exhausted, and it was never repaired. ... No one uses solar power anymore here.” Perhaps the solar panels will last longer as a shelter for cows.

Eventually, the village was connected to the main grid, which provided fully reliable coal-powered electricity at a third of the price of solar power.

Dharnai is not an isolated case. Several other large-scale solar projects in rural India have had a similar fate. Writing for the publication *Mongabay*, Manish Kumar said: “Once (grid) electricity reaches unelectrified villages, the infrastructure and funds used in the installation of such off-grid plants could prove futile.”

While green nonprofits and the liberal mainstream media have the embarrassment of a ballyhooed solar project being converted to cattle sheds, conventional energy sources like coal continue to power India’s more than 1.3 billion people and the industries their economies depend on.


India saw a record jump in electricity demand this year, as more of the population achieved the financial wherewithal to afford air conditioning and appliances. During power shortages, coal often has come to the rescue. India allows its coal plants to increase coal stockpiles and import additional fuel without restrictions.

India will add more than 15 gigawatts in the year ending March 2025 (the most in nine years) and aims to add a total of 90 gigawatts of coal-fired capacity by 2032.

Energy reality is inescapable in a growing economy like India’s, and only sources such as coal, oil, and natural gas can meet the demand. Fossil fuels can be counted on to supply the energy necessary for modern life, and “green” sources cannot.

India is putting economic growth ahead of any climate-based agenda to reduce their use of fossil fuels and has delayed its target for “net zero” until 2070.

The story of Dharnai serves as a cautionary tale for the implementation of renewable energy projects in rural India, where pragmatism is the official choice over pie in the sky.

This commentary was first published in Daily Caller. 

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