



Center for Military Readiness



Promoting high standards and sound priorities for our military men and women.

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House Armed Services Committee Disregards National Security Impact of Women, War, and Selective Service

On April 27, following little debate, the **House Armed Services Committee** [narrowly approved](#) Congressman **Duncan Hunter's "Draft America's Daughters"** amendment to the 2017 **National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)**. (See first video [posted here](#), starting at about the 2:33:16 mark.)

*If passed by the full House, approved by the Senate, and signed as part of the NDAA, the measure would extend the registration and conscription requirements of the **Military Selective Service Act (MSSA)** to young women between the ages of **18-26**. These comments may be attributed to **Elaine Donnelly**, President of the **Center for Military Readiness**:*

"It is unfortunate that all Democrats and a few liberal Republicans on the House Armed Services Committee voted for Congressman **Duncan Hunter's "Draft America's Daughters"** amendment to the **National Defense Authorization Act for 2017. (NDAA - HR 4478)** Committee Chairman "**Mac**" **Thornberry** (R-TX), to his credit, tried to deter the vote, but Republican members **Martha McSally** (AZ), Personnel Subcommittee Chairman **Joe Heck** (NV), and **Chris Gibson** (NY) joined with feminist Democrats in approving Hunter's amendment, **32-30**.

The intent of the measure was to draw attention to inconvenient facts and major problems with the administration's no-exceptions-allowed plans to order minimally-qualified women into direct ground combat units such as the infantry.

"Selective Service is a national defense contingency policy, and there is nothing "sexist" about it. Gender-related physiological differences between men and women fully justify women's *exemption* from direct ground combat units that attack the enemy with deliberate offensive action. The same realities apply to Selective Service law as well.

“Congressman Hunter voted against his own bill, but approval by the House and eventually by the **Senate** and **President Obama** would result in unsuspecting girls-next-door facing Selective Service obligations and a possible future draft in the event of a national emergency.

Congress seems incapable of recognizing a simple fact: The debate about Selective Service and related issues should center on national security, not women alone.

“If Selective Service were re-activated to fight an existential threat, thousands of women could be called up for accelerated military training. Only a few might meet the demanding standards of combat arms units such as the infantry.

“Would the expenditure of time, effort, and resources to find those few women, and to train them for combat arms units where military needs are greatest, be worth it? Only Congress has the right, and the responsibility, to say “No” on *national security* grounds -- especially when women are free to volunteer, as they always have.

“During a time of national emergency, when the very survival of our nation depends upon success on the battlefield, political paralysis and an administrative nightmare trying to find and induct a few qualified women would weaken America’s defenses. For the same reasons that women should not be ordered into the infantry, more lives would be put at risk at the worst possible time.

“CMR has published a new Policy Analysis explaining why none of this is necessary:

CMR Policy Analysis: [Women, War, and Selective Service](#)

“The Policy Analysis notes that if federal courts strike Selective Service law because military women are now eligible for ground combat assignments on the same involuntary basis as men, there will be no law at all. Congress is free to debate the issue and to exercise its constitutional power to write a new law that serves national defense purposes.

“That law still could exempt women, even under current women-in-land-combat policies, but only if Congress exercises responsible oversight. To do this, Congress needs to create a legally-sound public record documenting abundant empirical evidence that already exists.

“[Three years of comprehensive, scientific studies](#), which Congress has yet to consider, clearly show that assigning minimally qualified women to the combat arms will make fighting units less strong, less fast, more vulnerable to debilitating injuries, less deployable on short notice, and less capable during prolonged direct ground combat deployments.

“Selective Service registration is a low-cost contingency plan that backs-up the All-Volunteer Force, both active-duty and reserve. Contrary to statements made by Rep. McSally in support of the Hunter amendment, Selective Service does not register or draft people for support roles or playing in the band.

“Like all insurance policies, the system is not necessary . . . until it is. A major national emergency, perhaps on multiple fronts, might require national mobilization and rapid induction of sufficient numbers of civilians who are capable of replacing casualties fallen in battle.

“Rep. Hunter was correct in saying that a discussion about women in combat is long overdue. Despite everything that the Obama administration has done, the House has not had a full hearing on women in combat since 1979 – 37 years ago. This dereliction of oversight duties needs to come to an end, but the “Draft America’s Daughters” amendment is not the way to go.

“Members of the House Armed Services Committee should withdraw or defeat the controversial legislation, and start conducting responsible oversight. Members on both sides of the aisle need to seriously consider the impact on readiness if the military is forced to implement radical social agendas that will harm military women, men in the combat arms, and mission effectiveness in the All-Volunteer Force.”

To arrange an interview on this topic, contact CMR President Elaine Donnelly at 734/464-9430.

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The Center for Military Readiness, founded in 1993, is an independent, non-partisan public policy organization that reports on and analyzes military/social issues. More information on this and related issues is available on the CMR website, www.cmrlink.org.