



Center for Military Readiness

Elaine Donnelly
President

The Honorable James Inhofe
Ranking Member, Senate Armed Services Committee
205 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20510

March 26, 2021

Dear Senator Inhofe,

Thank you for including [CMR's Statement for the Record](#) of the March 11 hearing with the Co-Chairmen and a member of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service. I watched the hearing and read the written [testimony](#) that Chairman Heck presented. Several statements in the testimony cause me particular concern.

1. The Purpose of Selective Service

On page 7, the National Commission claims that Selective Service exists to “*meet a wide range of Department of Defense personnel needs in the event of a national emergency, which includes non-combat and combat positions.*” The statement is footnoted to a reference regarding circumstances during World War II before establishment of the All-Volunteer Force.

The purpose of Selective Service has not changed – nor should it change, as the National Commission recommended. The landmark Supreme Court *Rostker v. Goldberg* decision recognized that in requiring only men to register for the draft, Congress grounded its policy decision on the need for a rapid stream of qualified combat replacements. “*Congress determined that any future draft, which would be facilitated by the registration scheme, would be characterized by a need for combat troops.*” (453 U.S. 57, 75)

The Supreme Court also noted that Congress considered and specifically *rejected* the idea that the draft could be used to fill various non-combat billets. (453 U. S. at 80-81) The purpose of the draft was not to fill various non-combat billets; rather, the purpose of the draft was to quickly provide qualified replacements for combat casualties.

2. Misinterpretation of Project 100,000

The commission statement continues on page 7, “*In times of unmet personnel needs, the Department of Defense has regularly resorted to reducing quality standards, harming our armed forces' ability to respond to national security threats.*” This comment is footnoted to several articles about Project 100,000, a Vietnam-era program ordered by then Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara.

As explained in Matt Davis's [Project 100,000: The Vietnam War's Cruel Experiment on American Soldiers](#) and Hamilton Gregory Spring's article [McNamara's Boys](#), Project 100,000 was one of the worst social experiments ever conducted in our military.

Defense Secretary McNamara recruited and sent to Vietnam about 300,000 men who failed to meet minimum criteria for military service, both physically and mentally. Most had not passed the AFQT and were classified Category IV.

Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty" was starting up, and military "opportunities" were offered to Cat IV personnel as a way out of poverty. Good intentions did not matter. These recruits, who were called "New Standards Men," were killed in disproportionate numbers. Those who survived the war fared worse in their lives than civilian peers.

McNamara's disastrous social experiment is not likely to be repeated, but the National Commission nevertheless cited that tragic experience in suggesting that young women should be registered for a possible future draft.

There is an obvious irony here that the National Commission has failed to recognize: Without question, American women are as smart, patriotic, and as courageous as men. However, policies that would draft unwilling women to fight in physically demanding combat arms units would repeat the same type of social experiment that cost the lives of thousands of "New Standards Men" in Vietnam.

There have been times when recruiters have adjusted standards and bonuses to meet induction goals, especially in times of economic prosperity or high demand for troops, but the commission's misleading references to Project 100,000, which was not "regular" at all, overlook serious lessons that ought to be learned.

3. Unjustified Low Expectations of Women

The National Commission claimed without evidence that registering women with Selective Service would "*[acknowledge] the value women bring to the U.S. Armed Forces, and the talents, skills and abilities women would offer in defending the nation in a national emergency.*" (page 8)

Whether intended or not, the commission itself has failed to recognize women's contributions in times of national emergency by implying that it is necessary to force women to register with Selective Service or else they (women) won't do their part.

The insinuation is belied by the fact that millions of American women repeatedly have demonstrated their "talents, skills, and abilities" by volunteering to serve in times of national emergency. There is no reason to believe patriotic women would not do so again.

4. Misleading Claims Re Capabilities to Meet Military Standards

On pages 7-8 (and restated by Ms. Wada in answer to a question), the testimony claims, "*Should circumstances necessitate a draft, including women in the pool of individuals eligible for selection would improve the military's ability to maintain higher military standards. Of the 17 to 24 year old cohort, equal proportions of women and men meet initial military accession standards – an estimated 29.3 percent of women versus 29.0 percent of men.*"

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This highly misleading assertion (supported by a reference to JAMRS, the Joint Advertising Market Research & Studies outfit that conducts DoD surveys on young people's propensity to serve) seems to suggest that the 29% of healthy women without disqualifying health problems or criminal records are functionally interchangeable with the 29% of men who do not have disqualifying health problems or criminal records.

But those eligibility factors should not be confused with physical capabilities. Voluminous research that the National Commission barely mentioned contradicts the misleading claim that calling up equal numbers of women would somehow "*maintain higher military standards.*"

The National Commission's Final Report glossed over or omitted objective research findings confirming that physical capabilities of men and women are significantly different, and mixed-gender units do not perform at the same levels as all-male units. The achievements of a few outstanding military women do not change unassailable biological facts, Men, as a group, are bigger, stronger, faster, and have greater endurance and deployability than women as a group.

The CMR [Statement for the Record](#) cited the substantial body of evidence that supports this assertion, and also mentioned the Army's current difficulties in trying to finesse physical differences with the new "gender-neutral" Army Combat Fitness Test. Now the Army has announced the [ACFT 3.0](#), which essentially gives up on gender-neutral standards.

The new system will omit names, photos, and other gender identifiers on promotion packet records, and use color-coded "percentile bands" to obscure ACFT performance differences between men and women. Under this type of blind gender-norming, promotion evaluators will have to pretend that women taking the test who perform in their own group's top 10% ranking are the equals of men scoring in the men's top 10%. What could go wrong?

The Army's attempt to obscure the failure of gender-neutral standards – aptly scheduled to go into effect on April Fool's Day – will not fool anyone.

I hope that you and other members of the Committee are not misled by the National Commission's misinterpretations of military history and objective research that belies theories about gender equality. Social/political objectives, no matter how well-meaning or righteous, cannot justify repetition of a dangerous social experiment with men and women in our military.

I would be honored to meet with you to discuss these matters sometime soon and will file a request with your scheduler. Thank you for reading this letter; I hope to talk with you soon.

Respectfully,



Elaine Donnelly
President, Center for Military Readiness