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# Defense Report

AUSA



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## Registering for the Draft before Getting Federal Education Aid—An Exercise in Patriotism

Last year Congress passed a law which requires all young men eligible for possible call-up under Selective Service to register for that service before being granted federal assistance under the Higher Education Act of 1965. All that is required to comply with that law can be accomplished in a few minutes at any post office, and the effective date of the requirement was set for the 1983-84 school year in order to give all concerned ample opportunity to comply.

Opposition to this common-sense law has come from several directions. Of course, those who object to the basic requirement to register have been the most vociferous, claiming that it punishes nonregistrants without due process of law. Some say the law ignores the possibility of conscientious objection to military service. Several colleges have objected to what they see as a requirement for them to act as the government's agent in deciding who will receive aid. Women's rights activists complain that it discriminates against women—whom Congress decided need not register at all.

Those who oppose the registration law seem to be saying that they would rather have the stigma of a criminal conviction for disobeying the law than an administrative finding of ineligibility for aid. Conscientious objectors ignore the fact that they would be given full opportunity to avoid combat duty during the classification process prior to actual call-up. The colleges may be shooting themselves in the foot because many of them need the income from federal grants. Women should be assailing Congress to make them eligible for the draft, rather than wasting their efforts on a law that now has no impact on them.

The notion that recipients of federal largesse should be in full compliance with the nation's laws makes just as much sense today as it did when Congress translated it into law last year. Any position short of that is an open invitation to take advantage of the best our society has to offer without any requirement to reciprocate with obedience and, possibly, with service.