**Information about Registering for Selective Service and a Military Draft**

SELECTIVE SERVICE

The current Selective Service law requires all male residents of the United States between the ages 18 and 26 to be registered with the Selective Service. The penalties in the law for failure to register are up to five years in prison and up to a $250,000 fine. No prosecutions have occurred since the early 1980’s, but should a draft return some males who have failed to register could be prosecuted.

Because the military has newly (in 2016) opened all jobs within the military to women who qualify to do them, there is a movement to change the Selective Service laws either to require women to register or to eliminate the whole Selective Service System. If Congress does not act to take one of these routes, it is expected that a suit already filed will proceed to require that women also must register.

Likely consequences of not registering include:

1) not being eligible for public financial aid for college or job training,

2) not being eligible to be hired in federal jobs and

3) not being eligible to be drafted should a draft return.

If a person registers before they become 26, these consequences go away. If they don’t register, those consequences remain for the rest of their life.

All immigrants, whether documented or not, are to register as they are “residents” of the US. Only those here on a visitor status are exempt. Scary as it may be to register while being undocumented, failure to do so might prohibit any future chance to become a citizen.

Undocumented immigrants should leave the Social Security # space blank to avoid any future danger of prosecution for use of a false ID number.

MILITARY DRAFT

No one expects a return of the military draft under current conditions.

In the current political and military environment, a military draft seems highly unlikely to return any time soon. Politically, a return of a military draft would energize youth and their families to oppose war. The military has for decades now been a so called “voluntary” military, being largely constituted by offspring of career military families or members of what is often called the “poverty draft,” low income, rural or youth of color. So for the time being the military has successfully demonstrated to themselves that they can be a so called “voluntary” military.

An argument is made by some people that we should return to a military draft so that military service is more equitably shared across all social classes, all groups and women as well. If this were so, it is likely that this country would think more carefully about engaging in war, as the burden of war would touch almost all families.

Should things change, causing the President to decide a military draft is needed, Congress must first pass authorizing legislation. The language for a return of the draft, contained in the Selective Service legislation, is written and ready to go, which would have the first draftees in basic training within three to six months. If a draft were to return, males who turn age 20 the first year of a draft are the most vulnerable ones, as they would be the first drafted under existing rules about how a draft would be carried out. Whether the authorizing legislation would be changed to include females in a draft is unknown or whether the whole Selective Service will be terminated is unknown at this point.

From time to time there is talk of requiring national service of males and females, either in the military or some sort of alternate service. However, there appears to be no political will to do this in the foreseeable future.