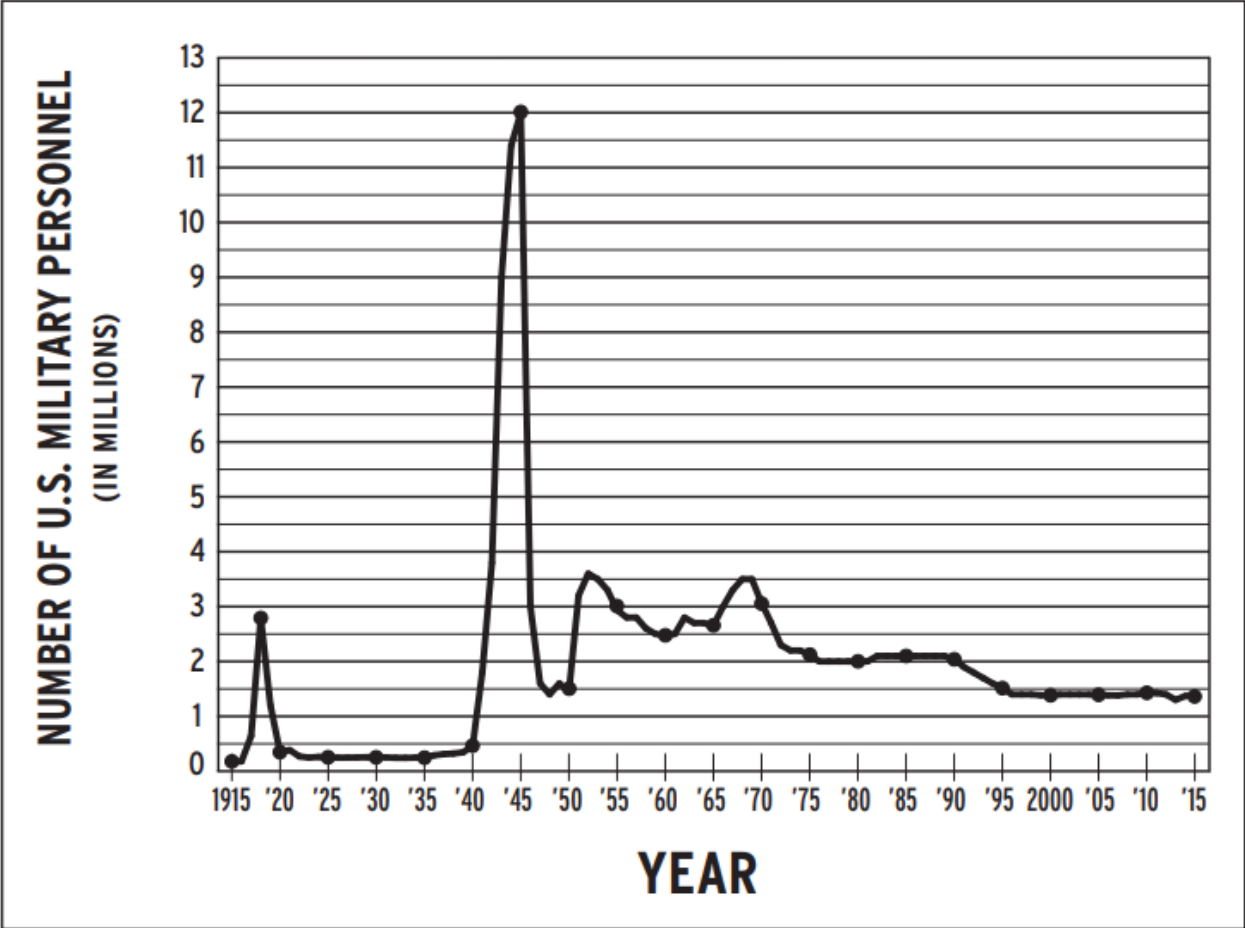


America's Fighting Force

Conscription, commonly known as the draft, has a long history in the United States. It began during the Civil War, when both the Union and the Confederacy drafted soldiers to fill their military ranks. But draftees who could afford it often paid substitutes to fight for them or paid the government to excuse them from the draft. In the 20th century, conscription was used to build a fighting force for World War I, then was reinstated in 1940, a year before the U.S. entered World War II. In place until 1973, the draft was used to maintain military manpower during peacetime as well as times of conflict. Use the graph to see how conscription—or the lack of it—has helped shape the size of the U.S. military over the past century.



This line graph shows the size of the U.S. armed forces from 1915 to 2015.

ANALYZE THE GRAPH

- 1.** At the height of World War I in 1918, the U.S. had about ___ military personnel.

 - 650,000
 - 1.2 million
 - 2.0 million
 - 2.8 million
- 2.** During the period 1915 to 2015, the U.S. military peaked in size in ___.

 - 1945
 - 1965
 - 1970
 - 1985
- 3.** In the time since the draft ended in 1973, the size of the U.S. military has ___.

 - increased sharply
 - decreased sharply
 - increased gradually
 - decreased gradually
- 4.** The Korean War ended in 1953. In that year, there were about ___ active-duty personnel in the U.S. military.

 - 1.1 million
 - 2.3 million
 - 3.5 million
 - 4.8 million
- 5.** In 2015, the U.S. military was about the same size as it was in ___.

 - 1930
 - 1940
 - 1950
 - 1960

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 6.** Why do you think the U.S. kept the draft in place in the decades following World War II, even during peacetime?
- 7.** The U.S. fought in Iraq from 2001 to 2011 and has had troops in Afghanistan since 2001. Does the graph show a change in military size for these conflicts as it does for other wars? Does this surprise you? Explain.

Debate

Should the U.S. Bring Back the Draft?

The United States has relied on an all-volunteer army since 1973, when the military draft was abolished. But at age 18, all American men are still required to register with the Selective Service, the federal agency responsible for implementing a draft. That's in case the government decides that a draft is once again necessary to maintain America's fighting force. With the war in Afghanistan now in its 17th year, some are raising the question of whether volunteers can still meet the nation's military needs. More than 30 other countries—including Russia, Israel, and Mexico—maintain a military draft.

Below, two experts—one a retired general, the other a former congressman—weigh in on whether the U.S. should reinstate the draft.



Arriving for basic training at the United States Military Academy at West Point in 2016

The Draft BY THE NUMBERS

10,110,104

NUMBER of men in the U.S. drafted during World War II, the most for any U.S. war.

SOURCE: U.S. SELECTIVE SERVICE

1973

YEAR that the last American was drafted into the military.

SOURCE: U.S. SELECTIVE SERVICE

\$90,000

MAXIMUM AMOUNT of individual bonuses paid by the U.S. Army in 2017 to encourage soldiers to re-enlist.

SOURCE: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Should the U.S. Bring Back the Draft?

YES The current model of staffing our military using an all-volunteer force is unfair, inefficient, and unsustainable.

The system is fundamentally unfair because it relies disproportionately on lower-income Americans, forcing them to shoulder the burdens of risk and sacrifice. Those are the people most often attracted by the economic incentives the military offers to encourage people to enlist.

Relying exclusively on volunteers essentially provides exemption from military service for Americans who have more money—and therefore more options.

An all-volunteer military is also inefficient because it can't expand and contract quickly to meet the changing requirements in the nation's defense. A draft would allow the military to quickly pull in additional troops without the cumbersome and uncertain process of recruitment. In the past 15 years, as the U.S. has simultaneously fought wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the military has been forced to deploy the same troops repeatedly. This additional stress

The current all-volunteer system is unfair and unsustainable.

NO A fundamental question we must ask ourselves when thinking about the military draft or any other form of compulsory service is: Who owns our bodies, our time, and our lives? If the answer is not ourselves, then we are but slaves. No other question is as important as this, as it goes to the core of what it means to be a free people.

Draft supporters argue that young people owe a debt of service to their country. I reject this notion. Involuntary servitude does not promote patriotism. No one should be forced by the government to work in a job they don't want.

Today, young men must register with the Selective Service on their 18th birthday and remain in a database throughout their 20s, just in case the government needs to reinstate the draft. There are proposals in Congress to force young women to do the same. This means the government can seize ownership of the lives of young people and force them into the military against their will, violating our most basic right. I find this unacceptable.

Our current all-volunteer force is more highly trained and more professional.

has resulted in tens of thousands of service members suffering from PTSD,* alcohol and drug abuse, and higher rates of divorce and suicide.

The current system also won't be economically sustainable for much longer. The Pentagon has had to pay unprecedented and costly enlistment and re-enlistment bonuses to get people to join the military and to remain when their initial commitment is complete. Last year alone, the military paid \$424 million in enlistment bonuses.

There's another reason for added expense: An all-volunteer force usually has greater numbers of older troops, many of whom have spouses and children who are also eligible for costly military benefits. By contrast, a drafted military force relies heavily on 18- and 19-year-olds, who tend to be single.

The U.S. should adopt a military draft that applies fairly to both men and women, with no exemptions or deferments. Doing so would be more fair, more efficient, and less expensive for the nation. •

—MAJOR GENERAL DENNIS LAICH (RETIRED)
United States Army

The idea that a military full of conscripts would make us safer has been rejected by military experts. How effective would a fighting force be were it made up of individuals who had no interest in being there? That's one reason many military leaders strongly oppose a draft. They know that our current all-volunteer force is more highly trained and professional than draftees would be.

Were the U.S. under attack or threatened with attack, there would be no shortage of Americans volunteering to defend their country. The problem is that the U.S. has troops in more than 150 countries, most of them not vital to our national security. Maintaining that global presence is increasingly costly and requires a larger military than we need for our own defense.

A non-interventionist foreign policy would eliminate any need for a military draft and would allow us to better defend our own country. It would also set a shining example of personal liberty for the rest of the world. •

—RON PAUL
Former Congressman (Republican of Texas)

Analyzing Authors' Claims

Read the debate on pages 22-23 about bringing back the military draft, then follow the directions below to analyze each author's claims and decide who makes a stronger case.

AUTHOR: Major General Dennis Laich
(Retired), U.S. Army

AUTHOR: Ron Paul
Former Congressman (Republican of Texas)

Author's main claim or argument in the debate:

Author's main claim or argument in the debate:

REASON 1: Name one reason the author gives for his claim.

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List evidence the author gives to support Reason 1.

List evidence the author gives to support Reason 1.

REASON 2: Name another reason the author presents.

REASON 2: Name another reason the author presents.

List evidence the author gives to support Reason 2.

List evidence the author gives to support Reason 2.

REASON 3: Name a third reason the author presents.

REASON 3: Name a third reason the author presents.

List evidence the author gives to support Reason 3.

List evidence the author gives to support Reason 3.

What persuasive devices does the author use?

- Appeals to emotions
 Uses data or scholarly research
 Tells why the other side's argument is weak
 Other: _____

What persuasive devices does the author use?

- Appeals to emotions
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 Tells why the other side's argument is weak
 Other: _____

EVALUATE: Which author do you think makes a more effective case? Do you spot any weaknesses—like a bias or missing information—in either argument? Explain on a separate sheet of paper.