

## Mandatory Military Service

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. The true neighbor will risk his position, his prestige, and even his life for the welfare of others.” (Martin Luther King Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail). Being a citizen of the United States comes with many rights, but that then means that to defend those rights you must commit yourself to military service. Martin Luther King explains that being a citizen and having rights comes from those who fight for them. To prove dedication to a country through mandatory military service is an idea that goes back to Rome and Greece when they conquered nations. They were nations who controlled other civilizations and had huge armies; they would require a percentage of the civilizations’ occupants to join the military and in turn grant citizenship to those people. As a result, they became some of the strongest military powers of ancient times. Our nation did not have mandatory military service until 1943 during WW2 when America imposed a draft which randomly picked young men to join the army instead of them volunteering. This continued until the Vietnam war ended in 1973 and left Americans feeling bitter towards the draft, as many drafted young men either died in battle or were kept from their families for years because of lengthy deployments. Our new President feels strongly about the original idea developed by the Romans, that all male citizens of the United States of America should serve one year of mandatory military service from ages 18- 22, and you should too. Military service will give every young adult the ability to show national pride in serving their country while also learning very important trades. Even though Americans might be at first skeptical about this idea especially after Vietnam, it will prove to be of great significance to the young men and their nation as they are given the ability to serve their nation and improve themselves.

Mandatory military service can be beneficial to young men because it can give them the ability to serve their country. The honor of serving one's country is seen as the most noble contribution a young man can give to his country, not only is he gaining a sense of national pride, he is serving his country as a citizen and doing his duty. This service also makes him aware of the politics regarding the nation's welfare. This was the same in Rome and Greece, when young men entered the military, they began to understand the country's idea of national pride in being a citizen, which correlates to our modern-day military's idea of gaining rights and responsibilities while defending our country. Military service can also teach Americans some very useful skills that can further help them improve their nation such as gun safety, hygiene, and overall fitness, and helpful trades. Glenn Anderson, a former Navy electronics technician said, "People today lose track of actually finishing jobs, The military teaches the opposite." This quote explains that Americans today get distracted easily or complain about doing something hard and it explains that military service can make a young man become responsible and do what he must to help his country. This is the one of the many reasons why mandatory military service should be reinstated to the American youth.

One may argue that mandatory military service impedes freedom of choice. Americans would say that it impedes on free will because they are forced to join the military and that this would cause problems with how many people were willing to commit themselves to the cause because it may seem gruesome. However, the reason Americans have that freedom of choice is due to young men who devoted themselves to the military to protect and serve his country's freedom of choice. This shows major responsibility on volunteers' part and goes to show that either the strong will protect or that all young men will protect the sense of freedom of choice that we hold so dearly to ourselves. People who may think the job is going to be too dangerous

should think about the idea that you could be put in a workspace instead of in combat and still serve in that way while gaining some experience in the workforce. Larry Anderson, a former Airforce Airman said, “People might regret being in the military by thinking it would be taking away their freedom of choice, but it is part of your duty as an American citizen to serve our country.” This quote explains that people might regret being in the military because of how gruesome or tiring it might have been, but nothing compares to the fact that you are serving your country and defending its people's freedom of choice.

Mandatory military service, though it may have both positive and negative aspects, is of vital importance in this country. On the positive side, military service gives a young man a sense of national pride and a set of skills that could help him be useful all of his life. While the counter argument states that freedom of choice may be taken away through the process. You are just defending that idea while doing the deed to your country. Both these viewpoints go to show that mandatory military service between ages 18-22 is good for the citizen and his country's welfare. It shows this by presenting to us that proving ourselves as true American citizens through service shows a respect for them and their country. This is because military service can teach a person about the world and who they really want to be in it. On the topic of young men having national pride, Abraham Lincoln once said “I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man who lives so that his place will be proud of him.”

## Works cited

“10 Famous Quotes from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.” *National Constitution Center*

*constitutioncenter.org*, [constitutioncenter.org/blog/10-famous-quotes-from-dr-martin-luther-king-jr-2](https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/10-famous-quotes-from-dr-martin-luther-king-jr-2). Accessed 28 July 2023.

Bieri, Matthias. “Military Conscription in Europe: New Relevance.” *CSS Analyses in Security*

*Policy*, 1 Jan. 1970, [www.research-collection.ethz.ch/handle/20.500.11850/118187](http://www.research-collection.ethz.ch/handle/20.500.11850/118187).

“10 Meaningful Pros and Cons of Mandatory Military Service.” *ConnectUS*, 3 Aug. 2018,

[connectusfund.org/10-meaningful-pros-and-cons-of-mandatory-military-service](https://connectusfund.org/10-meaningful-pros-and-cons-of-mandatory-military-service).

Thomas, Benjamin P., and Caroline Thomas Harnsberger. “The Lincoln Treasury.” *The Journal*

*of Southern History*, vol. 17, no. 2, 1951, p. 265, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2198287>.

Anderson, Glenn. Interview. Conducted by [name redacted per essay guidelines]. 23 July 2023

Anderson, Larry. Interview. Conducted by [name redacted per essay guidelines]. 23 July 2023