

Every nation has a military. Organized armed forces have been a core part of countries for centuries, extending back to ancient Sumer. A military is a way for a country to survive the constant battle for dominance and the only way for a country to protect its own, whether that be its borders, people, or trade. These armed forces, even today amid the world of increased technology, are composed of people, of individuals who join together to act as a united force to defend their nation from threats. The United States' military is no different. Our citizens, from varied backgrounds, with varied skills and assets, make up our military, which is known, and has been known for over two hundred years, as one of the dominant forces of its kind. So, because of the importance of having a well-developed military, and because of the valuable things his military experience has taught him personally, the President-Elect proposes a mandatory year of military service for every male before they reach their twenty-second birthday. He proposes this because it provides education in practical skills, and, more importantly, he believes, required military service will advance admirable qualities in America's young men.

One of the greatest benefits which will come from this mandatory military service is that every young man will gain practical training. Training that will provide the ability for young men to have a specialized job and skill set and subsequently pave the way for them to establish themselves in the workforce. With these practical and specific skills, they will be able to prepare for, and fully embrace, a future in which they have a purpose and the ability to fulfill it. This benefit boils down to opportunities. Tommy Krantz, who enlisted in the military in 1966, states, "With different technology, there are a lot more opportunities now. The military opens a lot of doors that were closed to an old country

boy like me.” Since he was competent in work with sheet-metal and with tractors, Tommy planned on joining the Seabees, or the Naval Construction Battalion. The Seabees are just one of the many ways that young men can acquire--or further advance--their training in skills that they would be able to use in the future. The military would provide every young man with practical training and skills to use when they return home.

With this proposal, of course, comes many differing opinions. For every argument, there is a counter-argument. One of the strongest counter arguments is that mandatory military service will detract from the American workforce. And, true, for a time, it will limit the number of people who can apply for jobs and begin work, but, after a few years, men will be more prepared to enter the workforce, and do so with more aptitude, which will benefit their employers. Others object that some people are not made for military service. Once again, this can be true. However, while the military emphasizes physical abilities and training to do things such as fly jets, there are more opportunities than that. Not everyone in the military has to perform physical labor in order to be of service to their country. Some of the non-combatant roles in the military are intelligence, science, and medicine, which are just as necessary as the other jobs. These two main objections, and others, are reasonable, but can be logically answered.

The strongest and most convincing argument for mandatory service is the ways in which it forms young men into better citizens and develops their character. During their year in the military, young men will be trained in more than just tactical fighting and physical training. Anyone in the armed forces also learns valuable traits and life-skills such as discipline, courage, strength, teamwork, and honor. These admirable qualities

can be developed apart from the military, but the military cultivates these traits in their members with vigor. After all, the Air Force's Honor Code Oath proclaims, "We will not lie, steal, or cheat, nor tolerate among us anyone who does. Furthermore, I resolve to do my duty and to live honorably..." In service to America, the military's leaders and institutions strive to train men with strong characters. "The draft teaches...lots of things. The military teaches discipline, among other things, like nothing else does," voiced James Pritchard, who joined the Army in 1965 but was medically unable to serve. These young men are the future leaders of America. It is important that they are guided and instructed in their character development. The military also teaches young men how to be quality citizens. Serving in the military is one of the best ways to show a love for your country. Patriotism is strengthened and displayed through the military like nowhere else. Required service would be an excellent way for young men to cultivate character and patriotism.

To epitomize, required military service would be beneficial to America's young men, because it would train them in practical skills to use in the workforce and because it would develop their character, making them better citizens and better men. While this is a controversial policy, the strengths of it outweigh all of its possible faults. The President is always keen to quote Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, who said, "Since the days of Greece and Rome, when the word 'citizen' was a title of honor, we have often seen more emphasis put on the rights of citizenship than on its responsibilities." Mandatory military service is one way for the people of America to invest in their country and to exercise their responsibilities, so that they may enjoy their rights to the fullest. When the President initiates mandatory military service, citizens of

the United States would do well to remember President Kennedy's words, "...ask not what your country can do for you--ask what you can do for your country," and embrace the responsibility to protect their rights.

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