

On the Citizens' Service to the State

The duties of a citizen are just as fundamental to their citizenship as the rights of a citizen are. Logically, citizens must fulfill their duties in return for their livelihood and protection; this is the fundamental principle of the social contract, where men and society exist in a symbiotic relationship. Sadly, modern society has seen an overemphasis on the rights of the citizen and a neglect of his duties. It is about time that we are reminded of what our duties are: upholding the Constitution and defending the country; this is our social contract. Hobbes, the father of the social contract, states that although the constant warring state between people ceased to exist once they entered society, the societies that they entered became part of a similarly chaotic state of warfare with other states, thus necessitating the defense of the country. In an increasingly chaotic and anti-American political landscape, the safety of the country is increasingly in peril. If it is in the interest of the citizen to defend his rights, it is in his interest to defend his country (which is the source of his rights). If it is in the interest of the citizen to defend his country, and compulsory service assists the citizen in defending his country, then compulsory service acts in the interest of the citizen.

Compulsory service is constitutional. The American Constitution authorizes Congress to do whatever it takes to wage war against other countries, including raising armies. Compulsory service will allow the country to be prepared in case any such event takes place. If compulsory service is tyrannical, then the democracies of Israel and South Korea are tyrannical, in addition with any civilization and nation that used conscription.

Compulsory service is neither an excessive nor offensive measure. We should look at countries like South Korea or Israel - where physically fit men over eighteen must participate in military service for at least eighteen months. These countries face existential threats - South Korea has North Korea, Israel has Palestine; the United States has China and Russia. However, the stakes are much higher for the United States due to their de facto status as the leader of the free world. Furthermore, our declining dominance and a weakened Europe leaves the free world especially vulnerable to our enemies. As the hegemon of the free world, it's our responsibility that not only our country but the entire world stays safe,

which warrants such conscription. Furthermore, we do not fight wars for the sake of fighting enemies. G. K. Chesterton summarizes the purpose of a soldier: “The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him.” The point of war isn't to fight, but to defend. Thus, compulsory service is actually a defensive measure.

Compulsory service is quite parallel to the education system. However, even though school is compulsory, no one complains about it. “Military training is unnecessary.” Some things learnt in school aren't used in everyday life - they may be building blocks for more advanced topics or insight into additional fields of knowledge. “Service shouldn't be compulsory. That takes away from the privilege of doing it.” Education is also a privilege, but it being compulsory doesn't change that fact. “Education is a fundamental necessity, while service isn't.” Military service is a fundamental necessity to society, which in turn protects our people and our rights. Compulsory service isn't degrading; it isn't unjust, nor does it damage the honor of service.

Compulsory service doesn't cause trauma. Many may think of the trauma of the Vietnam War when thinking about compulsory service. We must observe our past mistakes and more importantly learn from them. What happened in Vietnam shouldn't have happened to these soldiers, but compulsory service isn't to blame. The cause of trauma is the war itself; we should thus avoid fighting in wars that aren't necessary to fight in and prevent those that are necessary.

Compulsory service strengthens societies. Aside from the visible benefits of military training like physical fitness, self defense, and respectfulness, it also teaches immense discipline. Pastor Clark, my pastor whom I interviewed, stated the following about the effect of military training on his father: “When we are put in a situation where we have to undergo a discipline or training, more often than not, it stretches us beyond what we normally do.” The strict discipline that we face in military training pushes us to do things that we otherwise wouldn't attempt to do. He added, “Because he experienced a lot of discipline that helped him in life... he learned how to submit to authority.” Submission to authority is another important trait that we ought to exercise as citizens. It allows societies to function with command structures; it also further pushes us to our limits. Pastor Clark states succinctly: “You wouldn't be doing

the laps unless you're submitting to their authority." The struggle from the discipline also forges strong bonds between people. Additionally, service raises effective and decisive leaders - all militaries rely on a strict command structure of leaders. This is also why we should make service compulsory between 18 and 22 - not only because men are at their peak physical condition, but because it is better to teach them these vital skills earlier. Although many youth will be in college during this age, it's important to remember that the citizen's duty comes first.

Freedom isn't free, but it's worth fulfilling our duties for. Hebrews 12:11 states: "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." Men who have gone through service have become robust and disciplined members of society. They draw respect and admiration from their peers. Imagine a society where all men are disciplined, law-abiding, respectful, competent, and admirable. Compulsory service not only delivers this reality but also defends our country and our rights.