

STATEMENT OF U.S. SENATOR BOB DOLE (R-KANS.)  
ON THE SENATE FLOOR  
JULY 7, 1970  
RE: VOLUNTEER ARMED FORCES

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Mr. President, during his campaign for the Presidency, Richard Nixon announced his support for the concept of a Volunteer Armed Force for the United States. He, as many in the Congress and among the General Public, recognized that the present conscription system was inherently inequitable and ill-suited to the maintenance of top-quality and efficient military establishment. Soon after he took office President Nixon appointed a commission to study our draft system and make recommendations replacing it with an All-Volunteer Armed Force. Thomas Gates, a former Secretary of the Navy, was chosen to head the Commission.

While the Commission was conducting its study, the President took several steps to improve the existing system, and in response to several Presidential recommendations, the Congress passed legislation granting him discretionary authority to institute a lottery to determine the order of induction.

These efforts, while they improved the draft system, did not fundamentally change it, for the basic statutory framework remained. In response to this situation, I joined the Senator from Oregon (Mr. Hatfield) in introducing a proposal in January of this year which would end the draft and replace it with a Voluntary Military Manpower Program.

The Gates Commission Report was issued in February, and it specifically proposed an end to all inductions by July 1, 1971, with the expiration of the present draft law. It also made a number of recommendations for improving military pay scales and for reducing the high turnover rate in the Armed Forces and making military life more attractive as a career for dedicated Americans.

My colleague from Oregon has now authored a bill which incorporates the findings and recommendations of the Gates Commission. I am pleased to join as a cosponsor.

In addition to halting inductions, the bill provides a pay increase focusing on the enlisted ranks and continuing registration in the event it becomes necessary to reinstate the draft. Specifically, this bill provides \$3.2 billion to make the pay scale of the Armed Services competitive with opportunities in civilian life, and directs the Secretary of Defense to improve and expand specialist education, officer training, and recruitment programs. Moreover, in a time when the Reserve Officers Training Corps is being placed under more stringent academic regulation, this legislation allows for an increase in ROTC scholarships -- which may help to offset the credit restrictions imposed at many institutions.

There are some who argue that an army of volunteers would be an army of the poor, the non-white, or mercenaries. Yet these arguments ignore our history, throughout which we have relied on volunteer service, and only in the past thirty years has the United States used its power of conscription to raise a standing military force. Such arguments also ignore the improved compensation and better service conditions which this bill provides, and they ignore the projections of the Gates Commission which demonstrate that the turnover in an All-Volunteer Force would be three-quarters of the turnover in a comparable mixed force.

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As we consider this legislation, we cannot ignore the lessons of the Post-World War I return to volunteerism which collapsed on a wage structure too fragile to support national manpower requirements. This legislation is realistic. It recognizes that the Armed Services cannot survive the competition for human talent without a viable salary structure or worthwhile career training.

This proposal makes the Armed Services more than the purgatory between education and employment. It makes them a respected and gainful career. And it demonstrates our awareness that a Nation's greatness does not lie in its power of conscription but in its ability to raise an army without it.

While the Commission was conducting its study, the President took several steps to improve existing systems, and in response to several Presidential recommendations, the Congress passed legislation granting him discretionary authority to institute a lottery to determine the order of induction. These efforts, while they improved the draft system, did not fundamentally change it, for the basic statutory framework remained. In response to this situation, I joined the Senator from Oregon (Mr. Hatfield) in introducing a proposal in January of this year which would end the draft and replace it with a Voluntary Military Manpower Program. The Gates Commission Report was issued in February, and it specifically proposed an end to all inductions by July 1, 1971, with the expiration of the present draft law. It also made a number of recommendations for improving military pay scales and for reducing the high turnover rate in the Armed Forces and making military life more attractive as a career for dedicated Americans. My colleague from Oregon has now authored a bill which incorporates the findings and recommendations of the Gates Commission. I am pleased to join as a cosponsor. In addition to halting inductions, the bill provides a pay increase focusing on the enlisted ranks and continuing registration in the event it becomes necessary to reinstate the draft. Specifically, this bill provides \$3.2 billion to make the pay scale of the Armed Services competitive with opportunities in civilian life, and directs the Secretary of Defense to improve and expand specialist education, officer training, and recruitment programs. Moreover, in a time when the Reserve Officers Training Corps is being placed under more stringent academic regulation, this legislation allows for an increase in ROTC scholarships -- which may help to offset the credit restrictions imposed at many institutions. There are some who argue that an army of volunteers would be an army of the poor, the non-white, or mercenaries. Yet these arguments ignore our history, throughout which we have relied on volunteer service, and only in the past thirty years has the United States used its power of conscription to raise a standing military force. Such arguments also ignore the improved compensation and better service conditions which this bill provides, and they ignore the projections of the Gates Commission which demonstrate that the turnover in an All-Volunteer Force would be three-quarters of the turnover in a comparable mixed force.