

Draft system limits options for applicants

Dear President Bush:

You drew your line in the sand way back in August. You committed troops to back up your position.

I understand why it was necessary, but I can't bring myself to support your actions.

With good reason, you ask, why am I taking this thing so personally? The answer is painfully clear. When you beat the war drum, you will not join the fray. Neither will Congress.

You are counting on an entirely different generation to keep your promises. My generation. And that includes me.

The "military draft" is a term which seems foreign to my

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generation — as far away as some ancient, now-conquered disease like polio or smallpox. But I can see that it might not be so distant.

I have complied with the law by registering with Selective Service. I've even taken the pains to supply them with my current address every time I've moved.

However, I am a conscientious objector. People have different definitions for that term, so here's mine: unlike your most

loyal soldiers, I am not willing to kill to defend freedom, peace and justice. However, just like the most adamant patriot, I am resolutely willing to give my life for those values.

There are obviously serious questions about how to devise an equitable draft system. In fact, the very title "Selective Service" brings to mind the following question: What will the criteria be to decide who will be selected for service and who will not?

I DO NOT advocate any kind of deferment, nor ANY exemptions for any able-bodied American of my generation. The

mandate to serve must not fall to individuals based on their economic class. Rather, if you find the draft necessary, I encourage you to require service of the entire generation.

But, rather than sending us all to the Persian Gulf, I call on you to permit us to choose our area of service. Some may choose to wage war against a Middle East tyrant. Others may choose to wage war against illiteracy, poverty and apathetic American selfishness.

There are thousands of projects around the world which will advance democracy as much as an invasion of Kuwait and Iraq. Many of these projects are

just as critical for long-term global stability as Operation Desert Shield.

If you choose to reinstitute the draft, I'm not going to run to Canada to escape service. But many of us would rather give our lives to promote democracy, rather than take the lives of others. Please, Mr. Bush, give us the option to choose between the Marine Corps and the Peace Corps.

May God bless and direct you in the difficult decisions which face you.

Timothy Truesdale is a graduate student in urban planning.

Affirmative action, quotas add to racial tension

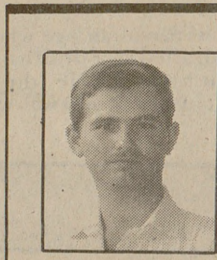
Much ado was raised in last fall's election campaign about David Duke and Jesse Helms' use of affirmative action and hiring quotas as a primary campaign issue.

After observing some of the abuses which are perpetrated in the name of these programs, it is clear they will continue to be an issue for years to come.

Take as a case in point the San Francisco Fire Department.

A fire department probe upheld charges that an Italian-American captain falsely claimed to be Hispanic in order to get promoted.

An internal investigation confirmed accusations that Capt. Thomas Santoro committed



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"ethnic fraud" by switching his ethnic designation from Caucasian to Hispanic in 1979, after being passed over for several promotions.

This move is understandable given the frustration which must have been present after seeing racial quotas and preferred hiring criteria used to fill the

positions which he had previously applied for.

What is beyond comprehension is the response of other Hispanic firefighters to the situation. A number of Hispanic firefighters want to initiate an ethnic review panel which would decide on the "Hispanicness" of any candidate for a Hispanic-quota job.

They want to ensure that only Western Hemisphere Hispanics — Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and others are considered for hiring quota jobs.

Of more interest to those who are concerned about discrimination is the fact that they are attempting to ensure

their piece of the pie by excluding all Hispanics of European origin-Spaniards, Basques and the occasional Italian.

Santoro, a 23 year veteran, was promoted several times since 1979 and has been serving as an acting battalion chief for more than a year. If found guilty of "ethnic fraud," Santoro could be demoted and face other disciplinary action.

Santoro's only crime, other than a case of bad judgment, was trying to stack the odds of receiving a promotion in his favor within the framework of a patently unfair system.

In the case of the San Francisco Fire Department as

well as hundreds of companies and agencies around the country, past racial discrimination is "remedied" by allotting a certain number of jobs and promotions to members of the discriminated-against ethnic group, regardless of whether any individual from that group can prove that he or she was discriminated against personally.

Would a bigoted hiring supervisor give someone named Santoro a promotion after being assured that he was of European extraction rather than Western Hemisphere Hispanic? I think not.

If a person is discriminated against because of his or her ethnic origin, our lawmakers have a moral imperative to see the discrimination is remedied.

Lawmakers only are concerned with protecting quotas which have been allotted to them and ensuring that second best will continue to be good enough when it comes to competing against others like Santoro on civil-service tests.

Just as these firefighters continue to split hairs over who is Hispanic, the question of affirmative action and hiring quotas will continue to divide the nation.

Santoro said he was considering a lawsuit in his defense. More power to him.

Any court case which will bring the debate on this issue into the public and expose the contradictory treatment which is afforded to some individuals because of their name — or lack of the right name — will do the nation a great service.

In the mean time, ethnic genealogists may be in great demand around the country if these review panels become commonplace to determine eligibility for hiring quota jobs.

Larry Cox is a graduate student in range science.

Q. Who Should Share The Cost Of Our Persian Gulf Defense Policy ?



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by Nito

The Battalion

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