

REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP MEETING

May 13, 1969

AGENDA

8:30 - 9:00 a.m.

I. Status of the Surcharge

9:00 - 9:30 a.m.

II. Draft Reform

*Find -*

*Presidents' Viet Nam speech.*

*After hearings  
next week probably  
w/H meeting.  
Byrnes, Williams  
Walker*



DIARY OF WHITE HOUSE LEADERSHIP  
MEETINGS -- 91st CONGRESS

May 13, 1969

At 8:35 a.m., the President recognized Byrnes, who reported "real trouble" on the surtax extension. Government witnesses will be heard beginning Tuesday. The Administration needs to dramatize the urgency of extension. Otherwise, Members on the Committee and on the Floor will justify negative votes for a variety of reasons, including high military expenditures, debt ceiling increase, spending ceiling, repeal of the 7% investment tax credit, and so forth. RMN asked if this means that something must be "tacked on" such as a spending ceiling. Byrnes answered that the most important thing now is to mobilize a sense of urgency. He suggested that the President might want to call a bipartisan leadership meeting at the White House after the hearings have been completed.

Ford said that he had read in a Cleveland newspaper that Vanik, a member of the Ways and Means Committee and a member of the DSG, had predicted the surtax extension would fail. Williams said that the bill would be in even more trouble in the Senate. Two Senators will attempt to attach expanded Social Security riders. He said that too much emphasis on a \$5 billion surplus in the Nixon budget was creating opposition to the surtax extension. As a matter of fact, Williams said that if he were convinced that there wasn't a surplus, he would vote against the extension. RMN said, "But you know better?" Walker expressed the confidence that in the two Committees, things are in "pretty good shape." There will be a "satisfactory resolution of the spending ceiling question." Mayo said that Mills and Mahon have talked and apparently agreed on the ceiling. Mayo called attention to the problems created by a ceiling which permits no exceptions whatever. It is difficult to accommodate unanticipated increases in uncontrollable items such as Social Security and veterans pensions.



Laird reported the thrust of the presidential message recommending draft reform is to be delivered to the Congress today. Currently, we are drafting about 300,000 a year and 400,000 are volunteering as a matter of draft motivation. In addition, there are 300,000 genuine volunteers. The draft will remain high for the next 12 months because we are now in one of the peaks in the cycle. Under the new plan, all 19-year-olds will go into a pool subject to random selection for the draft. Each will be given an opportunity to choose military service before or after college. This will give the young man an opportunity to control his options and make certain what is now uncertain. A one-year period of transition will be necessary. During that period, those now classed 1-A will be treated as a part of the pool. Essentially the same plan passed the Senate last year. Russell, Stennis and Mansfield have said that they will oppose efforts to attach amendments. If amendments are added in the Senate, the House will not consider the bill. Tower inquired if the plan preserves college deferment. Laird replied that the young man has his option on undergraduate school. There will be no graduate deferments except for medical and clerical students, for each of which there is a special draft law. Wilson asked if this plan intends a 4-year college term after which the student would assume an "artificial 19-year-old status." Laird replied in the affirmative. RMN asked why it was necessary to have any exceptions and if one exception would open the door to more. The reply was that the change would not provide any exceptions which are not already provided in present law. Laird said that objections had already been raised by Members of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees; that the new plan would make it possible for too many college students who have already been deferred to escape service altogether. He listed other possible objections.



RMN said that some inequities are bound to crop into any reform effort. Ford said that the change involves some political danger. Parents of boys who have gone to Vietnam and fought and bled and died will be incensed if they feel that the new plan will make it possible for college students who have been deferred and immunized during the period of heavy fighting to avoid service altogether. Mrs. Smith said she thinks the reform proposal is timely because the people are "in the mood for a change." She has doubts about the details but is prepared to go along and resist amendments. Taft said he feels that a change is right but that the mood of the country about Vietnam raises some questions about timing. He believes the message should make some mention of the possibility of later developing an all-volunteer force. RMN said that the message will go down on Tuesday and that on Thursday, he will meet with Tom Gates, who heads the Commission to study that question. Scott said that the message will likely increase agitation for lowering the voting age. Arends said he hoped the time table could be arranged so as not to interfere with more important Committee business. Laird said that Stennis had told him that this measure would be deferred until the procurement bill had been completed, possibly the last of June. RMN inquired what amendments might be anticipated. Laird called attention to amendments concerning conscientious objectors, length of draft service, the power of the President to commit troops abroad. Tower added graduate deferments and other exemptions. Further with reference to the time table, Laird indicated that the message would go forward as soon as the President had signed it. RMN said, "Whatever you send over, I sign. If it's all right, I signed it. If it's wrong, you signed it." He then closed the meeting on this point and suggested the Secretary might want "to get back to his military-industrial complex."

RMN reported on the policy which had been fixed concerning the visit by Rev. Abernathy. At the conclusion of this meeting



at 10:00 a.m., he will be received by the Urban Affairs Council in the Cabinet Room. The members will listen, and if they choose to do so, express views. He inquired how the matter is being handled in the House and Senate. Dirksen said that last year he received a wire requesting a meeting with Senate leaders. A meeting was arranged in Mansfield's office, where "he droned along, not prepared in his subject." This year, in reply to the telegram, Dirksen said that there is a leadership meeting today and that he wouldn't be able to grant a special audience. Ford said that it will be handled much the same as last year. The meeting is scheduled this afternoon at 2:30, and it will be bipartisan as before. RMN said that the movement is badly split in a leadership fight among CORE, Whitney Young, Mrs. King, Rev. Abernathy and others. He suggested that we should not become involved in a family fight. Scott said that 17 Senators met yesterday and heard their demands. The meeting was low key. They requested further meetings with individual Cabinet members. No promises were made. A "very wrathful Indian" included in her demands that the Capitol and White House be moved to the middle of the country so that the poor people could walk to it conveniently from all sides.

The President asked for a report from the House and Senate. Dirksen said that several treaties are under consideration. Ford said that this is a very light work week. Next week the supplemental appropriations bill will be considered.

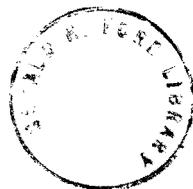
RMN sketched briefly the message he expects to deliver Wednesday night by live television. It will not be one recommending withdrawal of forces. He met yesterday with Abrams to discuss military prospects and particularly the status of the program of training of the South Vietnamese. The response was encouraging. They also



discussed possible future contingency actions. RMN first considered calling a bipartisan leadership meeting. He decided not to do so because he feels the need to clear with the South Vietnamese in such matters. It is important to win their confidence. It is difficult to make peace in company with the South Vietnamese; it is impossible to make peace without them. The speech, which will be principally in the nature of a report to the nation on the Vietnam War and the Paris negotiations, will be delivered Wednesday; Ambassador Lodge will be in Washington to meet with the National Security Council Thursday; on Friday, the Paris meeting, which is usually closed, will be open. In the telecast, the President will make it plain that he does not look with favor upon the enemy's tactic of launching a new military campaign at the same time it is allegedly launching a peace campaign. He warned that he would not raise false hopes. The war will not be over by summer. We will explore every effort to win peace by negotiation. Panic will not promote peace. Neither will total intransigence. The President said that he did not intend to criticize the critics but that he would be unaffected by them. He intends to "plow ahead on the program and policy that have been planned." Those who criticize today may look bad in two months.

The President then said that it was time to clear the room for Rev. Abernathy.

RICHARD H. POFF



## OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
PRESS CONFERENCE  
OF  
CONGRESSMAN GERALD R. FORD  
THE ROOSEVELT ROOM

AT 10:01 A.M. EDT

CONGRESSMAN FORD: First I should explain why Senator Dirksen is not here. He has to go up and introduce Don Rumsfeld to the Senate Committee involving the confirmation of Don as the new head of OEO.

The meeting with the President this morning was shorter than usual. There was a limited agenda because the President has another meeting in the Cabinet Room, I think with Dr. Abernathy.

The subject matter primarily involved the decision of the President, which he made this morning, to firm up his message which is going to the Congress today on draft revision. The message will primarily urge that the Congress amend the present law sufficiently to give him the authority to select nineteen-year-olds for the draft and to remove some of the uncertainties that presently exist for young men who come of draft age, and then from nineteen to twenty-six, have the problem hanging over their heads.

Under the proposal by the President there will be random selection in the nineteen-year-old category each year. If a man is selected under this random process and it is estimated it would be about one in six or one in seven, he still gets the benefit of his educational deferment, or any other deferment. However, he knows at the age of nineteen that he is in that category, which means he will be selected when he concludes his temporary deferment.

I think the uncertainty of all young people from nineteen to twenty-six that they are going to be drafted has created a great deal of concern and apprehension and this proposal, which to a large degree is comparable to what the draft bill was that was passed by the Senate a year or two ago, would be a step in the right direction.

Other than that there was no discussion, except in broad outline of the President's speech tomorrow night.

Q How soon would this new draft proposal go into effect?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: The message is coming up today. Hearings will be held, it is hoped, in the Senate first. As I understand it, Senator Stennis is currently conducting hearings on the procurement proposals. I assume this would follow those hearings in the Senate.

MORE

(OVER)



Q But I mean if it was approved and passed?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: Probably if it is approved in the form recommended by the President, it would go into effect January 1.

Q What do you think of the prospects?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I hope they are good, but at the moment it might be a little hazardous to be categorical. I think the removal of the uncertainty for young people going into the draft age is a very, very important problem. I think the public wants it. I think the Congress wants it. The Senate approved it basically two years ago. I would hope that we can do it this year so that young people who become nineteen next year will be affected by the change.

Q Did the President discuss the timing of his speech and why he is making his speech now, what he is trying to accomplish?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: He said that approximately three and a half months had passed and he felt that it was desirable that he lay out the Administration's views on the situation in Paris and elsewhere?

Q Did he tell you what he was going to say?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: No, he did not.

Q Will it be a sort of State of the Union Message?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I would not say a State of the Union Message. It is a summary of the situation in Paris and related areas.

Q Did he talk about troop withdrawals?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: No, there was no discussion about troop withdrawals, but it was said that the speech tomorrow night would not involve troop withdrawals.

Q I was going to ask you whether it was just a summary or will there be proposals of one kind or another, specifically diplomatic proposals?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: This detail was not discussed.

Q Did you discuss the Fortas affair at all?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: The Fortas matter did not come up.

Q You were quoted yesterday saying that you had cautious optimism about peace in Vietnam. Were those views reinforced today?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: My observations of yesterday about cautious optimism were reinforced by the general summary the President gave us.

MORE



Q Did you see the speech?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I have not.

Q Are you familiar with the disclosures on Justice Fortas that the Justice Department has? Have you been told about those and what they are?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I know nothing about the details. I hear the rumors and read the stories, but I don't know the details.

Q Have you been given a report by the Justice Department?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I have not.

Q Have you asked for it?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I have felt that under the circumstances, with the possibility of some action in the House, that it was not advisable for me to know at this stage any of these additional charges, if they do exist.

Q What took place in your meeting this morning with the President to reinforce your cautious optimism about Vietnam?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I think it was an accumulation of what we have heard heretofore, that the Administration has a deliberate plan and program, not only involving the Paris negotiations, but military operations. I have a great deal of confidence in the President and I think that knowing he has such a plan and a program gives me additional hope that we can expect some results.

Q Is it a plan that is in force now, that is proceeding?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I assume all of the steps taken by this Administration since January 20 in this regard are predicated on a coordinated plan, military and diplomatic, and I think they are.

Q Will the public be advised about such a plan tomorrow night?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: We did not get into these details, but I assume that this speech is a part of the desire on the part of the President to bring the public up to date on what he has been able to do and what his future aims and objectives are.

Q Does this plan regarding military operations include a cutback in U. S. forces in Vietnam?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: That was not discussed.

MORE

(OVER)



Q Is the plan now at the stage that the President anticipated it would be when he took office? I imagine he had a timetable.

CONGRESSMAN FORD: We did not discuss that aspect of it. I had the feeling the President believes things are moving along as he hoped for or anticipated, but that aspect was not discussed.

Q Did the President discuss at all how the other side is behaving with respect to a settlement?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I think the President feels some progress, from the point of view of the enemy, is being made, but we did not get into the details as to what specifically he thought was a change in their attitude.

Q Mr. Ford, was there any discussion of any other messages to come or any other items on the legislative agenda?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: There were not. The draft message was the only specific legislative matter that came before the group this morning.

MORE



Q Mr. Ford, under the present draft system the Army gets many of their junior officers from the colleges who are in effect sidestepping the draft. Under the system where the ROTC is being removed from the campuses, where would the Army get the officers from, if you remove the uncertainty?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: Ron tells me the details of this will be given in a briefing here later. I would say that very few, however, of the colleges, have actually eliminated the ROTC, some, but a limited number. It will be interesting to see what happens if they ever demand the removal of ROTC from land grant colleges. You know there is a specific requirement that a land grant college, if they expect to get Federal funds under the Morrill Act, have ROTC. Now, to my knowledge, none of those colleges where this problem has arisen fall in that category, but I would be interested to see just what the attitude will be of some of these college presidents when that problem gets on their agenda.

Q Mr. Ford, you are not going along with his premise that a man who goes into ROTC as a volunteer is sidestepping the draft, are you?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: Personally, I do not, because in most cases where the ROTC exists, they volunteer. I might say I have a son who is a ROTC volunteer and I don't think he is sidestepping the draft by taking such action.

Q Has random selection ever been done before? Wasn't it sort of turned down the last time?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I think in World War II, when some of us here had our numbers drawn out of the lot, that was pretty random, and that was in effect for some four years and some of us were affected by it.

Q Is that the way it will work this time?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: Within age categories, starting at age nineteen.

Q Was there any report this morning or any discussion of the prospects of the ABM?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: None whatsoever.

Q Did you discuss campus unrest and any possible legislation?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: No, sir.

Q Did you get the impression that the President is going to make any new announcements tomorrow night?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I think the mere fact that he is making his first nationwide speech implies there will be something of public interest in this matter.

MORE

(OVER)



Q Did you discuss the job corps?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: We did not.

Q How long did the meeting last?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: It started at 8:30 and we quit at 9:45.

Q Did the President say why he decided to rush this message through today?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: There was no specific reason. The Secretary of Defense was there and took 45 minutes, or thereabouts, to answer a great many questions raised by some of the members. This was the real core of the meeting this morning.

Q Were you briefed by Attorney General Mitchell last week on the Fortas affair, at the Leadership meeting?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: No, he was there for the purpose of talking about one of the crime messages and someone raised the Fortas matter, inasmuch as it appeared in the Life Magazine article the day before, but he did not brief us as such on the Fortas matter then and the matter did not come up today.

Q Did he indicate that there was something more on the Fortas affair other than what has been said?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I always felt those meetings, other than what either Senator Dirksen or I give you, are executive session, so I don't think I should go beyond what you have read and heard the last few days.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

(END)

(AT 10:10 A.M. EDT)



HOUSE ACTION, PERIOD MAY 6 THROUGH MAY 12, 1969

Tuesday, May 6, 1969

MILK PROGRAM

The House by record vote of 384 yeas to 2 nays passed H.R.5554, to provide a special milk program for children.

THE FINDLEY AMENDMENT

Prior to passage the House by a division vote of 8 yeas to 85 nays rejected the Findley (Ill.) Amendment specifying that milk only be available to low income children.

RECOMMIT

Also prior to passage the House by a voice vote rejected the straight recommit motion of Teague of California.

Tuesday, May 13, 1969

Eleven Bills from Committee on Ways and Means (by unanimous consent)

Wednesday and Balance of Week

H.J.Res.677, to authorize the President to reappoint as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff the officer serving in that position April 1, 1969. (by unanimous consent)

H.Con.Res.207, relating to General Omar N. Bradley. (by unanimous consent)

H.R.8620, to provide round trip transportation to home port for a member of the Naval service on permanent duty aboard a ship overhauling away from home port. (by unanimous consent)

H.R.6790, to authorize an increase in the number of Marine Corps Reserve officers who may serve in active status in combined grades of Brigadier and Major General. (by unanimous consent)

H.R.8018, to Amend Title 10, U.S. Code, to include a foster child within definition of dependent. (by unanimous consent)

S.1011, to authorize appropriations for the saline water conversion program, FY 1970. (subject to rule being granted)

H.R.4152, to authorize appropriations for certain Maritime Programs of the Department of Commerce. (subject to rule being granted)



EXECUTIVE 3-3600

Jerry - Per own conversation  
- the attached copy of a letter  
to Byce Harlow summarizes  
the main points

**ROBERT T. BORTH**

GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY  
777-14TH STREET, N. W.  
WASHINGTON 5, D. C.

RL 5/12

GENERAL ELECTRIC  
COMPANY

570 LEXINGTON AVE., NEW YORK, N. Y. 10022

May 5, 1969

Honorable Bryce Harlow  
Assistant to the President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

*Jerry -  
on Unemployment  
Compensation  
JH 7/12*

Dear Bryce:

1 In case it hasn't come to your attention yet, you may be interested to  
2 know about a proposal of considerable concern to the business community which  
3 has been cooking for a long period at the Labor Department and is about to be  
submitted to the White House for endorsement. The proposal is an omnibus  
unemployment compensation measure which was outlined by the Labor Department  
to the U. S. Chamber and other business representatives last week in Washington.  
While the measure does cover the waterfront and includes some items that are not  
too controversial, it does resurrect federal benefit standards for the state unemploy-  
ment system.

4 The last time this was a major issue was in 1966 when the House passed a  
5 modified version of the Johnson Administration's federal benefit standards bill  
6 H. R. 8282 - without benefit standards. This modified bill was H. R. 15119. The  
7 Senate then added benefit standards which would have increased gradually the  
maximum weekly benefit to 66-2/3% of state average weekly wages. The bill died  
in a joint House-Senate Conference.

8 General Electric and many in the business community supported the House  
version (H. R. 15119) including the concept of a recession extended benefit program  
but opposed the federal benefit standards saying that the case had not been made that  
the state programs were generally inadequate - while admitting that some states  
were lagging a bit.

9 It would seem a shame for the new Administration to endorse this remnant  
of the Johnson era, especially without at least having all the pertinent facts to judge  
the quality of the state programs.

10 While it would be logical for the new Administration to urge improvements  
in the unemployment compensation program, it would not seem desirable to endorse  
the program of the prior Administration for federal benefit standards or federal  
financing of extended benefits.



May 5, 1969

Page Two

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(11)  
(12)  
(13)

We have long supported the former Eisenhower Administration idea that a generally responsible program was one which permitted the majority of the beneficiaries to receive 50% of their pay. The Labor Department, after being prodded for years, has now agreed to provide essential state by state data on this by year end. The best available but still inconclusive data suggests this goal is being met in most states although there are unfortunately a few notable exceptions such as in Indiana and Ohio. Until better evidence is shown, I wonder why the White House should endorse the Labor Department's long-standing program leading to the federalization of the state systems which for many years have been working quite satisfactorily.

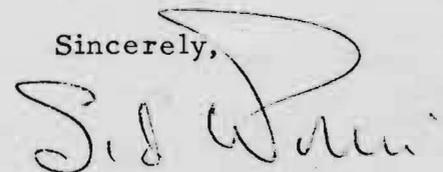
(14)

Incidentally, you should know that we, together with others in business, are currently supporting the Administration's proposal which would raise additional revenue now through advancing the payment of federal unemployment taxes by changing from annual to quarterly payments. This is a worthwhile measure.

At any rate, I thought this information might be useful and also perhaps serve as an advance indicator of the employer interest in and feeling on the subject.

Best regards.

Sincerely,



E. S. Willis, Manager  
Employee Benefits

ESW/cm



MINORITY LEADER  
United States  
House of Representatives

Draft - <sup>up</sup> Tomorrow.

1) Change in  
War.

2) ABM.  
conflict.

3) Mini change  
open up subject.



MINORITY LEADER  
United States  
House of Representatives

Pay for U.P.  
+ Speaker.



MINORITY LEADER

United States  
House of Representatives

How about  
Oakley Hunter?

Romney suggested  
~~having~~ him for exec  
director (?) of Comsat-  
type Housing Corp.  
under Kaiser.

Nothing has happened  
since x

May 13, 1969

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The President asked for a report from the House and Senate ,



Dirksen said that several treaties are under consideration. Ford said that this is a very light work week. Next week the supplemental appropriations bill will be considered.

RMN then sketched briefly the message he expected to deliver Wednesday night by live ~~XXXXXX~~ television. It will not be one recommending withdrawal of forces. He met yesterday ~~XXXXXX~~ with Abrams to discuss military prospects and particularly the status of the program of training of the South Vietnamese. The response was encouraging. They also discussed possible future contingencies ~~any~~ action; RMN first ~~considered~~ calling a bipartisan leadership meeting. He decided not to do so because he feels the need to clear with the South Vietnamese in such matters. It is important to win their confidence. It is difficult <sup>to</sup> ~~at~~ make peace in company with the South Vietnamese; it is impossible to make peace without them. The speech, which will be principally in the nature of a report to the nation on the Vietnam War and the Paris negotiations, will be delivered Wednesday; Ambassador Lodge will be in Washington to meet with the National Security Council Thursday; ~~xxx~~ on Friday, the Paris meeting, which is usually closed, will be open. In the telecast, the President will make it plain that he does not look with favor upon the enemy's tactic of launching a new military campaign at the same time it is allegedly launching a peace campaign. He warned that he would not raise false hopes. The war will not be over by summer. We will explore every effort to win peace by negotiation. Panic will not promote peace. Neither will total intransigence. The President said that he did not intend to criticize the critics but that he would be unaffected by them. He intends to "plow ahead on the program and policies that <sup>have</sup> ~~have~~ been planned." Those who criticize today may look bad in two months.



The President then said that it was time to clear the room for  
Rev. Abernathy.

Richard H. Poff



## Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

## TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

For almost two million young men who reach the age of military service each year -- and for their families -- the draft is one of the most important facts of life. It is my conviction that the disruptive impact of the military draft on individual lives should be minimized as much as possible, consistent with the national security. For this reason I am today asking the Congress for authority to implement important draft reforms.

Ideally, of course, minimum interference means no draft at all. I continue to believe that under more stable world conditions and with an armed force that is more attractive to volunteers, that ideal can be realized in practice. To this end, I appointed, on March 27, 1969, an Advisory Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force. I asked that group to develop a comprehensive plan which will attract more volunteers to military service, utilize military manpower in a more efficient way, and eliminate conscription as soon as that is feasible. I look forward to receiving the report of the Commission this coming November.

Under present conditions, however, some kind of draft will be needed for the immediate future. As long as that is the case, we must do everything we can to limit the disruption caused by the system and to make it as fair as possible. For one's vision of the eventual does not excuse his inattention to the immediate. A man may plan to sell his house in another year, but during that year he will do what is necessary to make it livable.

Accordingly, I will ask the Congress to amend the Military Selective Service Act of 1967, returning to the President the power which he had prior to June 30, 1967 to modify call-up procedures. I will describe below in some detail the new procedures which I will establish if Congress grants this authority. Essentially, I would make the following alterations:

1. Change from an oldest-first to a youngest-first order of call, so that a young man would become less vulnerable rather than more vulnerable to the draft as he grows older.
2. Reduce the period of prime draft vulnerability -- and the uncertainty that accompanies it -- from seven years to one year, so that a young man would normally enter that status during the time he was nineteen years old and leave it during the time he was twenty.
3. Select those who are actually drafted through a random system. A procedure of this sort would distribute the risk of call equally -- by lot -- among all who are vulnerable during a given year, rather than arbitrarily selecting those whose birthdays happen to fall at certain times of the year or the month.

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4. Continue the undergraduate student deferment, with the understanding that the year of maximum vulnerability would come whenever the deferment expired.

5. Allow graduate students to complete, not just one term, but the full academic year during which they are first ordered for induction.

6. In addition, as a step toward a more consistent policy of deferments and exemptions, I will ask the National Security Council and the Director of Selective Service to review all guidelines, standards and procedures in this area and to report to me their findings and recommendations.

I believe these reforms are essential. I hope they can be implemented quickly.

Any system which selects only some from a pool of many will inevitably have some elements of inequity. As its name implies, choice is the very purpose of the Selective Service System. Such choices cannot be avoided so long as the supply of men exceeds military requirements. In these circumstances, however, the Government bears a moral obligation to spread the risk of induction equally among those who are eligible.

Moreover, a young man now begins his time of maximum vulnerability to the draft at age nineteen and leaves that status only when he is drafted or when he reaches his twenty-sixth birthday. Those who are not called up are nevertheless vulnerable to call for a seven year period. For those who are called, the average age of induction can vary greatly. A few years ago, when calls were low, the average age of involuntary induction was nearly twenty-four. More recently it has dropped to just about twenty. What all of this means for the average young man is a prolonged time of great uncertainty.

The present draft arrangements make it extremely difficult for most young people to plan intelligently as they make some of the most important decisions of their lives, decisions concerning education, career, marriage, and family. Present policies extend a period during which young people come to look on government processes as particularly arbitrary.

For all of these reasons, the American people are unhappy about our present draft mechanisms. Various elements of the basic reforms which I here suggest have been endorsed by recent studies of the Selective Service System, including that of the Marshall Commission of 1967, the Clark panel of that same year, and the reports of both the Senate and the House Armed Services Committees. Reform of this sort is also sound from a military standpoint, since younger men are easier to train and have fewer family responsibilities.

My specific proposals, in greater detail, are as follows:

1. A "youngest-first" order of call. Under my proposal, the government would designate each year a "prime age group," a different pool of draft eligibles for each consecutive twelve-month period. (Since that period would not necessarily begin on January 1, it would be referred to as a "selective service year.") The prime age group for any given

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selective service year would contain those registrants who were nineteen years old when it began. Those who received deferments or exemptions would rejoin the prime age group at the time their deferment or exemption expired. During the first year that the new plan was in operation, the prime age group would include all eligible men from nineteen to twenty-six, not deferred or exempt, so that no one would escape vulnerability simply because of the transition.

2. Limited vulnerability. Each individual would experience maximum vulnerability to the draft only for the one selective service year in which he is in the prime age group. At the end of the twelve-month period -- which would normally come sometime during his twentieth year -- he would move on to progressively less vulnerable categories and an entirely new set of registrants would become the new prime age group. Under this system, a young man would receive an earlier and more decisive answer to his question, "Where do I stand with the draft?" and he could plan his life accordingly.

3. A random selection system. Since more men are classified as available for service each year than are required to fill current or anticipated draft calls, Selective Service Boards must have some way of knowing whom to call first, whom to call second, and whom not to call at all. There must be some fair method of determining the sequence of induction for those available for service in the prime age group.

In my judgment, a fair system is one which randomizes by lot the order of selection. Each person in the prime age group should have the same chance of appearing at the top of the draft list, at the bottom, or somewhere in the middle. I would therefore establish the following procedure:

At the beginning of the third month after Congress grants this authority, the first of a sequence of selective service years would begin. Prior to the start of each selective service year, the dates of the 365 days to follow would be placed in a sequence determined by a random method. Those who spend the following year in the pool would take their place in the draft sequence in the same order that their birthdays come up on this scrambled calendar. Those born on June 21st, for example, might be at the head of the list, followed by those born on January 12th, who in turn might be followed by those born on October 23rd. Each year, a new random order would be established for the next year's draft pool. In turn those who share the same birthday would be further distributed, this time by the first letter of their last names. But rather than systematically discriminating against those who come at the front of the alphabet, the alphabet would also be scrambled in a random manner.

Once a person's place in the sequence was determined, that assignment would never change. If he were granted a deferment or exemption at age nineteen or twenty, he would re-enter the prime age group at the time his deferment or exemption expires, taking the same place in the sequence that he was originally assigned.

While the random sequence of induction would be nationally established, it would be locally applied by each draft board to meet its local quota. In addition to distributing widely and evenly the risk of induction, the system would also aid many young men in assessing the likelihood of induction even before the classification procedure is completed. This would reduce uncertainty for the individual registrant and, particularly in times of low draft calls, simplify the task of the draft boards.

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4. Undergraduate student deferments. I continue to believe in the wisdom of college deferments. Permitting the diligent student to complete his college education without interruption by the draft is a wise national investment. Under my proposal, a college student who chooses to take a student deferment would still receive his draft sequence number at the time he first enters the prime age group. But he would not be subject to induction until his deferment ended and he re-entered a period of maximum vulnerability.

5. Graduate Student Induction. I believe that the induction of men engaged in graduate study should be postponed until the end of the full academic year during which they are first called to military service. I will ask the National Security Council to consider appropriate advice to the Director of the Selective Service to establish this policy. At present, graduate students are allowed to delay induction only to the end of a semester. This often means that they lose valuable time which has been invested in preparation for general examinations or other degree requirements. It can also jeopardize some of the financial arrangements which they made when they planned on a full year of schooling. Induction at the end of a full academic year will provide a less damaging interruption and will still be consistent with Congressional policy.

At the same time, however, the present policy against general graduate deferments should be continued, with exceptions only for students in medical and allied fields who are subject to a later special draft. We must prevent the pyramiding of student deferments -- undergraduate and graduate -- into a total exemption from military service. For this reason the postponement of induction should be possible only once for each graduate student.

6. A review of guidelines. The above measures will reduce the uncertainty of young men as to when and if they may be called for service. It is also important that we encourage a consistent administration of draft procedures by the more than 4,000 local boards around the country. I am therefore requesting the National Security Council and the Director of Selective Service to conduct a thorough review of our guidelines, standards and procedures for deferments and exemptions, and to report their findings to me by December 1, 1969. While the autonomy of local boards provides valuable flexibility and sensitivity, reasonable guidelines can help to limit geographic inequities and enhance the equity of the entire System. The 25,000 concerned citizens who serve their country so well on these local boards deserve the best possible framework for their decisions.

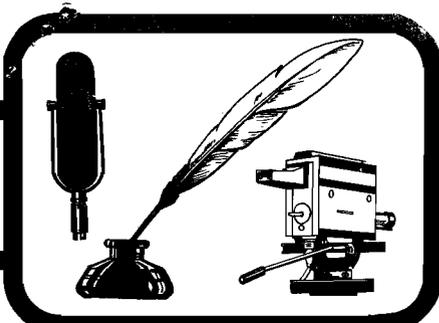
Ultimately we should end the draft. Except for brief periods during the Civil War and World War I, conscription was foreign to the American experience until the 1940's. Only in 1948 did a peacetime draft become a relatively permanent fact of life for this country. Now a full generation of Americans has grown up under a system of compulsory military service.

I am hopeful that we can soon restore the principle of no draft in peacetime. But until we do, let us be sure that the operation of the Selective Service System is as equitable and as reasonable as we can make it. By drafting the youngest first, by limiting the period of vulnerability, by randomizing the selection process, and by reviewing deferment policies, we can do much to achieve these important interim goals. We should do no less for the youth of our country.

RICHARD NIXON

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
May 13, 1969.





CONGRESSMAN  
**GERALD R. FORD**  
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS  
RELEASE**

--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE--  
May 13, 1969

Statement by Rep. Gerald R. Ford, R-Mich., placed in the body of the Congressional Record of Tuesday, May 13, 1969.

In wartime -- and we are at war -- there is no issue more important to a young man and his parents than the draft.

The draft is necessary as long as the Vietnam War continues. It is vital, therefore, that the draft be made as fair as possible. It is also vital that the uncertainty which clouds the lives of young American men under the present Selective Service System be eliminated.

To make the draft fair and to wipe out uncertainty the Congress must reform the present draft law.

President Nixon today has outlined for the Congress the reforms needed to achieve equity and certainty.

The only way to make the draft fair is to spread the risk of induction equally among all who are eligible. The President's proposals would do this.

The only way to eliminate uncertainty is to let it be known at an early age whether or not a man has been chosen to serve sometime during his draft-eligible years. The President's reform plan also would do this.

The most important feature of the President's suggested reforms is the plan for choosing by lot those who are actually drafted. Actually, this is the only change which the President does not now have the power to make on his own. It is essential that this power be restored to him, for without this change the others he suggests would not be feasible.

Why not? Imagine for a moment that the President has set up a system in which the prime age group contains younger men and in which each man stays in that vulnerable status for only a one-year period, when he is 19 or 20. How do you then decide who will be called first and who will be called last? Who will be at the top of the draft list and who will be at the bottom? The present law would force the government to list men for this purpose in the order of their birthdates.

Now, suppose that there were 500,000 men available in 1970 but that we only needed 250,000. The only way we could pick out those who would be inducted

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would be to start with those born on January 1, go next to those born on January 2, then take those who were born on January 3 and so on. Everyone born in January and February would always be taken. And no one born in November or December would ever be taken. Those who were born in March and April would run a much, much greater risk each year than those born in September and October.

Now someone will say, "No! We can do it on a month-by-month basis." But once again the same problem arises. And all those born on the first, the second, or the third day of each month would always be called up. Nobody whose birthday is on the 28th or the 29th or the 30th would run a very great risk ever. Moreover, since draft calls are almost always higher in some months than in others, those who happened to have their birthdays in high-call months would be systematically discriminated against.

In the present oldest-first system, these problems are somewhat obscured because everyone who is passed over by the draft during one month or one year moves higher and higher on the list as time passes. But that system has the overwhelming disadvantage of prolonging the time of vulnerability and uncertainty. A youngest-first, limited vulnerability system corrects this evil and, in addition, it provides more easily-trained personnel.

But the only way such a system can work sensibly is if the risk of induction is equally distributed among all who are eligible. This cannot be done unless we change from the order of birthdate system to a random system, as the President proposes.

The draft as it presently operates is terribly disruptive of a young man's life. It generates tensions and divisions within our society. I believe reform of the present Selective Service System as proposed by President Nixon is an absolute necessity.

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