

TESTIMONY REGARDING THE SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM

MAY 30, 2023

2:30PM

SENATE VETERANS AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Witness:

Bradley Willette
State Director, Ohio
Selective Service System

Testimony:

Good afternoon, Chair Hoagland, Ranking Member Craig, Vice Chair Wilson, and Senators Johnson and Wilkin.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 113.

My name is Brad Willette. I am the Ohio State Director for the United States Selective Service System.

The agency is currently in a standby posture. During standby, my primary responsibilities include:

- Outreach to community representatives and state and local officials;
- Advancing readiness capabilities;
- Oversight of local board member recruitment and training throughout the state; and
- Helping manage Reservists assigned to the Selective Service System.

During mobilization, I'm responsible for:

- Inductions of men ages 18 to 25 in Ohio through a randomized national draft lottery;
- The operation of local and district boards throughout the state;
- Maintaining an Alternative Service Employment Network for conscientious objectors to fulfill their two-year national service obligation in lieu of military service; and
- Supporting communications and operational functions between the Governor and Director of Selective Service.

State Directors are appointed on behalf of the President by the Director of Selective Service, upon the recommendation of the respective state Governors. Accordingly, I approach my job as an Ohioan. I want the best for our state and for registration-age men to remain in compliance with federal law.

Registration with the Selective Service System is a civic obligation and a rite of passage.

Throughout history, all men register with Selective Service System when they turn eighteen.

In April of this year, Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks said:

“If the United States were to go to a major conflict... We have Reserve components we would pull in, and we also have [the] Selective Service out there. I say that only because I don’t want people to think the all-volunteer force is sort of alone when the United States must make major decisions.”

By registering with Selective Service System, Ohio men are showing the all-volunteer force that they aren’t alone... That they stand with the men and women serving our nation in the United States Armed Forces.

This is why registration is so important to our country. That’s why I’m concerned that registration rates for eighteen-year-olds dropped to 51% in 2022.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 73% of Ohio eighteen-year-old men registered with Selective Service System.

To return registration rates to prior levels, we need help.

Senate Bill 113 creates a new incentive for Ohio men to register. It also helps raise registration awareness.

High registration compliance rates in Ohio help ensure that any future military draft is fair and equitable, which comports with the Congressional declaration of policy that:

“... in a free society the obligations and privileges of serving in the armed forces and the reserve components thereof should be shared generally, in accordance with a system of selection which is fair and just...”

As such, I applaud your efforts to support the Selective Service System’s mission.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.