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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND
COMPENSATION DIVISION

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The Honorable Byron V. Pepitone
Director of Selective Service System

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Dear Mr. Pepitone:

We have reviewed certain aspects of the Selective Service System (SSS) concentrating on management weaknesses applicable to either an active or standby system. We obtained information from the National Headquarters; service centers in Philadelphia, Chicago, Denver, and Alameda; State headquarters in Hawaii, Minnesota, and Colorado, and from both the State headquarters and selected local boards in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and California.

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Many of the weaknesses we noted are in process of correction.

- Your recent simplification of local board procedures and redesign of their records should eliminate a large number of cumbersome and duplicative steps nationwide.
- Your staff and budget reductions planned by December 31, 1973, are cutting a surplus of staff at many sites and at all organizational levels.
- The transfer of medical determinations to the Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Stations removed certain difficult medical considerations from the SSS structure.
- Actions taken on recommendations of the Management Evaluation Group of SSS appear to be adequate to correct a range of problems in the Alternate Service Program and operation of local draft boards.

We also noted continuing management weaknesses in registration and organizational structure. These are discussed below.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Registration is the initial step in processing a man through the Selective Service System. The system cannot operate fairly unless all eligible males register in a timely manner and have an equal chance of being selected for induction should the need arise.

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The Selective Service law requires that all eligible males between the ages of 18 and 26 be registered. Implementing regulations allow 30 days following an individual's 18th birthday for compliance.

Anti-draft organizations active in recent years have suggested both non-registration and delaying registration until after the lottery as means of avoiding the draft. The activities of such organizations may well have resulted in an increase in non-registration.

Extent of non-registration

A study made by the Colorado State Selective Service Headquarters in late 1972 showed that 379, about 9 percent, of 4,010 male high school seniors in the Denver metropolitan area had not registered in Colorado. Inquiry cards were mailed to the 379 apparent non-registrants with the following results:

- 208 registered after receiving inquiry cards,
- 15 stated they would register, but had not by the end of December 1972,
- 139 did not reply and had not registered by the end of December 1972, and
- 17 inquiry cards were returned by the post office with the notation "addressee unknown."

Registration in California dropped from 191,630 in 1971 to 177,053 in 1972, nearly 8 percent. According to the Bureau of Census there was no demographic reason for this decrease in registration. California officials attribute the decline to non-registration. The California Education Code prohibited school officials from furnishing student information necessary for us to survey the extent of non-registration. However, we were able to obtain such information in six states included in our review.

In Kansas, Missouri, Ohio, and Indiana we obtained the names of 2,582 male high school seniors, which we compared with local board registration records. We found no record of registration for 119, about 5 percent of the young men. Mail inquiries sent to the apparent non-registrants resulted in the following:

- 28 registered after receiving inquiry cards,
- 2 stated they would register,
- 44 stated they were registered elsewhere,
- 19 were in the Armed Forces,
- 2 non-immigrant aliens,
- 9 did not reply,
- 15 inquiry cards were returned by the post office with the notation "no forwarding address."

Similar tests in Massachusetts and Connecticut showed that the extent of non-registration was significantly greater. In these two States we obtained the names of 834 young men from school and locally

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prepared census data. We found no record of registration for 99, about 12 percent, of these young men. Mail inquiries sent to these apparent non-registrants resulted in the following:

- 51 registered after receiving inquiry cards,
- 9 stated they would register,
- 5 stated they were registered elsewhere,
- 4 were in the Armed Forces,
- 29 did not reply,
- 1 inquiry card was returned by the post office with the notation "no forwarding address."

We understand you anticipate an increase in non-registration as the draft ends, resulting from the public incorrectly assuming that the end of the draft eliminates the need to register. To counter this, an extensive publicity campaign is planned which will include radio and television spot announcements, magazine and newspaper advertisements, press releases, posters for public buildings, and special registration literature. While such efforts are important we believe further action is required to insure compliance with the registration requirements.

Recommendation

We recommend that SSS establish procedures to determine whether those who are required to register have done so. These procedures could provide maximum use of available resources such as local, State and Federal educational authorities; Social Security Administration; Department of Labor; and Bureau of the Census. Necessary legislation should be requested.

Processing of Late Registrants

Procedures set out in the SSS Registrant Processing Manual (RPM) state that late registrants will be processed in essentially the same manner as any other registrant. The RPM also provides instructions for processing violators, but does not identify late registration as a violation. As a result no uniformity exists in processing late registrants.

In one State where guidelines were provided, the local boards review reasons given by the registrants for being late. If the local boards believe a registrant willfully violated the law in registering late, the registrant's file is referred to State headquarters for further review and possible referral to the United States Attorney for prosecution. In the other State that has provided guidelines, late registrants appear before their local boards to explain why they were late. The files for all registrants who register after their nineteenth birthday were referred to State headquarters for review and prosecution. Several late registrants have been referred for prosecution from these States. Some of these registrants have been tried by jury, found guilty, and received sentences. Other cases were

pending trial or the registrant had volunteered for induction rather than stand trial. Each of these late registrants registered after their lottery drawing was held. Although none of them avoided induction by registering late, they were unable to provide a satisfactory explanation for their delay in registering.

In most States where no additional guidelines have been provided, late registrants are generally processed in essentially the same manner as registrants who register on time. Our review of registration records at 27 local boards in these States showed that 2,836, about 4 percent, of the 63,425 registrants born in 1951, 1952, and 1953 were more than three months late in registering. Of these, 1,036 registered after their lottery drawing was held. None of these late registrants were prosecuted, although in some cases their ages, delays in registration, and lottery numbers were comparable to those prosecuted in the States with additional guidelines.

Selective Service plans to correct the lack of uniformity in the way some late registrants are processed through increased training of local board personnel. While such training should be beneficial, we believe that additional guidelines from National Headquarters are needed to assure that all late registrants are processed uniformly.

We have noted that in response to your initiative the Department of Justice has recently clarified its position to all United States Attorneys on prosecuting nonregistrants reported by SSS as follows:

"An individual subject to the registration provisions of the Act who has not registered, and more than thirty (30) days have passed since the final date fixed for his registration, should be indicted absent compelling reasons to justify his failure to register."

ALTERNATIVE STANDBY DRAFT SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES

During our study of the Selective Service System we have become increasingly concerned that your organization plans do not suit its change of purpose from active (with inductions) to standby (without inductions) beginning July 1, 1973. Your plans to reduce the number of employees from 7,200 to 4,340 by December 31, 1973, clearly aim in the right direction. Our concern is with the question of what is the appropriate standby system.

C1 We recognize the reasonableness of your statement on May 2, 1973, to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Housing and Urban Development, Space, Science and Veterans that "All of fiscal year 1974 will be required before the success of the all-volunteer force can be assured." In the meanwhile, we propose that the alternative standby draft systems and procedures be thoroughly explored with recommendations for required legislation. S 90720

Broadly we categorize the alternative standby draft systems below:

- Maintaining the present traditional local board and State Headquarters organizations along with the Selective Service National Headquarters and service centers. We understand that you presently favor this alternative.
- Replacing the present local board structure with area appeal boards, composed of volunteer citizens, as the registrants' court of first appeal as recommended by the National Advisory Commission on Selective Service, Chaired by Burke Marshall in 1967. An additional structure was recommended by the Commission to operate at the same area level on a population basis, with at least one for each state, to register and classify draft eligible men.
- Using the framework of another existing Federal agency for registering and classifying but adopting the area appeal board concept recommended by the Burke Marshall Commission. We are aware of the study your staff started in 1972 to use Post Offices for registration and the decision of the Postal Service that such registration was not acceptable owing to its interference with regular postal business. It would appear that other procedures and other Federal departments and agencies might well be explored for these purposes.

Similarly the procedures of a standby draft system should be carefully studied. We recognize the starting point of such a study to be the requirements of Section 10(h) of the Military Selective Service Act that:

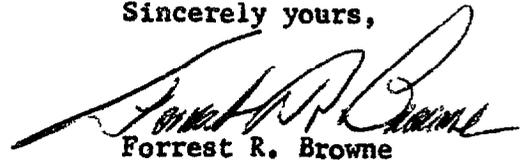
"--the Selective Service System--shall--be maintained as an active standby organization with (1) a complete registration and classification structure capable of immediate operation in the event of a national emergency and (2) personnel adequate to reinstitute immediately the full operation of the System including military reservists who are trained to operate such System and who can be ordered to active duty for such purpose in the event of a national emergency."

Thus we conceive as alternative procedures for study:

- the nature and extent of staff training,
- managing the ratio between peacetime assigned and emergency designated staff and,
- the extent that registration, classification and/or examination should continue after the all-volunteer force is tested in fiscal year 1974 as feasible in peacetime.

Copies of this report are being sent to the Director, Office of
C2-3 Management and Budget, and to the Senate and House Committees on SH L300
Appropriations, Armed Services and Government Operations. L 500

Sincerely yours,



Forrest R. Browne
Director