

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-18-226](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

The Military Selective Service Act established the Selective Service System whose mission, among other things, is to be prepared to provide trained and untrained manpower to DOD in the event of a national emergency when directed by the President and the Congress. In the NDAA for FY 2017, Congress included a provision requiring that DOD submit a report on the current and future need for a centralized registration system under the Military Selective Service Act. In addition, the act established a Commission to review, among other things, the military selective service process and report on it.

The act also included a provision for GAO to review DOD's procedures for evaluating selective service requirements. In this report, GAO compared the information DOD included in its report with the act's required elements and identified additional information that could benefit the Commission as it further reviews the military selective service process.

GAO reviewed DOD's report and the statutory elements and interviewed officials involved in the military selective service process to identify additional information that could benefit the Commission's ongoing review.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is not making any new recommendations. GAO believes its 2012 recommendation to DOD to periodically reevaluate its requirements for the Selective Service System, which DOD concurred with, is still valid. DOD had no additional comments on this report.

View [GAO-18-226](#). For more information, contact Brenda S. Farrell at (202) 512-3604 or farrellb@gao.gov.

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Ongoing Review of the Military Selective Service Process Could Benefit from Additional Information

What GAO Found

In its July 2017 report to Congress and the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service (i.e., "the Commission"), the Department of Defense (DOD) provided information regarding each of the six required reporting elements contained in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017. Specifically, DOD provided information on:

1. the direct and indirect benefits of the military selective service system;
2. the functions performed by the Selective Service System that would be assumed by DOD in the absence of a national registration system;
3. the systems, manpower, and facilities needed by DOD to physically mobilize inductees in the absence of the Selective Service System;
4. the feasibility and the utility of eliminating the focus on the mass mobilization of primarily combat troops in favor of a system that focuses on the mobilization of military occupational specialties, and the extent to which such a change would impact the need for both male and female inductees;
5. DOD's personnel needs in the event of an emergency requiring mass mobilization; an analysis of any additional critical skills that would be needed in the event of a national emergency; and a timeline for when DOD would require the first inductees to report for service; and
6. a list of the assumptions used by DOD to conduct its analysis.

GAO identified additional information that may benefit the Commission's ongoing evaluation of the military selective service process. The fifth required reporting element required DOD to analyze its personnel needs in the event of an emergency requiring mass mobilization and a timeline for obtaining these inductees. In response, DOD provided the personnel requirements and timeline that were developed in 1994 and that have not been updated since. DOD officials stated that they did not conduct additional analysis to update these requirements because the all-volunteer force is of adequate size and composition to meet DOD's personnel needs. In 2012, GAO recommended that DOD establish a process to periodically reevaluate DOD's requirements for the Selective Service System. Although DOD concurred with this recommendation, it has not yet implemented it. GAO believes this recommendation is still valid. Having updated DOD Selective Service System requirements and timelines for a potential draft may be useful in supporting the ongoing evaluation of the military selective service process by the Commission.

Further, military service officials told GAO that their perspectives on how selective service processes that could affect them had not been solicited in the preparation of DOD's report. Since the military services are to receive, train and integrate the inductees; provide support to the Selective Service System during a national emergency; and could help identify critical skill sets needed to meet emerging demands and the impact a draft could have on meeting those demands, the military service officials' perspectives could be useful to the Commission. DOD officials stated that they are currently collecting these perspectives and plan to provide this information to the Commission.