

**Advance Questions for Mr. Lawrence G. Romo**  
**Nominee to be Director of Selective Service**

**Duties**

**If confirmed as the Director of Selective Service what would be your principal responsibilities and duties?**

The principal responsibilities of the Director are noted in the Military Selective Service Act: to be ready to provide both trained and untrained manpower to the Armed Forces in the numbers and timeframes requested by the DoD, and to be prepared to manage an Alternative Service Program for those men classified as conscientious objectors. This charter implies that Selective Service be organized, staffed, and trained to perform these tasks.

**What background and experience do you have that you believe qualifies you for this position?**

Actually, my entire career has taken me on a path leading to this appointment. I have an affinity for military service: beginning as an USAF Academy graduate, a serving officer in the active and reserve components, and am currently working for the U.S. Army as a civilian. Public service is my life's preoccupation, both in and out of uniform. I believe that, even beyond a proven ability to build productive relationships among communities, the Texas Legislature, and the Federal Government, I was appointed to this position because of my familiarity with DoD, my demonstrated commitment to a strong national defense, and a career of public service.

**Relationships**

**The mission of the Selective Service System is to provide manpower to the Armed Forces in time of national emergency and to manage an Alternative Service Program for men classified as conscientious objectors during a draft.**

**If confirmed, what would your relationship be to the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness?**

It is clear that the chief customer of Selective Service is the Secretary of Defense. Today, Selective Service receives its guidance on the number of conscripts that may be required in a crisis, as well as the desired timeframes from the manpower planners in his Department. The Agency's primary contact within DoD is the Undersecretary for Personnel and Readiness. The SSS also works very closely with the Military Entrance Processing Command which also comes under his structure. As necessary, there is also direct liaison with the Office of the Secretary of Defense regarding SSS policy

issues. Over many years, these relationships have worked well and I will ensure that they continue.

**If confirmed, what would your relationship be to the Assistant Secretaries for Manpower in the military services; the uniformed personnel chiefs of the military services; the Chief of the National Guard Bureau; the reserve component chiefs; and the manpower officials in the Joint Staff?**

As an independent civilian Agency, Selective Service's principal interface with DoD is the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. Joint and Service manpower officials express their needs up their chain of command to OSD. This said, Selective Service has historically responded to the Services on Service-unique issues. For example, the SSS has been assisting individual Service recruiting efforts by including a recruiting brochure for the active and reserve components in our registration acknowledgment envelope mailed to more than 94,000 men each week. As Director, I will meet with the Service Secretaries as necessary. The Chief of the Bureau and the Reserve Chiefs support the Agency by placing 150 National Guard and Reserve officers in Selective Service assignments and assisting with the registration of young men.

### **Major Challenges**

**In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the next Director of the Selective Service System?**

There are four: getting the registration message out to the public given budget limitations, maintaining the registration compliance rate above the 90% range, assuring the public that if a draft is reinstated it will be fair and equitable, and defending the System against challenges from those who believe that our Nation no longer needs our capability.

**If confirmed, what plans do you have for addressing these challenges?**

To heighten awareness of the registration requirement among men 18 through 25 years old I would focus more mass mailings to targeted shortfall areas, augmented with public service advertising. This would expand the reach and frequency of the registration message. In support of this approach, I would add momentum and sustainability by encouraging more states to link driver's permits and licenses to the federal registration requirement. And finally, I would ensure a top to bottom review of all mobilization programs to determine the exact costs for readiness and whether the proper level of readiness has been achieved. Selective Service needs to be as ready and capable as is necessary to fulfill its responsibilities. With the foregoing accomplished, justification for the Agency and its mission would be self-evident.

## **Most Serious Problems**

**What do you consider to be the most serious problems in the performance of the functions of the Selective Service System?**

I believe they are two: eroding public awareness of the Federal registration requirement and the loss of trained personnel from the Agency. I am sensitive to the fact that the public awareness task is never completed because another 6,000+ young men turn 18 years old every day in the U.S. And excellent Selective Service employees are leaving for retirement or other jobs. Trained, dedicated personnel are the lifeblood of any service organization like Selective Service.

**What plans do you have for addressing these challenges?**

One of my first actions would be to spend about 60 days assessing the structure, budget, and programs of the System. Given the sizeable Agency investment in information technology over several years, a smarter realignment of programs and people is possible. New assignments and new challenges ought to excite staff and aid retention. Resources should be available for reprogramming in sync with priorities that I will set.

## **Military Personnel and the Selective Service System**

**The Selective Service System is authorized to use military members, from both the active and reserve components, to accomplish its mission. Currently, about 150 members of the National Guard and Reserve fulfill their military training obligations with the Selective Service System.**

**Please describe the current military manpower requirements of the Selective Service System and any initiatives taken by the Department of Defense and each of the Services to lower the number of uniformed military personnel who support the Selective Service System.**

Over the years, OSD and the military Services have been most cooperative in satisfying the Agency's military requirements, and working with them, Selective Service has reduced its uniformed assets. Since the mid-1990s, SSS has continuously realigned and updated those requirements. So the Agency now has assigned only 150 part-time National Guard and Reserve officers instead of 728 in 1993. Field grade officer positions were reduced by about 22 percent. Finally, SSS has eliminated all full-time military – from 19 in 1994 to 0 in 2005.

**To your knowledge, have there been proposals to substitute civilian positions for active duty or reserve component personnel, and what are your views about such an initiative?**

Yes, SSS has proposed replacing higher cost active duty positions with civilians. And although there has been a 100% reduction in active duty officers (19 in 1994 to 0 in 2005), there has not been a one-for-one replacement with civilians. In fact, civilian full-time staff has also gone down from 277 in 1992 to 136 in 2008. Further, the Agency has never sought replacements for its declining number of part-time reserve component personnel. Declining military and civilian personnel has been compensated for by applying more automation, changing policies, reshaping the organization, and smart staff training. These approaches have worked and the Agency has been doing more with less, so there is no need to surge employees of any type.

**What are your personal views about the requirement for military personnel to operate and manage the Selective Service System?**

While there is a benefit from military representation in the Agency, and the SSS currently has this with part-time National Guard and Reserve officers, Congress created Selective Service to be the independent, civilian buffer between the end user of conscripts, DoD, and American society. This approach has been working for over 69 years. But I do not believe that it is appropriate for military personnel to occupy decision-making positions; these ought to be civilian.

**Coordination with Secondary Schools**

**The Selective Service System has cultivated ties with organizations representing secondary school principals and counselors and community organizations in an effort to ensure knowledge of the requirements of law and voluntary compliance.**

**What Selective Service programs exist to inform and influence parents, teachers and other organizations regarding the requirement to register with the Selective Service System, and how widespread are these programs?**

SSS is already reaching out to influencers, schools, young men themselves, and other groups. Some are national in scope, such as radio Public Service Announcements to all the major media markets, high school kits to volunteer Selective Service registrars in 18,051 schools, and awareness materials to professional associations which deal with youth: National Association of Secondary School Principals, National School Boards Association, American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, and the National Association of Financial Aid Administrators. Examples of national influencer groups include: The League of United Latin American Citizens, National Urban League, Organization of Chinese Americans, and the National Congress of American Indians. Additionally, several programs focus on local or regional communities, such as YMCAs, local ethnic media, immigration services organizations,

and others. These local efforts are concentrated in areas of low registration compliance. And finally Selective Service has an extensive network of 10,000 civilian Board Members who are ambassadors for our programs in virtually every county in America.

**What is your understanding of the level of voluntary participation by secondary schools in assisting the Selective Service in achieving compliance by male students?**

The Nation's secondary schools are supportive. The Selective Service registrars in 18,051 high schools are volunteer staff or faculty members who distribute SSS awareness materials, approach young men directly to register, and send them to the library to register on the Internet at [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov). Today, SSS has 87% of the Nation's high schools participating with registrars.

**If confirmed, would you recommend imposing legal obligations on school systems that received federal funding to assist in overcoming ignorance of the law and apathy toward compliance?**

There is no doubt that a legal mandate would foster greater registrations, however, it might be perceived as the government being too heavy handed. I believe that the programs already in place at SSS are working, and improvement will come as more and more States adopt driver's license legislation supporting the federal registration law. But registration awareness remains a challenge and has to be continuously evaluated. If confirmed, this will be one of my priorities.

### **Assistance to Military Recruiting**

**What programs, if any, does the Selective Service System have in place to assist military recruiting?**

The Selective Service System is assisting military recruiting by placing information about military opportunities available in all active and reserve components in its registration acknowledgments. These are mailed to more than 188,000 men each month. So, DoD piggybacks on a routine SSS mailing. One very big selling point is the fact that SSS names and addresses are the most accurate to be found anywhere because they are recently submitted by the men themselves. Therefore, there is no wasted postage to contact them. DoD expressed its satisfaction by replacing its previous joint program with the SSS mailing.

**What are your views and recommendations about additional methods the Selective Service System might use in assisting in recruiting efforts?**

Conceptually, there should be additional ways that SSS might aid in this area if we put

our heads together. However, all would involve a change in law. And some would be seen as aggressive. For example, if reenlistment rates or enlistments themselves fall in the reserve components as a result of many protracted deployments, SSS might draft exclusively for them. A variation of this could be a National Guard and reserve draft, in which the military person completes his basic and advanced training on active duty, then performs a full-time homeland security mission in the U.S. for a period of time, followed by a part-time assignment in a Guard or reserve unit. The Nation is definitely not at this point currently; and I am sure DOD remains satisfied with the current arrangement only.

**What are your views and recommendations about initiatives the Department of Defense might implement to assist the Selective Service System in achieving higher compliance rates?**

I cannot think of anything additional that DoD might do for the SSS to achieve higher registration compliance. The Department already provides SSS its commercially-developed recruiting list and has given full-page ad space in one of its publications. Additionally, each Service ensures a new recruit is registered with Selective Service or registers him through the enlistment contract as he processes into the military. So Defense is already helping the SSS.

### **State by State Compliance**

**For years the Selective Service System has issued “report cards” by state measuring the percentage of eligible men turning 20 who have registered in accordance with the law.**

**What programs and requirements used by states have proven most successful in achieving above average compliance rates?**

The two most successful programs at the state level which foster registration compliance are state driver's license legislation and laws which parallel the federal Solomon and Thurmond amendments. Driver's license legislation links a driver's permit, license, license renewal, and state ID card to registering by means of the license application or submitting one's Selective Service number. The SSS now has 37 states, three territories and the District of Columbia participating. This is a wonderful source of registrations because every young man wants a license as soon as he can get it. The other great source of registrations is state law which links a man's eligibility for state-funded higher education benefits and state jobs to the federal registration requirement. To date, 21 states and territories have enacted both of these laws.

**What recommendations, if any, do you have for legislation or for new programs at both the federal and state level, for increasing compliance levels nationwide?**

At the federal level, I currently see no need for new or adjusted legislation. However, we hope that at the state level driver's license legislation might eventually include all 50 states and every U.S. territory.

**In your view, is the current budget of the Selective Service System sufficient to prevent declines in compliance rates?**

The past couple of years' worth of slippage in compliance rates is really due to changes in priorities for resources at SSS, not the lack of resources themselves. I think that SSS knows what works and what does not in registration compliance. If confirmed, I intend to do an assessment of the current needs of the SSS.

### **Incentives to Individuals for Compliance**

**Selective Service registration currently is a requirement for a number of opportunities, including federal student loans, job training, employment, and U.S. citizenship.**

**In your view, is it appropriate to require registration with the Selective Service System as a prerequisite for these federal programs?**

Yes. Together with the Congress and most state legislatures, I believe that it is not too much to ask men seeking a government benefit or opportunity to be in compliance with the law.

**Are there any additional incentives that you consider appropriate to encourage more young men to register in a timely manner?**

I believe that SSS has the bases covered. From its point of view, the one that needs to be expanded, the one that is the most productive source of registrations is driver's license legislation. But this is dependent upon the wishes of the 10 states that have not yet enacted such legislation.

### **Performance of the Selective Service System**

**Past Directors of Selective Service have indicated that the address information of Selective Service registrants is accurate because of provisions for voluntary submission of changes and through reliance on the U.S. Postal Service's National Change of Address system.**

**What is your estimate of the current accuracy of the address information of Selective Service registrants in the prime induction group?**

It is highly accurate. Actual mailings average over a 97 percent successful contact rate.

**What additional steps is the Selective Service System taking to ensure the accuracy of address information?**

Use of the Postal National Change of Address System is supplemented with changes provided by the registrant himself from our acknowledgment mailing to him at his residence, through changes a registrant mails in to the SSS using a card at any Post Office, from changes he provides by telephone, and with address updates he supplies on the Internet. So our procedures are working.

**Military Conscription**

**The demands placed on our military forces over the past 8 years have led to calls by some to reinstate the draft. Legislative proposals have been introduced in the Senate and the House of Representatives that would require all young men and women in the United States to perform a period of military service or a period of civilian service in furtherance of the national defense and homeland security.**

**What are your views on reinstating the draft to support the current wars?**

I see Selective Service as a service organization and, as such, it does not make policy; it responds to and implements policy. Policymaking is the realm of this Committee and the Administration. If confirmed, it would be my job to lead the Agency in conducting a timely, fair, and equitable draft if Congress and the President so direct. It would not be within my purview to determine when and if such a draft is necessary.

**Women now make up a significant portion of our military, and their service has been invaluable. In your opinion, should women be required to register for Selective Service?**

Since the founding of the Nation, the U.S. has never drafted women. To do so would require Presidential policy and Congressional lawmaking decisions. The primary customer, DoD, has taken the position that there is no military necessity to register, let alone, draft females, especially since a general draft would be intended to replace combat casualties and women can volunteer. As a matter of longstanding law and policy, the Nation continues to exclude women from front-line, ground combat assignments. If confirmed, it would be my job to lead the Agency in conducting a timely, fair, and equitable draft if Congress and the President so direct. It would not be within my purview to determine whether registration should be expanded to include women.

**Are there any circumstances under which you would recommend**



**reinstating the draft? If so, what are these circumstances?**

If confirmed, it would be my job to lead the Agency in conducting a timely, fair, and equitable draft if Congress and the President so direct. It would not be within my purview to determine when and if such a draft is necessary. Historically the Nation's policymakers have considered a draft when confronted with very serious threats from a hostile adversary or group of adversaries, or if a conflict was to be protracted over several years and volunteers were too few, or if there appeared to be no other solution to filling critical vacancies in the Armed Forces. This call belongs to others.

### **Congressional Oversight**

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**In order to exercise its legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress are able to receive testimony, briefings, and other communications of information.**

**Do you agree, if confirmed for this high position, to appear before this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress?**

Absolutely. I see it as a matter of integrity and principle that the Agency Head be the facilitator between Selective Service and the Congress in an ongoing dialogue. I have mentioned public awareness of the registration requirement, but the other type of awareness is Agency awareness by the oversight committees. This can only be achieved if I am responsive; if confirmed, I intend to be responsive.

**Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as the Director of Selective Service?**

If confirmed, I envision my job as Director to be the lead in the exchange of information between the Committee and the Selective Service System. Selective Service is a public agency doing the public's business. It can only retain its program credibility if what it does is open to public view and congressional scrutiny.

**Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings, and other communications of information are provided to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate Committees?**

I assure you that, if confirmed, I and Selective Service will be forthright and responsive in any communications to or from a Congressional Committee.

**Do you agree to provide documents, including copies of electronic forms of communication, in a timely manner when requested by a duly constituted Committee, or to consult with the Committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such documents?**

Yes, if confirmed I shall provide documents in a timely manner and will also consult if there is any delay or denial of documents.