

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SELECTIVE SERVICE TODAY AND DURING VIETNAM

The Agency has changed dramatically since the 1970s. A series of reforms during the latter part of the Vietnam conflict changed the way the draft operated. If a draft were held today it would be the most equitable draft in history:

If a draft were held today there would be fewer reasons to excuse a man from service.

Before Congress reformed the draft in 1971, a man could qualify for a student deferment if he could show he was a full-time student making satisfactory progress in virtually any field of study. He could continue to go to school and be deferred from service until he was too old to be drafted. Under the new draft law, a college student could have his induction postponed only until the end of the current semester. A senior could be postponed until the end of the full academic year.

If a draft were held today, local boards would better represent the communities they serve.

The changes in the new draft law made in 1971 included the provision that membership on the boards was required to be as representative as possible of the racial and ethnic background of the area served by the board.

Before 1971, state and local boards used a "quota system" under which they assigned a certain number of men to the draft. Because the boards determined who would be drafted, there were instances when personal relationships and favoritism played a part in deciding who would be drafted. Today, the Uniform National Call ensures that men will be treated the same, no matter which board they are assigned to.

A draft held today would use a lottery to determine the order of call.

Before the lottery was implemented in the latter part of the Vietnam conflict, there was no system in place to determine order of call besides the fact that men between the ages of

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18 and 26 were vulnerable to being drafted. This lack of a system resulted in uncertainty for the potential draftees during the entire time they were within the draft-eligible age group. All throughout a young man's early 20's he did not know if he would be drafted. A draft held today would use a lottery system under which a man would spend only one year in first priority for the draft—either the calendar year he turned 20 or the year his deferment ended, whichever came first. If he was not drafted in his first priority year, he dropped into second priority. In this way he would be spared the uncertainty of waiting until his 26th birthday to be certain he would not be drafted.

If a draft were held today, a registrant would be guaranteed a personal appearance before his board if he wanted to appeal his classification.

Before 1971, a draftee was not guaranteed this right, and so some decisions about whether a man would be drafted were made based on paperwork. Today, if a man wanted to appeal to his Local Board for an exemption or deferment, he could speak to them directly.