

## The Draft: Should We Have to Serve?

**Mary Layton Atkinson**

**Campus Life  
Correspondent**

According to *The New York Times*, two Democratic congressmen urged their colleagues to support a bill that would reinstate the draft in a letter they made public Jan. 27.

The identical House and Senate bills were introduced by Representative Charles B. Rangel of New York and Senator Ernest F. Hollings of South Carolina, and call for a reinstatement of the draft in addition to a period of national service for those not needed in the armed forces.

Both men and women ages 18 to 26 would be required to serve for two years under the bill, with exemptions made only for those enrolled as high school students or those with disabilities.

Aides to both congressmen

acknowledged to the press that the legislation was drafted in an effort to facilitate discussion of the issues surrounding an impending war with Iraq, and were not likely to become law.

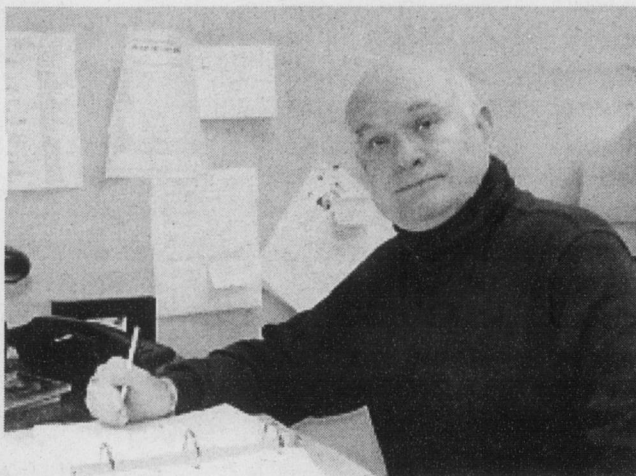
"If we are preparing for war against an enemy who wishes to 'threaten our society,' as President Bush says, then it makes sense that all who benefit from our society must share in defending it," the joint letter said.

Defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld does not share this sentiment.

"The disadvantages of using compulsion to bring into the armed services the men and

women needed to fight a war are notable," Rumsfeld said.

Guilford political science professor and former CIA employee Robert Duncan believes,



**Robert Duncan.**  
Sarah Austin

however, that compulsory service can be beneficial to both the nation and the individual.

"I think every young person should serve their country

in some capacity whether it be the military, VISTA, the Peace Corps, etc.," Duncan said. "By serving their country, these people provide meaningful contributions to society while learning marketable skills such as computer technology, management, community service, and leadership."

Many students, such as senior George Manley, are not eager to see mandatory service, something already widely required in Europe, become a reality in the U.S.

"I think requiring mandatory service gives the government too much power over the

individual," Manley said. "I do think, however, that it is a good idea to create awareness of what it takes to fight a war by introducing this legislation - it's a good shock tactic. People think back to Desert Storm and think that we can fight a war without people getting hurt. I just hope it doesn't pass."

Even if the bill were to become law, some students doubt that it would be able to ensure service by young people from all socioeconomic levels.

"I agree with their motives for proposing the draft legislation. One of the reasons is to make sure that there aren't just poor people fighting this war," sophomore Fern Hickey said. "But I don't believe we are going to see senators' sons being forced to enlist any time soon. They would find an exception."

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