

New bill may reinstate the draft for 2005

Meredith Veto

Staff Writer

“Those who love this country have a patriotic obligation to defend this country. For those who say the poor fight better, I say give the rich a chance,” said Democratic representative Charles Rangel in January 2003, when he and Democratic senator Fritz Hollings introduced a bill for a universal military draft.

The revised draft calls for all Americans between the ages of 18 and 26 to enlist in the military, including women. College students are not exempt from service, and neither are conscientious objectors, who would be placed in non-combatative service.

In addition, the “Smart Border Declaration” of 2001 between the U.S. and Canada would monitor draft-dodgers from the U.S., implementing a “pre-clearance agreement” of people attempting to enter the country.

Though the proposed draft sounds like an effort to boost Bush’s war on terror, it was

actually introduced by Rangel, who voted against the war with Iraq, and Hollings—both liberals.

The new draft is meant to “call the bluff” on conservative war hawks. In other words, Rangel and Hollings wanted to demonstrate to Bush the severity of committing to a potentially long-term war.

Rangel said he introduced the bill “in hopes that those people who make the decisions to go to war, to attack Iraq, would be better influenced against it if they had kids that would be placed in harm’s way, or if they felt closer to the shared sacrifice that we often times talk about.”

Although instituting a draft during the current war is considered unnecessary by most, many feel that revisions to make a draft more equal are needed.

“There were people that had a means of avoiding the draft (during Vietnam),” said Jerry Joplin, professor of Justice and Policy Studies, who served in the Vietnam War. “If you’re going to make it a fair process, you’ve got to elimi-

nate those class issues.”

Charlie White, Director of Information Services, was a conscientious objector during Vietnam. He agrees that there are class inequalities in the military. “If that’s truly an injustice, then maybe there’s some validity in it (the revision),” White said. “A piece of what’s wrong with the military now is that the wealthy and the educated don’t have to participate.”

Cara Newman, a CCE student, joined the military when she was 20 years old. “I consider myself a feminist,” Newman said. “As such, I don’t think that it’s right to exclude women from the draft, simply because they’re women.”

“But they are going to have to work out some specifics,” she continued. “For instance, in families with children, obviously both parents can’t be gone. In my family, if they institute a draft, I would be the one to go because I have prior military experience. And I wouldn’t have a problem with that if my husband were there to take care of the kids.”

Those who do not believe military service is right for everybody suggest alternative service.

“Service to the country, at least to me, is not an objection, but saying that you must participate in some sort of military service would be my objection,” White said. “There was, in the ‘30s, the Conservation Corps. It was sort of the Americorps of the 1930s. My mother helped build dams in Tennessee.”

“The military’s not the right place for everybody,” Joplin said. “I see things like the Peace Corps, the Vista program, as alternative service. I would like to see the military service looked at as another way of fulfilling a social obligation that we have, as opposed to saying we have to do this because we’re fodder for the war.”

Joplin also explained that it’s in the conservatives’ interest to keep the military all volunteer—there’s less internal resistance than when people are forced to go to war.

“There were people actually shooting themselves in the

foot to keep from going to Vietnam, and it wasn’t just out of fear of going into battle,” Joplin said. “When it’s pretty clear that the guys in Vietnam don’t want to be there, and people who have been drafted were saying, I don’t understand what the justification of the war is, that gave greater impetus to the war protesters.”

Misconceptions that the draft bill was conceived by the Bush administration may stem from the fact that the draft would be implemented in the spring of 2005, safely hidden behind major campaign issues of fall’s election season. Most supporters, in fact, oppose the war with Iraq. The draft bill is seen more as a cautionary tool created by liberals concerned about the consequences of a hasty move to war.

“We’re not going to re-implement a draft,” said Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. “There is no need for it at all. The disadvantages of using compulsion to bring into the armed forces the men and women needed

News Briefs

Aaron DeMoss

Associate Editor

French Fighting Anti-Semitism

In order to stem growing problems with anti-Semitism, the French educational system has suggested that schools show movies like “Schindler’s List” and “The Pianist”. The government also recommended using books like *The Diary of Anne Frank* and other depictions of the Holocaust in classrooms. The rising surge in anti-Semitic attitudes has been loosely connected with the conflict in the Middle East. France is home to western Europe’s largest Muslim population which has taken a

strong pro-Palestinian attitude. Threats and attacks have risen to the highest level since the ‘40s.

Palestinian Leader of Hamas Dead

Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the founder of the radical Palestinian movement Hamas, was killed with seven others in an Israeli airstrike on Monday, March 22. Abdel Aziz Rantisi, the replacement leader for Hamas, declared a continued war against Israel and America at the memorial service for the slain Yassin. In response, Israel claims it has the right to kill Hamas leaders, as Hamas is viewed as a terrorist organization. The U.S. vetoed the U.N. resolution

to condemn the strike. Since September 2000, Israel has blamed Hamas for the deaths of 377 Israelis.

Budget Passes House of Reps

The House of Representatives approved the \$2.4 trillion budget proposed by Republicans on Friday, March 26. The budget will increase funding for the Homeland Security department. Money was reserved for the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq; meanwhile some of President Bush’s proposed tax cuts were omitted. Democrats, who proposed their own budget bill, argued that Republicans didn’t include enough money for Homeland Security, veterans, educa-

tion and domestic needs. The Democrats substitute budget was voted down.

Bush Advocates Universal Broadband

Last Friday in New Mexico, President Bush expressed his support for the growing broadband market. A high-speed access to the Internet, broadband is already in 20.6 million homes and small businesses. The U.S. supplies a fund that subsidizes telephone companies in rural areas and those who cannot afford them, and now the President has suggested that the same subsidies should extend to broadband.