

Our Committee would be pleased to assist in any way possible in the consideration of alternatives that would meet the military personnel needs as well as make optimum use of our most highly trained personnel.

Sincerely yours,

CHAUNCEY STARR, *Chairman.*

[From the New York Times, Feb. 17, 1968]

BLOW TO THE UNIVERSITIES

In the name of greater equity—which was long overdue—the Selective Service System has dealt a crippling blow to the nation's academic community, and perhaps also to the armed services which it is supposed to support.

There can be no question that the decision to end most graduate school deferments, except in the fields of medicine, dentistry and allied medical specialties, eliminates an escape hatch that has unfairly permitted thousands of young men from privileged backgrounds to elude a burden of service that has fallen disproportionately on those less fortunate.

But if this abrupt change in policy is carried out with no change in the present rule of inducting the oldest first, the nation's graduate schools next fall will be decimated, with serious academic and educational consequences. Educational authorities estimate that more than 200,000 graduating seniors and first-year graduate students will suddenly become eligible for induction and, at present and estimated induction rates, will be thrust into the armed forces before the year is out.

This will, in the words of one university president, limit next year's graduate classes to "the lame, the halt, the blind and the female." It will complicate administrative problems, cripple university budgets and create a serious gap in future teacher material. It will also affect undergraduate studies by drastically reducing the number of available teaching assistants.

The induction of this large body of older, articulate students will also create serious problems for the armed services, which have found such older draftees less viable and more difficult to assimilate into military routines than younger men. It may create serious problems for Selective Service itself because a much higher percentage of war and draft objectors is found among graduate students.

These bitter fruits are the inescapable price of the failure of Congress last year to rewrite a fundamentally bad draft law. Equity and the broader interests of the nation simply cannot be served by tinkering with a basically inequitable act. The law should be revised in general accordance with the recommendations of the President's Advisory Commission on Selective Service, which Congress ignored last year. Meanwhile, the impact of the graduate studies ruling could be eased by modifying the "oldest first" order of induction.

[From Life magazine, Mar. 8, 1968]

THE DRAFT MUST BE MADE FAIRER

At a moment when the war in Vietnam is in so discouraging a state, and many more troops are being talked of, it is tragic for the nation to be saddled with an unfair draft law. Yet every time somebody sets out to improve the draft it ends up worse than it started.

In the past the inevitable inequities, though cruel to individuals, were such that we could live with them as a nation. But in this agonizing moment, grossly unfair draft rules add a tragic dimension to our problems. Snared in a war whose purpose many question and that is something short of national survival, we must ask of the draft that it treat with complete impartiality the men whose lives it may take. With such stakes there is no room for politicking or for satisfying grudges against more privileged young men. But these have been a part of the latest rewriting and interpretation of the Selective Service Act.

The old regulations badly needed rewriting. Their provisions allowed men with above-average cash or intelligence to parlay a college education into prolonged graduate studies and virtual exemption from the draft. The new rules, which will take effect in June, will not simply plug that loophole. They will completely reverse the inequity. From a situation in which few graduate students ever saw service, the next year will see the draft calls primarily filled by graduate students while nonstudent youths are spared.

When the President last spring suggested a revision of the system, one of his