

What if I decide not to register?

There are both federal and state penalties for not registering with the SSS:

Federal

- If prosecuted and convicted, you could face up to 5 years in prison and/or a \$250,000 fine
- You become ineligible for federal financial aid for college (although some organizations and churches offer loans or grants for non-registrants—for more information, see www.nisbco.org)
- You are barred from employment with the federal government, including the Postal Service and the National Park Service

State of Wisconsin

- You become ineligible for state financial aid for college (although some colleges have small grants available for non-registrants—check with your financial aid office)
- When you apply for a driver's license, and you are male and within the age limits (18-25) for registration, the Department of Transportation is authorized and required to forward your information to the SSS. Your permission for the DOT to do this is "implied" by submitting your application. (2001, Act 93)

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To our youth & militarization work:
www.paypal.com Nighttoak@charter.net
To Madison Area Peace Coalition:
PO Box 8344, Madison, WI 53708-8344

National Contacts

Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors
www.objector.org
(800) NO-JROTC (665-7682)

Center on Conscience and War
www.nisbco.org
(202) 483-2220 or (800) 379-2679

Committee Opposed to Militarism and the Draft
www.comdsd.org
(619) 265-1369

AFSC Youth and Militarism Program
www.afsc.org/youthmil.htm
(215) 241-7176

Local Contacts

Madison Area Peace Coalition

www.madpeace.org
Michelle Nightoak
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Veterans for Peace—Clarence Kailin Chapter

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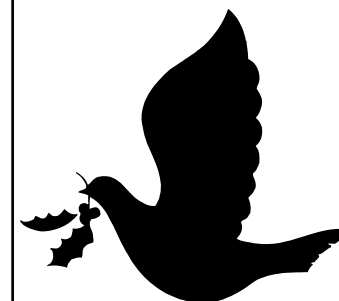
Madison Friends Meeting

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Conscientious Objection



*A publication of the
Madison Area Peace Coalition,
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March 2004

The Path of Conscientious Objection

What is a conscientious objector (CO)?

There are actually two classifications for CO's according to the Selective Service System (SSS). The first is for registrants who will serve in the military, but refuse to participate in combatant training and service. The second is for registrants who refuse to participate in combatant AND non-combatant military service.

What do I believe about war?

It's very important to reflect on your beliefs about war—to get CO status, you must prove that you have moral, ethical or religious beliefs that prevent your participation in war.

Talk with your religious leaders, teachers, parents, and friends to help you figure out exactly what beliefs you hold, why those values conflict with war, how you got your beliefs, and how your values affect the decisions you make everyday. Once you feel you have a good grasp on your beliefs, create a personal statement to include in your CO file (see below).

I've decided I'm a conscientious objector—now what do I do?

• Make a decision about registering

Some people choose to state their opposition to the SSS by not registering or registering just before they turn 26. This option does have serious consequences—see the panel “What if I decide not to register?” in this brochure.

If you DO decide to register, don't register online or with the other options available to you! Send in the registration card, writing “I am a conscientious objector” somewhere on the card. Make several copies of the card after you've filled it out. Mail the original to the SSS and one of the copies to YOURSELF on the same day via registered mail. After the SSS receives the card, it is destroyed, and the SSS does not document your statement in their database. This does not guarantee you CO status, but it IS one more piece of documentation regarding your beliefs. Include the unopened envelope in your CO file.

• Start documenting your conscientious objection now!

Since you need to prove a longstanding opposition to war, begin your file now and continue to add items to it. Make sure you date everything that goes into your file! Go over it every year or so to review the materials and remove items you no longer wish to include or update others. Ask your church or an organization that works with CO's if they will keep a copy of your file and officially register you as a CO with their group. (See back for organizations that might provide these services.)

What should go in my file?

You can include anything you'd like in your file—some suggestions:

- Your personal statement (written or taped)
- Statements from religious leaders, community leaders, parents, friends, etc.

- Statements from people who know you AND disagree with you—if they can attest to the sincerity of your beliefs, this can be a powerful supporting item!
- A record of books read on resistance
- Names of peace organizations and/or peace churches you belong to
- Peace-related events you've attended (include photos if you have them)
- Copies of any papers, poems, letters to the editor, op-eds, etc. you've written on peace-related issues

What should the statements say?

There is no “magic formula” - be honest and show that you've thought long and hard about your beliefs. Have other people include how long they've known you, the strength of your beliefs, the moral, ethical or religious basis of them, and the length of time you've held them.

What else can I do?

• Work to end the Selective Service System

Visit the Center on Conscience and War's and the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors' websites for more information on the fight to de-fund the draft registration and Selective Service systems.

• Organize!

- Share the information you've learned with others, especially other young people.
- Give people a copy of this brochure.
- Offer to speak to community groups or educate counselors, parents, and students about conscientious objection and alternatives to military service and war.