

Military Recruiting of Youths in Public Schools 9-22-06

To the Editor,

This letter is in response to one that appeared in The Independent on Sept 15th entitled "Parents can opt to have students avoid military recruiters" by Wendy Dwyer. (Ms Dwyer's letter also appeared in The Altamont Enterprise this week)

I was in high school toward the end of the Vietnam War and would like to remind you of the conditions back then. The war in Vietnam was the product of two successive Democratic presidents who were determined to stop the spread of an ideology: communism. (Imagine that - Democrats against communism. Things have really changed) The Vietnamese did not attack us and there was no imminent threat to our national security. It was a war of attrition where we were out to show the Communists how far we would go and how many lives we were willing to sacrifice just to stop the spread of their ideology.

At that time I was not allowed to vote. There was a draft and I was not allowed to opt out. Toward the end of the war, a draft lottery was established where 365 birth-dates were picked out of a hat and the order in which your birth-date was picked, along with the Army's need, determined whether or not you would be sent into battle. My birth-date was selected number eight and like it or not, I was scheduled to go to boot-camp with only a few weeks notice. Fortunately for me, our nation's elders decided it was time for a regime change and voted in a Republican President who ended the war just before my scheduled departure.

There was also this one other option I could have taken advantage of if the war hadn't ended first. When all of us eighteen year-olds appeared before the Draft Board we were given a test. Those of us who scored high on this aptitude test were approached by military recruiters from the various branches. They were looking for people with special skills. People who would not likely get wasted (pardon the pun) on the front line. I declined all their offers. If things were different, as they are today, I would have enlisted. A friend of mine had joined the Sea Bees (Construction Battalion) and told me of a great many adventures he experienced all over the world. To add balance I'll mention that another friend had joined the Marines and although he never spoke of his experience in Vietnam he did say that it was the worst experience of his life. I think it was largely because while he was away, his girlfriend left him for some guy who lived in our neighborhood.

Today we have no draft. We are at war with people who attacked us on numerous occasions and were/are determined to kill us all if we do not adopt their ideology. We can vote at a younger age now but we cannot end this war by voting for a President or a Congress for that matter because they cannot end the war. They can only end our response to it. If you think that having your name on a school list that is available to military recruiters is some kind of fascist scheme remember that the government has all the information they need about us in their Social Security database. The school lists are just a convenience.

You also state in your editorial that: "One of the beauties of a Democracy is that it offers the freedom of choice...unlike in a totalitarian regime..." Well now you have inadvertently hit the proverbial nail on the head. Our public school system is a totalitarian regime - we have no choice. If you do not like the government's rules in the government schools that the government funds then you might want to vote for Republican politicians who will once again bring choice where once there was none.

Lastly, one of the letter writers you cite, Wendy Dwyer, stated: "I do not believe youth should be approached without a parent present." Really? Most Liberals seem to think its okay to approach a young girl with regard to abortion when no parent is around. The hypocrisy just keeps getting thicker. -
DRC