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Congress has historic opportunity *Draft registration could end this week, saving \$250 million over 10 years*

WASHINGTON, DC -- Congress will decide this week whether or not an outdated, inefficient government agency should be closed, saving taxpayers at least \$250 million over 10 years.

In fact, according to a Department of Defense report, the time has come to end the inefficient Selective Service draft registration system. The report stated draft registration could be stopped "with no effect on military mobilization requirements, little effect on the time it would take to mobilize, and no measurable effect on military recruitment."

When the House of Representatives convenes in session on Wednesday, the first measure up for debate will be the Veterans Administration-Housing and Urban Development Appropriations. Included in this appropriation measure is the Selective Service System.

US Rep. Ron Paul (R, Texas), has been working with Veterans Appropriation's subcommittee chairman Jim Walsh (R, NY), as well as William Clay (D, Missouri), Jack Metcalf (R, Washington) and Gary Ackerman (D, New York), to ensure this wasteful program is ended.

"This \$250 million would be much better spent improving veterans programs," said Rep. Paul, a physician who served as a flight surgeon in the US Air Force in the 1960s. "But even the military agrees that the Selective Service System is an ineffective hold-over from a different age."

In recent years, the mission of the Selective Service System's draft registration program has changed from simply collecting data for use in a possible compulsory call-up, to serving as a mailing list for government programs.

This emphasis is seen in the Selective Services' web site (www.sss.gov), where student

visitors are provided links to various big-government programs, like AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps, the Department of Education, and even the National AIDS Clearinghouse, but none to any branch of the military -- the part of government Selective Service is supposed to serve.

"The Selective Service System is abusive of the civil liberties of America's 18-year-old young men, forcing them to register with the government simply because of their age," said Rep. Paul. "Nearly 50 years ago, Senator Robert Taft said, 'A compulsory draft ... is far more typical of totalitarian nations than of democratic nations. The theory behind it leads directly to totalitarianism. It is absolutely opposed to the principles of individual liberty.' I could not agree more. For too long government has violated the rights of our young people. That they are then subject to receiving big-government propaganda makes this all the worse."

The program does have its defenders, including Rep. Randy Cunningham (R, California), who is expected to propose an amendment to the Appropriations legislation that would fund the program.

"Anyone who sees Selective Service as an effective defense tool is simply not in touch with the needs of the modern military," said Rep. Paul. "No longer does our defense require warm bodies holding guns, instead almost every position in the military of the 21st Century requires a high degree of training and proficiency that cannot be taught in a short boot camp."

"The time to get rid of Selective Service has long been upon us. Congress can finally end this waste to better serve the taxpayer and the national defense," said Rep. Paul.