

**December 29, 2006**

**Press Release** | Contact: Danielle Langone (202) 225-6416

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WASHINGTON, DC—U.S. Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-OR) today announced plans to reintroduce legislation to abolish the Selective Service System (SSS) and put it in “deep standby” status soon after the 110th Congress convenes in January 2007. Deep standby would suspend draft registration, reduce a significant portion of SSS staff, and disband the SSS boards.

DeFazio's announcement comes in the wake of recent revelations that the SSS plans to conduct a “readiness exercise” for the system by 2009, including tests for: randomly choosing military draftees by birth date and notifying those chosen, the network of appeals boards, and dealing with conscientious objectors and those seeking deferments. The test amounts to a “mock” draft. DeFazio also announced his intention to offer an amendment during the fiscal year 2008 appropriations process to prohibit the SSS from carrying out this exercise.

“Our all-volunteer military is the best in the world,” DeFazio said. “As the Pentagon, the president and the House of Representatives have agreed, there is no military or national security imperative to reinstate the draft. The current selective service infrastructure is obsolete and unnecessary. Taxpayers should not be forced to continue funding it.

“If our country truly faced a national emergency that threatened our way of life, I have no doubt that citizens would voluntarily mobilize to protect it. American citizens can be mobilized just as effectively and at less cost if we get rid of the existing selective service infrastructure.”

DeFazio has a long history of opposition to the SSS on grounds of fiscal responsibility as well as a desire to protect personal liberties, which are threatened when the government is able to mandate military service. He first introduced legislation to abolish the SSS in 1990 and has reintroduced it in several subsequent sessions of Congress. In 1995, DeFazio offered an amendment on the House floor to remove funding from the SSS. The amendment was defeated.

Taxpayers will spend \$25 million this year, and have spent more than \$650 million since 1980, on the increasingly obsolete system. Going to deep standby could save taxpayers more than \$20 million a year, plus the cost of running the “mock” draft planned for 2009.

DeFazio points out that the SSS is not necessary for our national security or military readiness. A 1993 report by the Secretary of Defense noted, “Peacetime draft registration could be suspended with no effect on military mobilization requirements, little effect on the time it would take to mobilize, and no measurable effect on military recruitment.”

If a mass mobilization were necessary, it could be accomplished with an SSS that is in deep standby. In fact, the SSS has already developed a standby system that would provide for a rapid mobilization of health care professionals after the declaration of a national emergency.

### Brief History of the SSS:

The SSS was established by Congress and President Franklin Roosevelt in the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, which created the nation's first peacetime draft.

From 1948 until 1973, both during peacetime and during periods of conflict, men were drafted to fill vacancies in the armed forces which could not be filled through voluntary means.

The draft was ended in 1973 and the U.S. converted to an all-volunteer army.

In 1975, President Ford suspended the SSS and put it in deep standby status.

President Carter decided to reinstate the SSS and the registration requirement after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1980.

The House has twice voted to abolish the SSS. In 1993, the House VA-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee zeroed out funding for the SSS. An effort to restore the funding on the House floor was defeated. In 1999, the House Appropriations Committee again removed funding for the SSS. An effort to restore funding on the House floor was again defeated. However, in both cases, funding for the SSS was restored during the conference committee with the Senate.