

It's Time to Teach Peace and Make Our High Schools Military-Free Zones!

What recruiters and JROTC don't tell students about the military

End Militarism!

Militarism means glorifying war and the military way of life at the expense of the rest of society. Militarized societies take money from schools, housing and jobs and spend it instead to build huge armies. People are taught to follow orders and to not think for themselves. Blind obedience is encouraged.

All of the military propaganda, recruiters and JROTC classes in high schools are examples of militarism. They are used to make the military popular among students, even though military spending robs our schools of money. They also teach people that violence can be heroic and that war is normal. Shouldn't our schools be teaching peace rather than promoting violence?

Recruiters Don't Belong in Our Schools!

Military recruiters are allowed to roam around in our high schools, where they present only one side of a controversial issue. Recruiters are sales people who take advantage of students' trust and often mislead them. They may seem friendly and concerned about your future, but many of them promise jobs and training that they have no power to provide. Their job is to get you to enlist in the military, and they don't always tell you the truth to do it.

Things Military Recruiters Don't Tell You

Recruiters don't talk a lot about war in their sales pitch. Many soldiers who were sent to the Persian Gulf, Somalia and the Balkans never thought they would end up risking their lives in such places. Recruiters never tell you how discrimination is a serious problem in the military. People of color are more likely to be assigned low-level jobs and passed over for promotion. They are more likely to end up on the front line in combat as well. In the military, women still are not treated as equals, and two out of every three of them are sexually harassed.

Another example of how the military discriminates is that openly gay and lesbian people are not allowed in the military — they are kicked out if they admit their sexual orientation.

Misleading Promises

Some people join the military because they don't see any other choices for jobs or educational opportunities. They think joining the military will solve their problems. Quite often, however, they don't get the skills and benefits that the military promises them. For example, unemployment among young veterans often runs higher than among nonveterans of the same age. And surveys of enlisted people on active duty in the Army consistently show that a large

majority are either “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with their basic pay and opportunities to select a job, training or duty station.

As former-Defense Secretary Richard Cheney once said, “The military is not a social welfare agency; it’s not a jobs program.”

You Can Get Out of a Delayed Enlistment Agreement

Some students have joined the military through the Delayed Entry Program (DEP). Under the DEP, you sign up now but don’t enter the military until months later. If you change your mind, recruiters will say that you can’t get out of the DEP. This is not true! For help getting out of the DEP, contact some of the military counseling groups listed below.

The Myth of Easy Money for College

Recruiters might promise you lots of money for college, but it’s not free; you have to work for it, and it’s not automatic. You have to qualify for special hard-to-fill jobs and sign up for an extra-long term to be eligible for the higher amounts of money. To get any college aid at all, you have to deposit a \$1200 non-refundable fee. For a number of reasons, you could end up losing this money as well as your college benefits. For information on better ways to pay for college, visit CCCO (see resource links).

Stop the Military’s Invasion of Student Privacy!

In most school districts, students’ names, addresses and phone numbers are given to military recruiters without first getting students’ or parents’ permission.

The recruiters then bother them with many uninvited phone calls at home. Under federal and state laws you have a right to keep your name private — send a letter to your school demanding that it not give your name to recruiters without your permission!

Say No to the ASVAB Test!

The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is a military test given in many schools. Recruiters use the test scores to get very personal information on students. After you take the test they call you at home to try to talk you into enlisting. The ASVAB tests you only for military jobs. It does not really test you for civilian jobs. Do you think that everyone should be measured by the military’s standards?

Remember that you don’t have to take the ASVAB, and you can demand that your school give other aptitude tests instead.

Teach Peace — Not JROTC and Killing!

With all the talk about school violence, the last thing schools should be doing is teaching how to kill. JROTC teaches young people how to use guns, to think and act like soldiers, to give and take orders. It discourages young people from thinking critically and for themselves, missing the whole point of true education. Furthermore, many districts spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on JROTC while cutting back on other needed programs. Some of this money could be used for classes that teach ways to settle conflicts without violence.

Beware the Draft

The issue of militarism is especially important to young people not only because the military robs our schools of money, but also because youths are the ones who are called on to fight in wars. Right now it is the law that 18-year-old men must register for the draft, but hundreds of thousands of young men have chosen not to do so. If you have questions about the draft, draft registration or what happens if you don't register, you can contact COMD or one of the draft counseling groups listed on our resource links page.

What You Can Do to Help

If you would like to demilitarize your school, there are many things you can do. You can start a peace and justice club, bring speakers to your school or write an article about military recruiting fraud for your school newspaper. You can begin a petition drive or help distribute literature. You can organize a rally or a teach-in. Be creative! Help change our schools from promoters of militarism to sources of peace!

For organizing resources, see the links page at our Web site: www.comdsd.org.

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