

Mixed reactions to the possibility of requiring women to do

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In Singapore, National Service (NS) is mandatory for every male citizen and Permanent Resident. It entails their mandatory conscription once they are 18 years of age. Their duty may be served in three different areas: the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF), or the Singapore Police Force (SPF).

However, over the years, there have been more and more conversations surrounding the possibility of including women in Singapore's National Service (NS).

Back in 2013, a study showed that one out of 10 Singaporean women are willing to volunteer for full-time NS for two years. This was based on a survey conducted by the Institute of Policy Studies.

Of the 1,251 Singaporeans who responded to the survey, about 80 per cent of them believed that women should be granted permission to volunteer and contribute to national defence.

More than 70 per cent of the respondents said that these contributions should be given as a professional or by assisting in NS-related events. Examples are the Army Open House or the National Day Parade.

Less than 25 per cent of the respondents were in favour of a two-year period of full-time NS for women. Furthermore, among the women who voted in favour of that, 9.3 per cent said that they would do full-time NS.

Netizen opens floor to arguments against women serving NS

Quite recently, in an internet forum, a Singaporean opened the floor to arguments against women serving NS. "There's been a lot of discussion over the years, so to not tread the same ground again, I want to ask people who do oppose women serving NS what their argument against it is?" the post read.

The netizen claimed that there are "good reasons" for women to serve NS and that women could be assigned non-combatant roles, as he asked why conscripting women seems like an unpopular idea.

Singaporeans share mixed reactions

"I'll say it again...war doesn't discriminate," said one commenter, "It affects every man, woman and child. Regardless of race, language or religion. If national defence is everyone's responsibility, why not enlist and train every citizen? Why exclude a particular segment of the population?"

Another wrote, "Having women in NS will have unpredictable effects on 1) Productivity of the nation, 2) Rate of Fertility of the nation, 3) Increase in defence expenses, and 4) Imbalance in the familial dynamics."

This concern was echoed by others. Agreeing that conscripting women may drastically impact the birth rate, another netizen said: "Women have a prime time period for childbirth, and if I squeeze two years into that frame, it's gonna affect our population by A LOT."

On the other hand, the already declining birth rate may instead make female conscription a reality in the coming years, some argued.