01 (A->G): What are You Willing to Do for your Country, Your Neighbors, Your Community?

Here's our topic for this week: In many places worldwide, civic obligation and responsibility include serving one's country, often through the military and/or through some other form of service. That's a huge action with significant consequences for the people who serve. What are you asked to do by your country in terms of service? And what are you willing to do? If something happened--to your family, your community, your region, your country—would you be willing to serve on behalf of your people? Can you explain your thinking with as much specificity as possible?

JUDI FREEMAN DEC 06, 2020 05:08PM

mia c, USA, Boston, MA

Being a citizen of the United States requires a few civic responsibilities. Such responsibilities include taxes, jury duty, following the law, and attending school until the age of 16. For these basic duties, I am willing to complete them all, some of them reluctantly.

For a while, the US did have a draft for service, but this only applied to men and therefore I would have been exempt (thankfully). If for some reason the US decided to bring the draft back, I really do not think I would be willing to support a country in a war for three reasons: I don't support war in general, I don't necessarily enjoy the idea of supporting this country, and because I am so ill-fitted for battle. However, there are other ways for me to aid my community which I enjoy doing, like community service and advocating for the rights of the people in my community. More recently (aka in light of COVID-19) some other civic duties include social distancing/quarantining, wearing masks in public, and maintain good hygiene; all of which I am happy to do.

Eileen L, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

As a citizen it is one's duty to go to school until at least 16, pay taxes, go to jury duty when called upon, and vote. An optional one is fight for the country. I'm willing to do all of the above except fight for the country because I'm not fit for war. With the pandemic our job is to maintain a distance, wear a mask, and keep a good hygiene. People who aren't doing that almost a year into the pandemic are absurd and selfish. It's not that difficult and it's not a violation of freedom. In a nation sacrifices need to be made for the greater good.

Ali Mattout, Lebanon

Knowing that I'm a native Lebanese citizen, I have the privilege of joining the Lebanese Military or police. Moreover, being a volunteer in the red cross is a way of serving my beloved country as well. There are many ways actually that can be done on behalf of serving our country. To illustrate, in our present days, Covid-19's being a major problem to us, and to fight it we have to take precautions, and the best way to do it is by compulsory wearing our masks and distancing our self from others, by this we can keep others safe and serve our country a big time in an indirect way, But unfortunately, we cant find this king of service in my country...

Abdulaziz [redacted] ebanon

In Lebanon military service used to be obligatory however it's not anymore. The law changed years ago. There's isn't a lot of services required by my country. Tax payment is required and due to the Covid situation I think wearing a mask is a service. If military service is required I don't mind joining to serve the people of my country. Other things that I would do for my country is continuously donating and building opportunities for those who need it.

you should've seen yesterday's City Mall brother :) — ALI

Mila [redacted], Ukraine

Protection of the our country, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, respect for its state symbols is the duty of the citizens of Ukraine. Citizens serve in the military in accordance with the law. Everyone is obliged not to cause damage to nature, cultural heritage, to compensate the damages caused by him. Of course,also we must abide by the laws of Ukraine and do not disturb them. And I am ready to protect my family, region or country if it's necessary. We can also volunteer to improve our country. Due to the situation in the east of Ukraine(war with Russia), even those who are not required to serve go there. We take the example of soldiers and border guards who defend our

country every day and we help them as much as we can. We collect food, clothes and other necessary things for them. Also border guards share their experience with us and we gain new knowledge.

Minha ,Kerala,India

Military service is not mandatory in India,its the person's opinion to do or not.I personally don't want to serve in military,I've never thought about doing so.Eventhough I have a huge respect to the Indian soldiers,they are trying to protect our country while sacrificing their lives.
If my country is facing an emergency situation,I still won't be doing any military service.I want to be with my family at that time.

There is a lot of another ways to serve my society.As a member of my school's Scout and Guide unit,we have been doing some volunteer works for the people around our district.We bought an ambulace for a charity group,giving financial aids for the students from poor family background,initiating awareness programmes,cleaning public places etc.I like to continue this works for my community instead of doing military service.
Paying taxes is compulsory in India and education from 6-14 os also compulsory.

Sana M Japan

In Japan, we are obligated to pay tax and take education during the age from 7 to 15. Regards of tax, there are many kinds such as consumption tax(now 10%), income tax, and
living tax. And there is a system that people pay money to their hometown and the city returns the city's fruits and food to the person as a reward. This is called hometown tax payment and it promotes regional revitalization.
Regard of education almost all Japanese have gone to high school and half of them have gone to college or university. In fact, those who have graduate from university is easier to get job and those who haven't, so there people who cannot get their job therefore they can't live in a stable life. Some of them is living on the street. So, some Japanese volunteer groups give them meals freely and regularly.

I want to join the volunteer and help them. And also, as Utako said, there are still some mothers who abundant their baby due to unstable living conditions. These days there is a person who killed her baby in my neighbor. To stop such sorrowful incidents, I would like to join a volunteer to help them.

It is so sad that money is such a big issue that it can drive people to kill or abandon their own children. I think its important that people feel there is enough support so that they will not take these drastic measures, but since things like this still happen, I guess we need to do a better job. — GREG

Madeline . Star Valley, Wyoming

In the United States we are privileged when compared to others. Less fortunate countries have laws and obligations that are unseen in the US. Here we have civic responsibilities such as jury duty, taxes, fines, following the law, and all together being a good citizen.

I know that others have very different situations. I am very grateful to live where I do, where we have certain freedoms. From what I have read from news sources and even this padlet from other people's responses I can see that there are lots of different things that countries require from their citizens.

As far as service goes I would be happy to help my country out and fight if needed. However, I would need to make sure that I believed in the cause and the reason as to why we are killing each other. If it was worthy, then by all means I would be happy to go. Our country used to draft people back during the war but it ended back in 1973 and back then it was only men. I'm not sure they would ever open up a draft again unless there was a huge war and I don't know if it would include women.

Overall, as long as I cared and believed in the reason, I would happily go and help my country and serve in whichever way was needed.

I think that we are very grateful where we don't have to seriously consider this question in terms of reality quite yet.

Utako O, Japan, Hiroshima

In Japan, we are obligated to pay taxes, follow laws, and take education during 6~15 years old. We have to pay 10% for taxes and have no tuition during this age. However, most Japanese students have recently gone to school until they become 18 years old. Half of them go to universities, colleges, or vocational schools.

Even though it seems less poverty, there are still people who are left in poverty in Japan. Therefore I want to help them by participating in volunteer work. For instance, there are restaurants called "children's cafeterias" where not only children but also

adults can eat meals cheaply. Furthermore, I want to help children who get abuse from their parents. This problem has been serious in Japan. In addition, some parents kill their babies after their births. Hence, there are commercials to prevent those incidents in Japan. The commercials allow someone nearby to easily call a child consultation center for those children. However, I think Japanese government has to select more strict laws to protect those children.

Nan Chon [illegible] Gaygue,Myanmar

In our country,Myanmar, also has many responsibilities and duties like paying taxes, voting and so on.But our country doesn't have any military service .Anyone of us who longs to serve for military service can freely serve if we are 18 and above.
For me, I used to participate in a project which aims to reduce using plastics.This project is held by my school every year.Almost all students in my school participate in that project. I think keeping our environment clean and safe is also important for our country. As this is during covid-19 ,I have nothing to do with my environment widely.But I'm now attending a conference called Glean, as an ambassador.Glean aims to donate many books to libraries in Africa.I'm so glad to participate in that conference. This is also one of the obligations globally.
Moreover, this project,Civic Obligations,is also important for teenagers like us.If we know more about the laws and obligations of each country, we will be able to serve our world.
I aim to participate in more projects after this covid period. I think, if we do those duties and obligations individually, our whole world will be more unity and peaceful.

Both your schools project to reduce plastic usage and the Glean conference sound like really important and interesting ways to support your community and the world as a whole!
— GREG

Nouhaila [illegible] sale, Morocco

In Morocco, our civic obligation is to pay taxes etc...
Last year, in my country males and females aged 18 to 20 without work had to join the military due to the shortage of manpower in that field.
In my opinion, if they give me a choice between helping the military and go to war by staying home and waiting for someone else to protect me. I will with the first one, because if each of us will not go to the military and fight for our country, our family...who will do it.
In conclusion, if the country needs help my responsibility as a citizenship I will fight with here until the end.

I had no idea your country had instituted a draft last year.. that's very interesting and must have been nerve-wracking for people of those ages. In the US, we used to have a draft but it was ended in 1973. — JACK TRAPANICK

I think it is a very good point that although anyone can come up with valid reasons not to serve their country, in the end, unfortunately, someone has to. It would be tough to say whose reasons not to serve are "better", so I agree that if needed, I would join the military, but I am thankful that this is not the case in the United States like it is in some other countries. — GREG

Bilge G, Turkey,Diyarbakır

Turkey as well as each country's people have a responsibility to do. As far as I know, our responsibilities in the country are to pay taxes, for men to go to the military, to vote, to send their children to school, following laws. My whole family do these responsibilities.

I would do anything for my family, friends and country. But war is not one of the things I can do for them. I do not go to war for nothing, because I know that the reason countries fight is mostly for money. And in my values there is absolutely no killing for money.

There are many ways to benefit the society, briefly, to volunteer in social assistance clubs and try to solve the problem as much as possible, that's why I founded a club in my own school and through this club, I talk to foundations in the country and help children who cannot buy books for the poor, at least the animals in my city. Every time I do these things, I feel happy by myself because contributing to the world and helping people makes me feel why I live.

In some countries volunteering is compulsory and I wish it is compulsory in my country, but it is not and this makes me very sad. Because there are so many needy people, animals and only a small part of the society wants to help them.

zulhafiz, penang island ,malaysia.

in malaysia school, is all children required to register and start studies at the primary school level till the age of 12. After that, they will further their studies at secondary school level till the age of 18 and they also will continues their studies at university or college level including the taxes.

last years we're should joining pre-military after secondary school we called PLKN, this program teach us how to survive and civic education in our life. this program walking without taxes.

For me, it's depends on the situation. if world started the war or malaysian have a crisis i had wanna save people especially family. That we're allowed to joining the pre-military program.

in term of service all citizens required to pay taxes no matter where we go but government worker have a half of taxes.

i think, we have a lot of taxes in our lives including the services offered.

Lėja M, Lithuania

In Lithuania school is obligatory till the age of 16 years old. Adults are resposible for taxes and for men from the age 18 to 23 you might get choosen to do milatary training for 9 months also you can join any time by choice. Also it's a must for everyone to follow all laws.

For me personally it really depends on the situation. If war started I'd want to save the people that I care about and if joining the milatary would be the best thing to do at that moment for everyone I'd definetely join. Although I'm against any kind of voilence I wouldn't hesitate if my country was in danger.

There are also other ways to serve like doing community service, donating money, going to shelters and helping with cleaning, taking care of the animals that are living there, chatting with elders that don't have any family left and/or they just don't communicate with them (of course with the pandemic this is done way less).

All in all I just want to encourage everyone reading this to try at least once in a while to do some kind of community service. It really does make a differance.

I really liked how you broadened what it means to serve your country by discussing donations and volunteering!
– JACK

Brooks G, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

The United States requires few things from its citizens, much less than many other countries. These primarily consist of going to school until age 16, jury duty, paying taxes, and following laws.
I am happy and willing to do all the above things (although I have definitely wanted to drop out of school at times, and I have been known to jaywalk).
If I were somehow drafted, which is unlikely given that the US doesn't currently have the draft in place and that said draft only includes men, I would go, but unhappily. I do not believe anyone should be forced to go to war, but I would still go because I would not want to break the law. There are many ways I would be willing to serve on behalf of my people, but it is not likely that I would feel comfortable serving via violence. I would not be okay with harming most people, but I would be willing to serve my family and community as a public servant or as part of a governing body. I am also more than willing to help my community via community service, and already have some experience doing so.

Paola MM, USA, Boston, Massachusetts.

As a US citizen a and a student I am requiered by law to go to school. In addition to this kids are supposed to follow the laws. Specifically at BLS we have the civic duty to do 100 hours of community service. This is supposed to help us in making connections with our communiities to improve the general well being.

As an adult responsibility only grows because you have to abide by the laws but also you must do your taxes, and attened jury duty. Both are requiered and if you try to evade taxes this could lead to jail time.

Other than that we are not requiered to do other civil services. Personally I find helping the community to be very rewarding but this is not everyones experience. We are not requiered to fight in the military and if I had the opportunity to I would definety not join. Although the military does more than just fight wars, I don't think I would be willing to blindly follow the orders of my superiors, or have the guts to do what people in the army due.

In conclusion we do not have a lot of civic responsiblities to do besides obeying the laws, school, taxes, and now wearing a mask. Wearing a mask is for the good of everyone and I would deem this a civic responsibility because it is so important to do.

Deanna R, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

In terms of service, big responsibilities that citizens have for the U.S. include paying taxes and jury duty, but military service isn't mandatory, as well as voting. Some schools in America require that the students do volunteer work, whether that be in-school, out-of-school, or both. In Boston Latin School, the students are required to have done at least 100 hours of community service, 50 hours for outside programs and 50 hours inside the school. Outside organizations are accessible and my options can extend from distributing free food, working in hospitals, attending various yearly events, or it can be as simple as writing meaningful cards for essential workers (relevant to the pandemic now). We also have opportunities within the school to volunteer; working in the main office, nurse's office, the guidance office, or in the library. As of now, I think that volunteering is what allows us to understand and interact with our community better; without this means of communication, it would be hard to grasp how we can help others. Eventually, this volunteer work becomes not much of a necessity, but more of genuine want to make a difference.

However, I still wonder what I'm able to do in the future for my community as an adult in terms of civic obligation. Because the U.S. has always focused on the idea of individuality and freedom over the obligation to others, many Americans are not committed to doing something for the "greater good" in preference for their personal choice. In terms of military service, I wouldn't be able to handle the rigorous training and exercise that comes with being a soldier, but I would know to vote and offer service in other ways.

Although I cannot legally vote yet, I am still aware of the amount of researching and educating oneself on the legal parties involved and what the candidates have to offer for the betterment of our country. As for jury duty, I would fully take responsibility on my part for contributing to an impartial verdict as someone's life is on the line. However, I do understand the difficulties in being able to partake in the event someone gets called: I've noticed that Americans tend to be job-oriented so they see jury duty as something of a "waste of time" to some extent because they are obligated to go to a court that may be extremely far away and are suffering economically if they don't have as forgiving or a high-paying job. Another perspective is that jury duty is something that we, citizens or not, have right to do that the government doesn't have control over, the power to decide whether or not someone is guilty.

As to what I would prioritize, I would care most for my family first and have the means to support them financially and emotionally. In regards to if something were to happen to the U.S., I would still offer my services in ways that wouldn't pertain to the military, as I wouldn't be able to contribute much in that area and I don't think it's as effective of providing service in comparison to volunteering, speaking out, voting, fundraising, and advocate for my community's well being. Depending on the situation, and whether I have the means to exercise my civic obligation, I still hope to be able to use my voice by all means as a part of my civic responsibility.

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Deanna R, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

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Jesse C, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

Service is not largely required in the united states other than the bare minimum of paying taxes.

Despite it not being required i think civic service is a great thing to take part in, and is fulfilling to both yourself and your community. Were also required to complete 100 community service hours for our school which while it can be a pain sometime ive found it to actually be a really rewarding experience which i enjoyed taking part in.

In terms of military we are not required to serve but the Government can create a draft and I was required to sign up for the draft when i filled out fafsa for my college application so while im not required to serve that could change at any time.

Also theres simple things we can do every do which serve our community and society, for example one simple thing we can do is wear a mask when in contact with people, its such a simple thing but can make a big impact.

Ourania P, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

Military or civil work isn't mandated in the United States, though I know this isn't the case in many other countries, which is quite interesting when you think about how much incentives by federal funding are put into our country's military and there are benefits when you join any part of our military. For example, the US Army says they "Offer you money for education, comprehensive health care, generous vacation time, family services and support groups, special pay and cash allowances to cover the cost of living." Yet. . . even with our Defense Department's budget being $686 billion, over 1 in 10 homeless people in the United States are homeless. This whole dynamic is founded on the principles of individualism here in the United States. The Founding Fathers believed us to be purely focused on our self-interests and why they decided on a representative democracy, because they didn't want us to encourage unchecked and unbalanced factions amongst ourselves (James Madison, anyone?). Yet, we're more partisan and polarized than we've ever been in terms of political parties. It's crazy to think about because I remember watching a TedTalk on military service being a requirement for everyone in Israel and how it creates a better sense of patriotism amongst everyone and makes it much easier for former military to return to civilian life. It makes me think about how isolated some veterans feel are when resorting to drugs or alcohol to escape the plagues of war or PTSD, and how lackluster many of our rehabilitation and mental support groups are here. It makes me think about how we haven't mandated wearing masks or putting stricter curfews out there and that has resulted in 285,000+ deaths as of today. It makes me think about how the Constitution was supposed to encourage larger unification through representation but voting is not even mandatory. Yes, we should feel free in certain aspects of ourselves, to express ourselves freely as we wish but the purpose of government is that one person's free will does not impose itself into the harm of another. Then you have jury duty and taxes as everyone's mentioned before, but then there's also loopholes around both of those things and it really just makes you think about the lack of civic obligation and responsibility that is present within our country, and sure that's one way we truly are the "land of the free", but at what cost?

Elisa M, USA, Boston, Massachuestts

In terms of what is expected of us when it comes to civic duties, we must (of course) always abide by the law. In addition to that, there are tasks such as completing jury duty, paying taxes, and I believe young men are required to register for the draft. Some may opt to serve their country by joining the military, while others will only do what is required of them and no more. While there definitely are people who join the military to serve their country, I believe many also join for the benefits or simply for a sense of direction.

I personally wouldn't go father than the bare minimum, especially in this day and age. I simply don't agree with the direction that I believe the United States is heading towards, therefore I don't find myself having a high sense of responsibility or moral obligation to the country. This is especially so when it comes to the military, where we seem to be involving ourselves in unnecessary wars and killing many innocents in the process.

When it comes to my own community, I'm much more willing to take a few extra steps. I feel as though the ideas and opinions that my community believes in are not exactly on par with America's as a whole. It most definitely takes its own side, but it's a side that I find myself generally supporting. One of the biggest ways I can and have been doing is supporting my community through community service.

Addy K, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

In the US, our main civic obligations are paying taxes, following the laws, and jury duty. Additionally, all US citizens must attend school until the age of 16 (although it ranges from 16-18 depending on the State). This is a form of civic responsibility as many schools were created as "Factory Schools" in order to prepare adolescents for life as a factory worker during the industrial revolution. But other than that, there are no other required forms of civil obligation.

As others have stated, military service is not required but in the past, such as during the Vietnam War, there was a draft that forced some people to serve. However, a mandatory draft would most likely never be allowed now-a-days in the US.

Personally, I do not have any interest in serving as I do not believe in what the US is fighting for. The wars that the US is fighting in the Middle East in order to end the violence only seems to provoke more violence, and they are usually fought for ulterior motives (such as stealing the resources of other countries). To me, war has no real meaning. I agree full heartedly with the quote "war doesn't determine who is right—only who is left" by Churchill as it precisely sums up my thoughts about wars caused by disputes. But even if I was willing to serve in the US military, I would not be allowed to due to the Trump administration's trans military ban. Outside of the ban, the military has a long history of being anti-LGTBQ+, such as having the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" directive. Seeing how this country does not support my community, I do not feel the patriotism that would be required for me to risk my life fighting even if I was permitted. That being said, I have hopes of one day becoming a doctor and have thought about possibly serving as a combat medic, even if only for a short time.

The US military has contacted my family multiple times (as it does with many other high school seniors bound for college) asking if I would be willing to serve. This is because the military will cover most (if not all) of your college tuition after a few years of service.

Similar to others, I believe more in my City and State than I do in my country. This may be from the extreme political divide in the US, or due to the fact that I grew up in Boston and have a sense of community here that I lack elsewhere in the US. I do believe that I

would be willing to risk my life to fight for my community if necessary, but only if the cause aligned with my beliefs.

Emma L, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

I think that serving our communities is something great, though I'm not very familiar with such obligations in the United States besides jury duty and taxes. I think much of the time in America, you are paying your dues by acting patriotic, not necessarily through practices of helping the community. We glorify guns and our flag when we think of service, but I think it can be much simpler than that.

I'm very willing to partake in the services I mentioned above — I think taxes are important, though many commit tax fraud which might make taxes more of a burden for others than it needs to be. I also don't currently have an issue with jury duty if it helps our democracy function.

However, many people are mentioning military service as a common social obligation for your country. I think the military includes a whole breadth of people, like those who don't necessarily believe in the military but must enlist for money; there are people who commit war crimes, and there are people who join because they think it is the best way they can protect and serve. But I think that generally this country, historically, has asked of its citizens to participate in many wars which might've not all been productive, so it's a bit difficult to say whether (again, not in all cases, not for all soldiers) our country asks its military to serve its citizens or its power. As someone who sees other ways to service my community (like volunteering, donating, voting, etc.), I don't necessarily consider military service the best way for me to serve the country.

Now, in this pandemic, I am willing to serve my community by wearing masks or social distancing, or signing up for various volunteer events. Ultimately, I think I'd be open to most methods of serving, even when uncomfortable for me, if I feel that they give something of real value back to my neighbors, and are not just fueling a possible sense of nationalism.

Greg R, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

As many other people have noted, the United States was built on individual freedoms more so than the idea of sacrificing for a greater good. The only mandatory service I can think of is jury duty, where citizens are occasionally called upon to participate in a jury. Other than that, citizens are required to pay taxes and obey laws, but I do not think there are any other required services.

Military service is not required in the United States. However during times in the past such as during the Vietnam War, there have been drafts in which you could end up having to serve. I do not have any interest in joining the military, and it has never really seemed like an option as a career. I think this is mostly due to the household I was raised in. However, as others have talked about, recently, especially in our more liberal area of Boston, patriotism and feelings of national pride have been frowned upon as we reckon with the many flaws throughout society in America. Additionally, the military is no longer held in as high regard.

I think my willingness to serve in the military would depend entirely on the circumstance. For example, our military is often involved in wars that I and many others think are unnecessary and unjust, such as the Vietnam War. In this case, I would do by best not to have to serve. However, if a situation like World War 2 were to happen again, in which our military was fighting against the Nazis, I would have no problem serving and might even do so under my own will. In a case like this, where there is so clearly just cause, I could not justify not serving, despite the awful possible consequences of war.

Similar to many others, I fell much more pride for living in Boston and within Massachusetts. I guess this makes sense, as the United States also emphasizes states rights more than the power of a centralized federal government. The fact that my ideals and political views align more with my city and state than the country as a whole contribute to this heightened sense of pride, and I would be willing to sacrifice more for my community, city, and state, than for my country as a whole.

Ziqi Z, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

There are only a few things that America require: serve jury duty and be willing to be drafted, however the latter is only for men of a certain age. If you are a citizen, you have to file taxes to the US government every single year regardless of where you currently live. I agree that serving in the military is no easy task and should be respected, they all go through near death experiences or suffer a painful injury.

However, I'm definitely intimidated by the military and warfare. I already know that the vast majority of veterans suffer PTSD of some kind and have to not only witness horrific trauma but also bear a tremendous load on their shoulders if they do survive. The field is notorious for being a very uncomfortable space for women, LTBTQ+ folks, and people of color. Even if I am physically fit, these factors alone make me want to stay far, far away from the military.

That being said, even though I know I won't be that useful physically-wise, I do think I have other skills which I might have in the future that I could put to use (technology, medical), but again, all the dangers of warfare and death scare me a lot. I do feel like a lot of Americans around the country share the same sentiment of Rayna, that they're more loyal to their hometown or state rather than the country. Jack's assertion that serving actually means serving the US government and not protecting your country is really interesting. It's really important to know why the US is fighting in the first. Is it because otherwise, every American will die? Or is it because of a cause that I personally disagree with? If

it's the latter, it's much harder for me to justify serving the country.

Aidan O, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

In the US, surprisingly, we aren't asked to do much in terms of individual obligations to serve our country. We are asked to pay taxes in order to fund our institutions, but most of everything else is made optional. Of course voting is encouraged in order to have a say in what political and governmental direction our country is going to go into, but many choose not to do so and don't feel like it matters. Military service is also optional, although there used to be a draft that was eliminated a long time ago.

This level of individual choice is celebrated as a constitutional choice in a country founded on the basis of personal freedom. But when does it go so far as to deter at the level of community engagement and completion of civic responsibilities? Over the generations, the American population has began to not trust our institutions to be working for us because there hasn't been enough of a presence of these governmental programs in communities to advocate for them. I can say for myself that I don't feel like I have the same sort of nationalism and patriotism that other generations have had because there hasn't been the same presence of American institutions in my community or I have grown skeptical of them because of things I don't agree with. It is a complicated question on whether I would serve for a country that I don't feel much attachment to or am deeply skeptical of.

In order to incentivize more community engagement and awareness, our country needs to invest in methods to inform the public on how our institutions work and insert them into the every day lives of every citizen.

Isabella S, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

A U.S. citizen really has no obligations in terms of serving their country. Serving in the military, voting, and helping others are not things that are required by law. So, anything I choose to do for my country is my decision. To be honest I think that is a really privileged thing to say because I know a lot of people are required to risk so much more for their country whether they want to or not. I also think that something like voting should be mandatory because even if the outcome doesn't affect you, it does affect a lot of other people. This is something that was clearly evident in this past presidential election.

In terms of being a good person and helping people in any way that I can, that isn't violent, is definitely something I would like to think that I do. Serving in the military is a whole different issue because I'm not really sure what I would do. If the US was fighting in a war that I did not agree with then I would most definitely not fight in it. On the other hand if the outcome of this war could put my loved ones in any danger, then I would consider joining the military. Then again, if there was any other way that didn't involve killing people to protect my loved ones I would choose that. I would choose that option because I believe that killing another human is the worst crime you could ever commit. If I had to kill a bunch of people, I don't think I could do it or see the point in living after committing such a heinous act.

Ultimately, I can't say if I would fight or not because that is a decision that you can't make unless you're in the moment when it's really happening.

Aidan C, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

Here in the United States, our country was founded upon the notions of individual liberty and personal freedoms. As an American citizen nearing the age of 18, I can't think of any mandatory civic responsibilities that I must take care of as a result of my country's governing body. While we do have civic obligations, which includes voting, respecting the Constitution, and being a good 'Samaritan' overall, there are no legally obligated responsibilities that a US citizen must fulfill within their lifetime.

This unique aspect of the United States then leads to the question of whether our citizens feel national pride or a sense of duty to their country. Nationalism, or patriotism, has long been an integral theme within America. In wars, this message is what drives many people to enlist within the army. This theme can also be adapted to encourage people to vote, and thus further the good of our country. However, in recent years, especially during the time period surrounding the 2020 election, national pride has become a somewhat controversial subject. Conservative-leaning US citizens tend to echo various traditionally nationalist sentiments, while accusing members of the other party (liberal-leaning citizens) for lacking patriotism and love for their country. In response, some liberal Americans state that they display patriotism by accepting the country's flaws and contemplating on how they can be fixed. Nonetheless, national pride in the US is most certainly not what it used to be.

Another issue regarding nationalism within the United States arose as a result of our country's multi-ethnic population. In light of recent racial controversies, non-white American citizens have shared a message of feeling 'not accepted' within their country. This aspect of the US differs greatly from other areas of the world. Objectively, it's much easier to create a national identity when the ethnical population of the country is homogenous. This is not the case in the US.

On a personal level, I'm slightly conflicted regarding my view of America. Growing up in an immigrant family, there were various instances where I felt that people of my race were not being accepted nor treated on an equal 'playing field', so to speak. However, I do also recognize the opportunities and privileges of living in a free country such as the US. As I approach adulthood, I believe that I do feel a certain sense of national pride within my country. While it may not be to an extreme extent, I feel that my

experiences within the country have solidified my willingness to undertake certain things for the benefit of other American citizens and the country as a whole.

Danny N, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

In America, the only mandatory responsibilities I can think of is to pay our taxes in order to fund public services like education and health programs and jury duty. There are many civic obligations that are encouraged such as voting and community service. With voting, it's a way for the people's voice to be heard and it only does more harm than good if one doesn't vote. Many high schools across the United States have a mandatory graduation requirement of community service. BLS specifically has 100 required community service hours. I would say that I would be glad to do any of these obligations as they help further my community. My taxes would directly help public services for people who cannot afford them, voting directly helps me as my opinions can be heard through legislation, and community service fosters community bonding with people in your nearby neighborhoods and ultimately help for a greater good.

Aside from these, I don't feel obligated to do much more. As I see the flaws in our government, I am not sure if I can hold those nationalist and patriot ideas that many other countries have. This would also mean that I would not have much devotion if I were to be drafted, which would most likely never happen again. The last time a military draft was ordered was during the Vietnam War and it received much backlash from the public. President Johnson justified this draft of males ranging from ages 18-25 with the idea that America should intervene into other countries in order to help them. This influences my idea of the military as I do not want to join something that leads to unnecessary war. Because of this, you will not see me voluntarily joining the military soon. And not to mention the many veterans who suffer from PTSD and trauma, I do not want to have that risk.

The military has also discriminated against the LGBTQ+ community with Trump's recent(-ish) military ban on trans people. If joining the military was voluntary, I would not want to join if they actively discriminate against a whole community.

Lilah [redacted] USA, Boston, Massachusetts

America prides itself on being, "The Land of the Free," but they only really like to stick to that when it is beneficial. It is taken very seriously when it comes to civic obligations. People are so consumed with the notion of their individual freedom, that they will not even allow facial coverings to be required for everyone to wear at all times. Some claim this mandate to be a violation of their freedom.

There are very few civil obligations that every American is expected to uphold. We are expected to all be law abiding citizens, and face the consequences if we are not. We are all supposed to pay our taxes on time, although our own president does not seem to be doing that. We are also required to attend jury duty when we are summoned for it. There has not been a military draft since the Vietnam War, although I do not doubt that the U.S. government would be quick to put this into place again.

On a more personal level, I believe I have obligations to my own community. At school, I am required to complete certain things in order to graduate. At home, my parents expect me to graduate from high school, and also to help in any necessary ways around the house and with my brother. I feel the obligation to at any point do anything in my power to protect and support them from any harm.

Rayna M, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

The only obligation I can think of that adult US citizens are required to do is to pay taxes. People have the choice of joining the military if they want to serve for our country, but it is not a requirement.

It's interesting to think about what I would be willing to do for my country. I, personally, don't feel any sort of attachment to the US. Within the past couple of years, I especially don't feel the need to be associated with the it. I have more pride for my state and my city. Perhaps if I were from a different country, I would be more inclined to join the military, I would be more patriotic, but I still don't think I would want to serve in the military.

From a young age, we are told that the people in the military are heroes, that we should respect our veterans and I agree that we should have the utmost respect for the people who have fought for our country, it's honorable that they are willing to risk their ives for a cause, but I don't really agree with the idea that they are heroes. We shouldn't glorify war. War is not a necessity, war can be prevented, but we praise the people who kill the most "enemies".

This may sound strange, but war seems almost childish to me. The fact that two or more nations can't come to an agreement is ridiculous. I understand that sometimes war has to be used to prevent dangerous events from occurring, and maybe I only think this way because I've never had to serve, but I don't think having a military is that necessary.

Andy M., USA, Boston, Massachusetts

In the United States of America, we are expected to perform certain duties under the law when we turn 18. We are expected to vote, identify with a political party, be a part of the legal process through jury duty, and most all men must sign up for selective service. I'/m willing to do all of these things under certain circumstances. I'm willing to vote and I'm very excited I will be

able to vote in the next president election. I don't really know what jury duty is, all I know is my parents hate it, so I'm not excited to do it, but I'd still be willing to be a part of the country's legal process. Something I am not willing to do, and this may be controversial for some people and I totally understand why, but I am not willing to join the army to die in the middle east for an oil company. Serving in the military is the ultimate form of service for your country, because you could give the ultimate sacrifice by doing so. If something happened to America, like an attack, I would be more obligated to serve but if America shoots first, I wouldn't want to serve. If something like Pearl Harbor or 9/11 happened, I would feel the need to serve. But earlier in the year when the U.S. attacked Iranian general Qasem Soleimani, I wouldn't want to serve. I wouldn't want to serve my country if it was the aggressor. On the United States Coat of Arms, there is our national bird, the bald eagle, holding two things in each of its arms. On the left side it holds and olive branch and on the right side it holds 13 arrows, symbolic of the first 13 American colonies. When in elementary school I was taught the reason the eagle holds an olive branch is because the U.S. would never seek out violence, or attack a nation without provocation. I was taught the reason the eagle holds arrow is because if the U.S. was ever attacked it wouldn't hesitate to strike back. I would serve my country for the olive branch, never for the arrows.

Tandin JW, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

I believe that there are many things everyone can do to help and protect their country and their community. I like to think that I would be willing to do anything for my country, my neighbors, and my community, but it is interesting to think about whether I would serve in the military. Growing up I always thought about going into the military as something other people did, not something that I would one day do. While I have a ton of respect for the people that choose to go into the military and fight for the country, I personally hate war and the idea of fighting other people, and I do not think I would be able justify doing those things in order to serve the country.

I think everyone has a civic obligation to help their country in any way they can, but I do not think this necessarily means serving in the military. As other people said, military service is not a civic obligation in the United States, however there are different situations in which people are required to serve. Obviously if we were in a war or some other kind of national emergency where there was a draft, many people would be drafted to serve and protect the country. Although being a woman, I would probably be excluded from a draft, I think the idea that I serve in the military depends entirely on what is happening in the country and world. If there were a threat that impacted my community, family, or had a big impact on the whole country I would think about serving in the military in some capacity. As other people have mentioned, serving in the military is often more serving the government which I do not agree with, but if there were an imminent threat I would like to think that I would serve to protect the people of the country.

Grace P, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

My civil obligations as a U.S. citizen are paying my taxes on time and participating in our judicial system through jury duty. Another civil responsibility that I have is completing 100 hours of community service, which is also a graduation requirement for high school. I know that many high schools around the country have a community service requirement. However, I believe that community service should be required for every citizen in the nation, not just high school students. It would improve our community and give everyone a better understanding of how important it is to help others and give back to our community.

Even though military service is a civic obligation in many other countries (including South Korea, Israel, and Brazil), it is not a requirement in the United States. Like some of my peers, I see it as a career path that allows individuals to fight for and protect our country. I personally would not want to participate in the military, since I am not as fit or athletic as I hope to be so my efforts would be a waste. In my case, the costs would outweigh the benefits. Instead, I would like to serve my country in a different way by raising awareness for and fighting against the social and racial injustices in my community and nation. Through advocacy and volunteering, I want to help protect citizens' rights and lift the voices of individuals, who have been silenced.

In addition, I have obligations and responsibilities towards my family, which can mean helping them with daily tasks and protecting them from any danger or harm. I would serve and support my family both in times of peace and crisis, as we are very close with each other. If I am passionate towards or care about someone or something, I would be willing to take action to support and defend them.

Rachel R, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

Individual liberty has always been a priority in America, and I think that is why are civic obligation under the law is very limited. We are all expected to abide by the laws made by our government, but outside of that we are free to be as uninvolved with the government or community as we please. We aren't required to join the military or hold public service jobs, even voting is optional. The most extreme example of forced civic obligation that I can think of are the military drafts that happened during past wars. I don't believe that it is fair to force citizens to abandon their futures and families at home to risk their lives fighting in a war they did not start. In the Vietnam War, many of the young men drafted were people of color who faced discrimination from their fellow Americans. They risked and lost their lives in great numbers for a country that did not respect them or treat them with equality. Many Americans directly opposed the war and protested

for its end as well. Things have improved since then, but I still don't think people should be forced to fight for a cause they may not support.

I honestly don't know much about the recent conflicts the US is involved in right now, like the war in Afghanistan. We are lucky that this has all faded to the background for us, meanwhile it probably defines the daily lives of people living near active combat zones. Despite having relatives who served, a military career was never presented as a possibility for me because of my gender and my parents' careers. If something big did happen to threaten our national security or certain freedoms, I might consider enlisting, but I would never want to serve in a combat zone. This might be weird, but I can see myself taking up arms against our own government (should some extreme violation of rights occur) more than a foreign one. I also understand the mental and physical toll war can have, and the upsetting number of veterans who don't receive proper care or end up homeless. This, in addition to a decrease in patriotic sentiments, is probably why few young people (at least in our community) see the military as a viable career path. I think we are also less accustomed to and accepting of violence nowadays, and I don't think any of us are capable of killing or seriously injuring another person. Because of our education, we also have very many other options available to us. I am very grateful to live in America, but I think I can better serve my country in other ways than joining the military. I hope that someday I will have a career that contributes to the greater good, or at least doesn't cause anymore harm. I would also like to continue volunteering in my community and using my voice, dollar, and vote to advocate for issues that I care about.

I think young people are still incensticised – ZIQI

I think the military still attract young people because it alleviates student debt, though that's more indicative of a larger problem regarding education. – ZIQI

I agree, a large part of the draw to military service is in the financial and educational benefits. It is good that it offers disadvantaged students opportunities, but it doesn't seem right that you might have to risk your life just to afford school. I have even heard this being referred to as the poverty draft. Military websites say this is a myth, but I'm not sure what to believe since it certainly wouldn't help their reputation for them to agree with it. – RACHEL

Regina C, USA, Boston, Massachusettes

I am going to be honest, I don't know a lot about my civic obligation and responsibility to my country. I am privileged to say that I have a choice in what I choose to do, say, and act. When I think about my civic obligation and responsibility, the first thing that comes to mind is paying my taxes, which has loop holes in some situations, and voting, which is all about ones choice.

Although when I do think about the military, I think it's a choice to be there. In America we have not had a drafting since the Vietnam war, therefore I have not thought about what I would do if there was a call to action. I think its important to acknowledge that it is a privilege that I have the outlet to even have an option to not be enrolled. I know that there are programs that specialize in the training of armed forces, but I have never myself thought about joining. Like "military service? It's not for me" I see the military as any other job that people apply and work for. If I had an option, the question of what would I do would stem from how much do I care? For me, I would feel a stronger connection with my family than to the obligation of the state or the country. The more personal that it is to me, the more I would want to fend for what I hold close. There's also the question of "what am I fighting for?" If I believe in the cause strongly enough, I would believe I would step forward. Although that also brings in the question, how safe is everything going to be? Radical change versus slight change to a place where I do not have a stand in, why would I? I know that this is selfish of me to say, as it probably affects so many people, but it really depends on the circumstance. If I am putting my life on the line for a cause, I don't want it to go to waste. However, I know that the military does not only consist of fighters, but people who help, nurses who tend, people who cook, and many more occupations. I think I would be more willing, if I knew I could help out in a way that I knew would be a good use of my time. I am not going to hide that I am not physically fit. The wind is knocked out of me going up three flights of stairs at Boston Latin. Therefore why would I risk my time in a place where I know I would be making no significance. Theres also the factor of the trauma, and the weight of a war has on a person even if they have survived. It puts into question, what is the worth of lives, for an argument. It is likely that my reasoning and my morals are tainted due to the privilege I have had since I was little, although I do believe we all can make a contribution to what we firmly believe in. I think it just leads to the question of how.

Silvia G, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

I believe that I am held to the duty of being a law abiding citizen within my country. My civic obligation is to respect the rules put in place in order to maintain a peaceful community. Although there is the option, you are not forced to join the military nor have the responsibility to protect its people. For most this choice would be based off of the reason behind the fight. As Regina said it largely depends on the importance of the issue and whether it is a crucial cause. I do not think that I would participate in the military for many reasons. I am very against violence and joining would contradict my beliefs and values. Additionally, I think previous wars America has partaken in have not been necessary to benefit or save our country. The military also has a detrimental impact on both physical and mental health sometimes indefinitely. The immense trauma those are forced to encounter as they serve is unimaginable. It involves rigorous and constant practice with long periods of schooling. I respect those who have the determination to endure this strenuous process and risk their lives to serve the country. Even if something happened to my country, I would stand by my decision of refraining from joining the military.

Jack I, USA, Boston, Massachusetts

It's interesting to me to really be asked to consider whether I'd be willing to serve my country through military service. In my community, it seems enlisting in the military is seen not as particularly encouraged or the way of honor, but more a career path that someone takes, no different in its abstract from training to be a mechanic or lawyer (though of course, in practice being a soldier is vastly different from civilian jobs). I think I can safely say the answer is no from me on that question, on the principle that most American military action comes with little benefit to the American people (see: Iraq and Vietnam wars). Additionally, drawbacks including great personal risk, an almost guaranteed development of trauma/PTSD, and spotty history in terms of the morality of the American army (i.e., committing war crimes), would all dissuade me from joining. Thinking about it now, **the problem with being in the army is that you're really not serving your country- you're serving its government**. And I don't agree with many of the actions the American government takes, so I wouldn't be comfortable serving it.

However, this question of what I would do if there was a real, imminent, serious threat facing the American people complicates things. Whereas normally I would not see the US military as a vehicle for doing good, in this instance it would be. So, I might be more inclined to reflect on it and consider joining, but at the end of the day I think my answer would be the same. Frankly, I just haven't been raised in a way that makes me see the US military as helpful and something to look up to, and it would be hard to change that. And, unhappy as I am to say this, I'd probably end up prioritizing my own comfort and happiness. The military is a rigorous and demanding environment, physically and socially. It's known for being a place for mostly straight white men, so, being gay, I would be pretty stressed/uncomfortable going into it, and I'm not someone who's very athletic or interested in a physically rigorous lifestyle. Plus, I have strong nonviolent values and I shudder at the thought of killing someone.

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02 (H-->N): : What are You Willing to Do for your Country, Your Neighbors, Your Community?

Here's our topic for this week: In many places worldwide, civic obligation and responsibility include serving one's country, often through the military and/or through some other form of service. That's a huge action with significant consequences for the people who serve. What are you asked to do by your country in terms of service? And what are you willing to do? If something happened--to your family, your community, your region, your country—would you be willing to serve on behalf of your people? Can you explain your thinking with as much specificity as possible?

JUDI FREEMAN DEC 06, 2020 05:13PM

Christian , Boston, USA

When hearing about this post, the first thing I think about is the famous John F. Kennedy quote, which leads me to really think what am I willing to do. The most prominent community that I'm a part of is the Black Community, this will never leave me, and will never change for as long as I live, so what can I do for the better of the Black Community. In this country there are extreme forms of racial divide, and Black lives seem not to matter whatsoever. So present day the one thing I can do is educate, help others understand what it means to be a part of the Black community as well as help end racial stigmas and get closer to destroying racism. For the other question would I be willing to serve, in terms of the black community, service would be advocating and speaking up, which I am extremely ready to do, however I need to continue to educate myself further so that I can properly "serve" my community.

Maya Boston USA

In the United States, there is not too much that we are asked to do in terms of service, at least when compared to countries that consider serving one's country as the norm. We are expected to pay our taxes, to serve jury duty, and follow the law, but not *expected* to serve in the military. I don't think I would ever voluntarily join the military because I don't support a decent amount of things they do, and I don't want to be a part of something that takes up so much unnecessary funding if I don't have to. I do think that joining the military is a good way to serve your country if you are very passionate about your country, but given the past and present of America, I don't necessarily think I'd give up my life for it. If we became a part of a huge war and I was absolutely needed, I would probably cave in and join, if to help protect my family and friends if nothing else. In terms of what I am willing to do, I try to volunteer at a food pantry near my house as often as I can, but it can be hard to balance school work, a job, and volunteering so I don't get to volunteer as much as I would like.

Maia Boston, USA

In the United States, some required aspects of helping our communities are paying taxes and serving jury duty when summoned to. Military service is not required by all citizens, but men from ages 18 to 25 are required to sign up to be drafted if needed if a war is commenced. Some other ways that Americans are encouraged serve their community in more voluntary ways are volunteering, staying up to date with current events and voicing opinions, signing petitions and attending protests for what one deems to be a worthwhile cause, and arguably the most important and encouraged, voting.

As for what I do to serve my country, in being asked this question, I have to admit that could and should be doing more. I, as I'm sure many others do as well, often convince myself that giving a few dollars to the homeless as I walk past them on the street is enough to help my community, but in reality, it is no where near enough. I try to stay up to date with current events and issues and do what I can to help them from home, but there are ways to get out and actually make a difference in our society and be of service to our people that I don't do nearly enough of. I think that volunteering to help the less fortunate is amongst one of the easiest ways to help people in our communities in a life changing way and I think that if everyone took initiative to do this even a little bit, out society would be a much better place.

Arpita S. West Bengal, India

In India, it is not mandatory for the citizens to serve the military. But still, if I get a chance to serve my country I would like to serve as a military doctor. If you are willing to serve your nation then the means of serving doesn't matter.

I think one can serve their nation through any form of service. You

can do it either by taking care of the people and environment or by following laws and order like paying taxes, exercise fundamental rights, etc.
If something happened against the well-being of my people then I'll definitely raise my voice against it.

Ema Bosnia and Herzegovina

In Bosnia and Herzegovina military service is optional. I think that the only thing citizens are required to do is to pay taxes and abide the law.
I think that the lack of military draftings is a good thing since young people can focus more on their education instead of feeling like the weight of the world is on their shoulders. I would never join the military since I think that I'm better suited for different types of community service, like volunteering and charity work.

Faruk S, Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina

Here in Bosnia & Herzegovina there is no required military service as in many other nations. There is, for example, a minimum number of hours of community service for most students including myself. These projects vary greatly - from helping in charity organizations to planting trees in parks.

I don't believe in obligatory military service as I am of the opinion that serving when not in war only make wars more likely. As a country which went through a fairly bloody war the consequences of which are felt to this day, obligatory military service is absolutely the last thing we need.

What we do need is a more educated public on socially and environmentally important issues - mainly global warming.

I would join the military only if I was forced to because I believe that war can always be avoided and it is the most disgusting and horrible thing that humanity ever came up with.

That said, there are plenty of ways to help the society. I believe in bottom-up service. What I mean by this is not looking at issues from a greater picture (though knowledge of the bigger picture is definitely required) but considering how you can help in your area right now. Can you help that lovely old lady carry her groceries? Can you fix the bench in the park by simply hammering in a nail to secure something? Harsher sanctions for littering should be implemented (it's a very significant issue here) as well as other things that should be common sense.

All this can be made significantly easier to achieve through education. The young generations such as mine are mostly aware of these issues but we need to make sure that even younger generations also know of the issues, and so on as long as the issues are solved. Change starts in ourselves :)

Paarth A, India, Gurgaon

Though citizens in India are not required to serve the country through the military, there are various services deeply rooted in citizenship. Single-use plastic has been banned by the government and every citizen is required to use eco-friendly alternatives to the same. During the lockdown, everyone adhered to the restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID. The simplest of things like not parking at a no-parking zone, and separating waste into biodegradable and non-biodegradable is also considered a service. I consider myself to be patriotic, and am willing to serve the nation in any way I can, be it through simple everyday services or joining the military and serving. The spirit of the nation is engrained in the minds and hearts of every Indian and I have full confidence that most citizens of the country would be willing to serve and grow the nation, and lead it to prosperity.

Mohamed Amine France

In France we are not asked for a service to render for our country. But at 16 years old for all people who have a French nationality we have to make a "journée d'appelle". But I confess to you saw that I do not have French nationality (I have Italian nationality) I do not know how it works, how this "journée d'appelle". MPersonally I will never fight for France or Italy, because I am not as patriotic for these two countries, but if I should fight for Morocco (my country of origin), I think yes I could fight for it because my parents are Moroccan and I grew up around Moroccan culture in my family and this is the one that characterizes me the most. And also pretty much all my family lives in Morocco. After that if tomorrow there is a war I would never go to the front. I am not going to ruin my life because of the conflicts between countries and I think there are enough people who want to come to the military so that they can go to war. Notably France is one of the 5 most powerful countries militarily in the world. But then if I had to provide humanitarian assistance, I would be to serve my country in this case.

Saeed Lebanon

Military service is optional in my country,but well i can serve my country by several ways.
I can volunteer to any job that is common good for the society like planting trees in cities and cleaning the beach. Also, i can create a charity that criticizes the poor population for a better qualified life . Moreover, donating money to local NGO's to strengthen their position on the behalf of absent government .

Nayeli , Boston USA

In the united states, military service is not required but if there were a national crisis where it was necessary for the greater good, I believe I would join. One required act of service is the requirement to act as a juror every few years ti guve back to your community. This is a good attempt for civic obligation that is for

the greater good. This obligatory service has no severe repurcutions other than a missed day or two of work.
Back to the idea of military sevice I think if something happened to my peers that could soley be solved through military intervention, rather than diplomacy, I would join for the greater good. Or I would support the cause locally through advocacy. There are many ways that a person can support their country and that should be considered more than solely military intervention which can have serve consequences for the innnocent people in other countries.

MAMTA , GURGAON,INDIA

In India no citizen has to go through compulsory military training or service . Though Constitution of independent India clearly endows the duty on all citizens to serve at time of national calling.

As responsible citizen of India I should follow the law and order of the land . Exercise all the fundamental rights and duties, such as casting a vote, paying government taxes; protecting the country from corruption.

Being a good and responsible citizen of the country, I must engage in activities or assist in undertaking issues such as keeping the environment clean, conserving natural resources and protecting public properties

Teacher Florence from Rwanda
For the country, I educate students by providing to them update knowledge, advice, and encourage students to love work so to contribute to the development of Rwanda.
For my neighbor,I have supported them by providing food during covid 19 lockdown. I encourage children to maintain hygiene.
For my family,I contribute more in house repairement, supporting important events.etc

MAURO , CUENCA, ECUADOR

In Ecuador, military service is optional. I think that it is not the unique form to serve your country because we can serve and help people doing other activities.
First of all, people can help in many ways, for example: you can donate food, clothes and toys because there are many children that need help. Community service is one of the best ways to improve the lives of others. Also, few things are as easy or provide as much instant gratification as donating to people in need.
Furthermore, If something were to happen to my community, region, country, etc. I think joining the military is the ultimate way because war is not the solution.
Finally, remember Dalai Lama says
"If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion."

MAURO , CUENCA, ECUADOR.

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Paing Pathein, Ayeyarwady, Myanmar

In Myanmar, the citizens are not required to serve the military like South Korea, men between 18-28 ought to serve in the military for at least 18 months. But we need to follow the laws and pay the taxes. I think these are the basic steps of being a good citizen. In my point of view, joining the military is not the best way to serve the country. We can serve the country in many different ways as well.

Changing the environment, volunteering the people and participating in the local communities for the betterment of the country is also the best way to serve. But in our schools, we are taught to serve the motherland country as much as we can. Moreover, participating in the movements of local communities lead the country to be more united and not a violent country. Globally, I am participating in the Ego-Bags project which is

leading to the non-garbage world. I think it's quite important. I am also in the Glean program which is a project for the children in part of South Africa.

Jagna B, Malopolska, Poland

In my country, military service is optinal. We have a handful of professional military that helps people during the various cataclysm disasters during the pandemic to support the health care. My country sends toops on peacekeeping missions, but this is rare. Women are not included in the duty of service. At this moment, I'm too young to imagine a situation in which my country will need me, but I know that difficult situations inspire higher feelings in a person, such as patriotism and courage. Probably, if I was put in such a situation, I would like to do something that would help my motherland. The history of Poland has shown us that young people of my age, during the wars, fought or supported other as paramedics and couriers, performing tasks that under normal circumstances adults would do.

Nahna Pc, India, Kerala

If I can serve my country through any means it will be one of the greatest things which I can do to my nation. Since Military service is not mandatory in India I won't opt it. I think I can serve my country by being a law abiding citizen, by taking care of the environment, by showing patriotism etc. If something happens against the welfare of my family, region, community etc I will definitely raise my voice against it and I hope the Father of our nation Gandhiji's great ideas of Ahimsa will lead me.

Emily H. Boston, MA, USA

In the United States, American citizens are not required to serve in the military, but men ages 18-25 do need to register for Selective Service in case there is a future draft. Although citizens do not have to participate in military obligations, they must file taxes and do their jury duties.

While I am more than happy to follow the laws and volunteer in community projects, I think I would not be suitable to be part of the military. It is my responsibility to do my services in this country, but for me personally, I just think there are better participants who are much stronger and dedicated than me.

If something happened to my family and community, I would be willing to do anything because they hold an important place in my heart. When it comes to military services, I think I would less willing, but would still do it. It would be disappointing though if I have to serve in a war that I do not agree with.

Jasmine L. Boston, MA, USA

In the US, military service is not required, but citizens must follow all laws, pay taxes, and serve as jurors when summoned. Something I didn't know before and learned while researching this, is that all males ages 18 to 25 are also required by law to register for Selective Service, which serves in order to resume a draft in case of war or a national emergency. If you fail to register, you can be fined and even imprisoned, as well as lose access to federal student loans, benefits, and job programs, as well as naturalization, and a driver's license in some states. This can be a problem because often the people who fail to register are the people who need these benefits the most. This article that I read about Selective Service and how it punishes often low-income men for not registering, was interesting.

If something were to happen, I definitely would and currently am willing to serve my community and do as much as I can for its betterment, but in terms of serving in the military, I would be more hesitant. I would serve in the military if circumstances absolutely needed it, but probably in a non-combatant role and only if I morally agreed with what was happening.

Tia H. Boston, MA

American citizens are not required to serve in the military but they are required to pay taxes and do jury duty.

In terms of serving my country in the military, it is something I would not be willing to do because I don't think I have it in me to use violence against someone else and it is unethical to me. If something were to happen to my family and friends I might join as a last resort if it was completely necessary . I'm definitely willing to help my community in other ways such as using my voice to help the common good and volunteering at organizations and non-profits.

Thanh S. Boston, USA

In terms of service, I am asked to be a law abiding citizen, pay taxes, and volunteer. I am willing to help out my community with things like working in a food pantry or raising money for certain causes, but I would never serve in the military because I don't condone violence and am against the military's ideals.

The wars that the US is currently involved in hurt and kill too many innocent people and their lives and waste too much of Americans' taxes, in my opinion.

If something were to happen to my family, community, region, or country, I still wouldn't join the military because it is unethical. I would rather do something that would benefit everyone without resorting to violence.

Christopher N. Boston, USA

Freedom is generally preached to many people from my country so there aren't many things citizens are required to do other than following the law. We do have the Selective Service where men over 18 are required to enter the military draft in times of emergency.

I am willing to follow the law in my country. I honestly wouldn't be too keen on going to the military to help serve my country, but I would be most definitely willing to help out my community. I wouldn't want to go to war because I feel like any war we have in the next few decades would be because of poor leadership. Therefore, I wouldn't want to be following the orders of that person, who would be sitting safely in their office while millions go out to fight.

If something were to occur, I would do what is necessary to help the common good. If it's a environmental emergency, I would help those I see in need if I possess the ability to do so.

Lukas H. Boston, USA

As far as requirements go, there isn't too much our country explicitly tells us to do, aside from the expectations that we follow every part of the law, pay our taxes, and serve on a jury when we are called to. Men are also required to be registered with Selective Service (the military draft if there is a national emergency) when they turn 18.

Some things we may be asked to do, but not required, is promote the common good, help our communities out, and vote vote vote.

I think it is interesting to see what our country is asking of us vs. requiring of us regarding COVID. More often than not we are asked rather than required to wear masks to promote public health and safety.

I'm willing to follow all the laws, unless we ever come to a point where they become far too restrictive, dictatorial, or more harmful than protective. When I'm older I will do everything that is expected of a U.S. citizen, including paying taxes and serving on a jury.

I think so many wars are unnecessary and can be avoided and some in our country's past have had an unclear motive or goal at all. I would not be willing to contribute to the violence if I didn't know what I was fighting for, but I would be willing to sacrifice my life if there was a clear threat to our country that needed to be stopped, especially if it was harming my community or even family.

Ziane R-C Boston, MA, USA

If I were required to serve for the military, then I absolutely would. However, I wouldn't voluntarily serve because it is a scary ordeal. I don't even know if it would assist citizens of our country in a positive way. However, I can absolutely can and will serve my local community in any means I can. Everyone who is able should do their part.

Tiffany D. Boston, USA

Military service in the U.S. is not mandatory, but there are other ways in which we can serve our country. Through things like abiding by the law, serving on a jury when summoned (Jury Duty), and paying taxes. Other than the required services, there are also voluntary efforts taken by citizens like voting and staying informed on current issues.

If something were to happen to my family, community, or country, I would not serve on behalf of my people. In terms of other means of service like lending a hand whenever someone's in trouble, I wouldn't mind serving in that sense, but I cannot see myself serving in the military. Although I commend our U.S. veterans, I don't necessarily agree with how our military operates and the violence that ensues. I would rather support my family and community through peaceful means.

Allison [redacted], Boston, USA

With citizens, everyone is required to pay taxes and follow the law to help their country. Citizens do not have an obligation to serve in the military though.

I am not sure if I would join the military because although it is a service to my country, it is very dangerous and violent. I am willing to pax taxes and follow the laws in terms of service for my country.

I would serve for my family, community, religion or country if something happened and I was needed to help save lives. I do not necessarily agree with war and violence but I would try to save lives and help to protect because my family and community are important to me.

Isabella C. Boston, USA

In terms of service, citizens of the United States are not asked for much. It is expected that we abide by the law, pay taxes, and do a few other things. United States citizens are not required to join the military.

In terms of service, I would definitely be willing to join the military if I believed in the cause and thought it was morally right. I think that dedicating yourself to something that benefits those around you is extremely fulfilling. I would be happy and satisfied knowing that I had a positive impact.

if something happened to my family, community, region, or country I would probably be willing to serve on behalf of my people. I am a little hesitant though because I think that what is seen as morally right depends on what side you are seeing it from. When two countries are at war, people in the military from both countries most likely think they are doing the right thing. I think that everything isn't either right or wrong.

Vincent O. Boston, USA

In order to serve my country, I am asked to follow all laws and pay taxes. As a male, I am legally required to register for the draft when I turn 18. I would probably never join the armed forces because I don't necessarily agree with the wars being fought now. If there was a good reason for a war, I might join the military. If my community and family were in danger I would consider giving my life to protect them. Outside of the military, I would like to make a positive change for my country. I'm not sure what field it would be in but I am proud to be American.

Maggie O. Boston, USA

In the U.S. we are expected to follow the law and I believe jury duty is also mandatory. Other than that we have no major mandatory responsibilities especially none with a consequence as great as serving in the military, which is optional here and is considered one of the greatest sacrifices you can make for our country. Although I would not choose to be in the military, I am conflicted on whether or not I would if I had to fight for my family, community, region, or country. While I don't necessarily agree with the idea of war and I would not be eager to serve, I would most likely do it if it meant protecting my community or if serving in the military was the only choice. Ideally I would serve in some other way, but I would serve if I felt I had to.

Shuwen M. Boston, USA

Joining the military is the ultimate service to the country, but it is not required by law. To obey the laws of the country could be considered a service. Joining the military is not something that I am willing to do. I feel like it is not the best way that I could serve my country, but I would be willing to help out in other ways, whether that be providing resources to those that need it or just staying out of the way in order for people to do what they need. If something happened to my family, community, region, or country, I will try my best to help them in any way that is needed but I am not willing to hurt anyone in the process. I am personally believe that harming others would not help with what has happened.

Johny S. Boston, USA

In my country, I currently do not have any required service that I have to do by law, however I do have to register for the draft once I am 18 and serve jury duties.

In terms of what I am willing to do, I often do service in and around my community to serve for a greater good. I'm always willing to help out when the help is needed and it is for a good cause, whether it be for my family, friends, or complete strangers.

If my service would be for a cause that I agree with, I would be more than willing to offer my help and support for the cause.

Megan N. Boston, USA

Some things I can think of that everyday citizens in the US can do to serve the country is paying taxes, going to jury duty, and volunteering. Paying taxes is something almost every working person has to do. Taxes can help pay for the funding of public schools, Social Security, and Medicare. Jury duty is where adults are sent a letter saying "they need to serve on a jury". This is so different court cases can have a random jury. Volunteering is a broader way of serving the country but it can help a lot. By taking time out of your day to help your community and in turn to country, it is an easy way to give back and help create a better country. These are everyday things that I do or will do to serve my country.

Many people say serving in the military would be the ultimate way of serving. Many past presidents have talked about serving in the military to show their sacrifice and Patriotism. I, myself would not join or serve in the military because I do not support everything they do and I don't think my service would beneficial to the military.

Diana [redacted] Boston, USA

There are many ways that we are asked/expected to serve our country. Outside from serving in the military, we serve the US by following laws/working for the government, enriching the youth by becoming a teacher/being a good parent, joining the Peace Corps, and so forth.

I am uninterested in joining the military; namely because I am physically inept, but also because I do not wish to participate in violence. If something were to happen to my family, community, region, or country, however, I think I would be willing to serve. I guess it's one of those things that I will never truly understand until something bad actually does happen to me/the people I care about, as selfish as that sounds. But on the average day, I do not get excited while thinking about joining the military. It isn't something I have ever really considered, and I don't plan on enlisting. I am not extremely pro-America or pro-military, so I don't think I am generally fit for that position.

Patty - Boston, USA

If I were asked to serve my country, presumably by joining the military, I believe that I would. I would want to help out in any shape or means possible. I may not always agree with their methods and goals but if something happened to my family or community, I would be willing. I'd rather have the opportunity to serve my role as a citizen and give back to the community that I grew up in. I'm not sure as to what extent of what I am willing to do but I am open to at least making an effort to.

Natalie - Boston, USA

In regards to serving my country, serving in the military is the least I could do for my country. The most I can do is attempt to give back to the community, because if every person asks that of themselves, every person can make a difference first on a small scale, and then on a larger scale after. For my neighbors, I can attempt to be an upstanding citizen, treating others with kindness. I would absolutely be willing to do more for my community and neighbors, even if it meant hurting myself in the process. If it was necessary, I would give myself to fight for what I deem to be right.

Olivia - Boston, USA

In terms of service for my country, citizens are asked to follow the law and although it is a possibility, in no way are we required to serve through the military. Personally I am not willing to serve in the military because it just isn't something I want to do with my life and I do not think it is completely ethical. I think if something were to happen that put my family, community, region, or country in danger I would consider serving on behalf of my people but only if it doesn't involve hurting other people. So honestly I don't know what situation I would have to be in for me to serve but it would have to be pretty extreme circumstances for me to even consider it.

Bivushi I, Nepal ,Pokhara

Serving motherland is something everybody should do.But, I think it is not necessary that I can only serve my country through military but I can also serve my nation by being a law abiding citizen and bringing a positive change in any field in the nation.

However ,if something happen against the welfare of my country then I will try my best to follow the path of my brave ancestors who sacrificed their life for the nation and made every Nepalese proud of them .Nepal was never colonized because of the Gorkha Empire.

To conclude, I truly believe performing our duty with full enthusiasm is the best service for the Nation.

Emmanuelle B, USA, Boston

I believe that I am asked to be a law abiding citizen to serve my country. However, serving my country by joining the military is the ultimate way I suppose. If so, then no I am not willing to do it. I would personally never join the military simply because I don't support violence and I dont believe that the wars the US is currently involved in make any sense. If something were to happen to my community, region, country, etc. I still wouldn't join the military because it still goes against my beliefs.

I agree war is not the solution. — ANONYMOUS

I agree war is not the solution. — MAURG

03 (O-->T): : What are You Willing to Do for your Country, Your Neighbors, Your Community?

Here's our topic for this week: In many places worldwide, civic obligation and responsibility include serving one's country, often through the military and/or through some other form of service. That's a huge action with significant consequences for the people who serve. What are you asked to do by your country in terms of service? And what are you willing to do? If something happened--to your family, your community, your region, your country—would you be willing to serve on behalf of your people? Can you explain your thinking with as much specificity as possible?

JUDI FREEMAN DEC 06, 2020 05:15PM

Valeri [illegible] Greece

That's a great question, as a matter a fact, I believe there are plenty of things I can do on behalf of my community, however the issue is that I'm not certain that the community will also do plenty of things on my behalf. The issue is that people in my community only ask for things. The situation must however be a give & take. To be truthful, I am not living in the best neighborhood, and therefore my family and I choose not to have many neighbors, however I do occasionally help whoever is in need outside of my doors, like for directions or the small talk. Other than that, things can only escalate on a national level. I am willing to fight for my country, I will be going to the army soon to join our special forces, so I guess you could say I'm a soldier to my country. On a more broad scale, I'm not sure what I can really do that will have an impact on my country. The only thing I can say for sure is that I will try my best to participate in the implementation of rightful actions taken by our government, although that's quite rare. Last, I suppose because I'm studying to be an actor, maybe I can give some credit for the history and over all status of my country.

Afreen [illegible],Kerala,India

In India, it is not mandatory to join in military services.It is ones affection and love towards their country which leads them to be a part of military and it is through their brave effort and courageous acts we are able to live a peaceful life in our country.I am very proud of them.It is not only through military we can serve our country.There are civil services in India and also through different kind of taxes we can help our country for its growth.If any problem arises for my community,I'd like to be with them to make them feel that they are not alone and I'd do my best to solve their problems.It is not merely a person who can change the world and who can work for the country, instead it is the concerted effort of every citizen to make their country sustainable and developed.There is a saying that if you are good, your family changes, your village changes, your state changes, your country changes and the world changes.So every first step should be taken by citizens

Ben Z. Boston MA

The U.S. do not have required military service aside from the Draft. I do not think that there should be required military service, nor should people be forced to do it for a livable wage or access to college or any reason aside from caring about your country and your freedoms. I think that in general, there is too much

glorification and emphasis put on dying to save your country. If something were to happen and the government were to set up a new draft, I would probably not dodge it, but that being said, I very much am not pro-war.

Maysam M, Beirut, Lebanon

Due to the governmental corruption in Lebanon, citizens aren't involved with the government and do not have any obligatory services towards their country (excluding the mandatory services that have appeared because of (COIVD-19). However, there are a few unspoken services between the citizens such as keeping the streets clean and helping each other.
Unfortunately, I don't have to imagine what I would do to help my country because of the August 4th explosion. Mainly because after the explosion that occurred, all of the citizens of Lebanon came to Beirut, by choice, and started helping in many ways. For example, NGOs were created to provide support and other things, people opened up their houses and hotels to anyone who needed a shelter, blood was being donated along with food, people were helping each other evacuate the injured, and help the hospitals that were struggling at the time. Furthermore, those who couldn't participate in those things, due to personal reasons, were spreading necessary information and updates through social media about where blood donations were needed, which hospitals were too full and couldn't take in more people, and etc.

Erin [redacted] USA, Boston, Massachusetts

In the United States, joining the military is voluntary, besides the draft era. There is an age limit for the different military services which include the Army Reserve, the Navy Reserve, Marine Crops Reserve, and Coast Guard Reserve. If something happened or a violent conflict broke out, I would not serve in the military. I think the people who do serve are very brave, however I wouldn't ever want to participate in warfare/violence. I would help my community, family, and country in other ways that don't involve any violence/harm. I think killing is killing no matter who is involved. There are so many ways that we can help out our community/country. You can commit simple acts of kindness, whether it's being nice or volunteering to do community service. If the situation and circumstances were urgent then I'd maybe consider it. For now, that is not something that I see happening in my future.

Lucy [redacted] Boston MA, USA

Military service is not required in the U.S, other than drafts, but that is what comes to mind in terms of services to the country. I think I am pretty certain I'll never voluntarily join the army. Taxes are a way to give the country money for supposedly and trust that they distribute it wisely in hopes to help those who need it. I think a lot of services come from people who are willing to give up a part of themselves and volunteer or donate to those who do need it.

Shaun [redacted] Boston MA, USA

Military service is probably the first thing that comes to mind when service for your country is brought up. What isn't talked about is service at home. Lending a helping hand at home is, in my opinion, more important. I am willing to serve my country by volunteering in my community and helping those in need. That is an important service. Uplifting the unfortunate and providing help builds a stronger community and country. Like the famous phrase, "we are only as strong as our weakest link" we must strengthen ourselves by helping those in the most need. Volunteering our time in hospitals, food banks, and helping the homeless allows for stronger communities, less people in poverty and more people building up the country. This makes the country more powerful. Volunteering in communities and helping the less unfortunate is one of the best ways to show patriotism.

Leo [redacted] Boston MA, USA

There are several ways that people who live in the United States are asked or urged to do things for their country. One of these is serving in the military, which for the most part is voluntary. However, it is possible that during times of war, people who are certain ages may be drafted into the army. Personally, I would not willingly join the army. I do not agree with the approach that the United States takes with its military. In my opinion, far too much money is spent on the military that could be used to benefit people in other circumstances. In addition to this, I would not want to serve in the military because I do not want to engage in conflict that could cause harm to people. Another way that people are asked to serve in the United States is through jury duty. This is when people are randomly selected and asked to sit on the jury for a case. This is much less significant than being asked to serve in the army, and many people are called for jury duty. While many people do not like having jury duty, I believe it is important for people to do their part as citizens of the United States. If I were called for jury duty, I would do it willingly.

Henry [redacted] Boston MA, USA

In the United States, the military, whether the Navy, Air Force, or the Army, is completely optional, and there is no requirement for any American citizen to fur-fill. When we were in war, however, something was enacted called the draft, in which men of a certain age were drafted into the military to fight. If something happened to my country, family, or community, I would volunteer to fight. I think lots of people my age would be willing to fight for their country, on behalf of our people. When you look at previous wars, community is one of the strongest virtues that can lead to a win, and espiecally for a country like our own, community is vital. I think that though our political system is often debatable, and

Who doesn't want to serve his/her country? For serving ones country it is not necessary to be the part of military or sth like that. As being a citizen of a developing country, inquality prevails. I want to serve my country so that each and every people will be a part if equality. There are many people in my country who are working 24/7 to serve their country and i want to be one of them. Whenever my family, society, or nation flow their tears, i am always there to wipe it. I wont care time, I wont care situation, I am ready.
Pradeep Bhandari
Nepal

Gian , Boston MA, U.S.A

Pranav, Gurgaon, Haryana India

Service before self is something which is ingrained in every India. A country that got its independence from colonial power has a historical past of putting the nation before everything else. Mahatma Gandhi, Bhagat Singh, Subhash Chandra Bose, Mangal Pandey, Sarojini Naidu, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and the list goes on and on. They are the people who have made patriotism and pride for our nation flow in our bloodstreams. Although we might not have mandatory military enlistment, public service enlistment or so, but we do contribute our part by following simple duties and obligations like using paper bags instead of plastic ones, adhering to the no parking rules in specific zones, creating separate coloured bins and compost pits for waste management. India is a welfare state which is focusing on providing basic amenities to all citizens before stepping into laws like mandatory military/public service. However the Constitution does provide that all citizens must be ready to serve the nation if and when required. Fortunately there hasnt been any such instance

My country have the simple agenda - give & take. Ofcourse I would love to serve for my nation as much as I could and do it in any other way possible. The word "serve" itself means doing something for the betterment of our society and our country. Everyone can help or serve their country if they are willing to do so. They don't necessarily have to be recruited in any military force or police force.
Every citizen have their own different duties but our common goal is to do something for the betterment of our country. Being a youngster of my country, volunteering should be my goal .

Jenija
Pokhara, Nepal

Antonia V, Australia

Where I live there is no obligation to serve for your country whatsoever. You can enlist in the army but no one is forced to do anything after school. We are to pay taxes when you turn 18 but that is a given in most countries. At my position if something bad did happen to my family I would help where I can, but serving in the army is not something Australians need to think about regularly.

Jasmin Austria

I'm not asked to do military service because I'm a girl, but boys either have to serve in the military or do community service when they turn eighteen/have finished highschool. Other than that I'll be asked to pay taxes and to vote, but honestly it isn't much that my country asks me to do. I'm trying to look after the environment and bring joy to people, through my music or simply by being nice and helpful. I'd love to become a doctor someday to help people. Many of my classmates are members of the firebrigade, which is voluntary in most villages and I respect them a lot. If something happened to my family, I'd be willing to do anything it takes. I'm not so sure about my country. Although I love Austria I'm not very fond of nationalism. For example, if another country attacked Austria I wouldn't want to fight because that way I would take part in a war and hurt people who didn't want to that war either, who have a family and friends at home and after all I don't think I could live a normal life after having killed something just because my country asked me to. Furthermore I have friends abroad, and I think that's pretty common these days. It leads to a better understanding of cultures and I think it helps with overcoming nationalism. Because after all, countries depend on each other. So rather than doing things for "my country" I would like to help people and communities that need help, all over the world if that's possible. And what are countries? They are ways of dividing the world to better understand it, but after all these boarders are something superficial. Empires rose and fell, we went through the first and the second world war (the latter being the most frightening example of how bad nationalism can be for people) and most of the time wars resulted in the borders we know today. So in a nutshell, I would do everything for the people I love, and for people who need help, but not for "my country".

Yukine ,Hiroshima ,Japan

I think it is three major duties of japan.
we have to three things to do .
First ,we have obligation to pay taxes.
Second,we have obligation to work .
Third we have obligation to educated.Money of to study until junior high school pay by japanese government.(without private junior high school)

I won't be a military. But,If it happens disaster,pandemic, I want to donate for people in need.

Galina D,North Macedonia

some decisions that are made in this country are heavily controversial, we are still one people, one country. And we are all citizens of this country, therefore we should fight for it. Sure there would probably be setbacks in my overall life if I fought, but it would be a for a good cause.

Anderson , Boston MA, USA

In the United States, joining the Military, whether it be The Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard, is completely optional, during times of peace of course. During war time, there is something called the draft, where males aged 18-35 are drafted into the military to fight for the country. You can dodge the draft of course, but you'll face legal problems, and possibly the social shaming from other Americans. Despite this some people do join the Military in hopes of being able to pay for college, or just to be able to provide for themselves or their families. Some institutions give tuition assistance for college sometimes 100% of the tuition. In America, it seems that times of hardship bring us together no matter what. Some believe that the city of Boston is racist, which is to be honest, true. Now when the Boston Bombings occured, I had never seen the city so together, Boston Strong, we said. So when the question comes up, if I would serve my country if it was absolutely needed, my answer would be yes, but no. If I were to enlist in the army, I'd be fighting for my family, friends, and the Americans who would be grateful for my service, not those who would instead ridicule me for being black, because it is a known fact some Americans are disgustingly racist.

Jacob , Boston MA, USA

In the United States, almost all service is voluntary except for the military (if we re-enact the draft), and things like community service if you've broken the law. That being said, I will probably never serve in my country's army unless I have been drafted or if the war is over something serious enough for me to risk my life in. When I am older, I suppose the taxes I pay will be a form of passively helping my community through things such as welfare and whatnot. There are other forms as well, when the protests first flared up, I participated in them physically along with online advocacy and petition signing. I suppose those are ways of serving my community. I advocate for my beliefs and I unconsciously give my money to those in need through taxes.

In our country we are just following the rules and laws for fighting this global pandemic all our country men are together fighting this pendemic . Yes I will wholeheartedly serve my country on behalf of my community,family,society ... the patrotic feeling will allways be on above of ourselves to serve our nation we are nothing without our nationality.

Hoàng CanTho City, VIETNAM.

Currently, my country does not have any requirements for me to do in terms of service, but I don't know if other people same of my age outside of society are being asked or not. I am ready to do anything if I required by the government of my country. If something happens to my family, my community, my region or my country I would be willing to act as a substitute for them if my government and country asked me to do.
I am a person who loves my country very much I readily accept the requirements and obligations that the country places on me. To me, an exemplary citizen is always accepts and fulfills his responsibilities and duties when the country in need.
Hoàng Long, Vietnam.

Sayad Golam Gazipur, Bangladesh

Patriotism is a great virtue. I think that there is no man but loves his country. The importance of patriotism for the development of a country beggars descriptions. I feel that it is a hateful act to love a country for her power, wealth or riches rather her selfessnes and idealism.
As a citizen of my country, I try to do my best to follow the traffic rules like the pedestrian signals and standing strongly in opposition to those who might litter, are corrupt or practice imequality. Our government wants us to follow the rules of my country that made by government for our welfare.
At present, in the lockdown restrictions I should wear mask and use sanitizing first and then make my neighbour awaken to follow the sanitizing rules. I always like to help people and communities that need help all over the world if that's possible.
In my society or other society the security and the safely is essential to live in peace. In this connection to serve in the countrys military on behalf of my family or community. I would be willing to do so.
The prophet of the world Mohammed (S) once quoted, "He is not a great Muslim who fulfils his stomach with food and his neighbor is in hungry." I always leave no stone unturned to serve my neighbour when help is or crying need.

Dikshya Pokhara,Gandaki, Nepal

Serving doesn't necessarily has to be in the form of military involvement or so . Fulfilling our obligations obediently as a citizen of the country can be a form of help for the nations progress and prosperity .

Whatever I may choose in future as my profession, I don't want to ground that work only in a limited space of my workplace . Rather, invest my labour in such a way that it benefits the country as a whole . For instance , if I happen to choose agriculture sector then I would urge to initiate some unique cultivation methods which certainly accelerates job opportunities, the economy of local markets and so on. So basically what I believe is to think from a wider perspective and question myself : How can I individually invest my knowledge and work experience to create something for the sustainable development of Nepal ?

In Myanmar, there is no military service, it is not forced . You can enter if you want and also there are no specific laws for paying taxes. If the country wants me to serve in the military. I do not deny it, but I do not like wars. Instead of fighting, I prefer to be a military doctor, a military engineer. It doesn't matter to me if the country asks me to pay taxes.

For the country, I am currently joining the scouts team of my university. We did a lot of activities such as collecting garbage on the streets of our country, giving lectures on plastics, and donating to the poor.

Lev Boston MA, USA

Military service is not required by anyone in the United States. It is entirely optional.
That being said, I would absolutely not serve in the US military in any form until we see true, bottom-to-top, systemic change in our defense systems. Right now, the US military budget exceeds 600 billion dollars, more than the next ten countries military budgets combined. The United States has military bases in 70 other countries, and there are no foreign military bases in the US. Along with this obvious corruption within today's military, the US has a history of interventionalism and thinly-veiled imperalism in countries across the globe. We have waged war and killed innocent people over natural resources, and still do.
For these reasons, I would not even consider serving in the US military. It is too corrupt a system for young people like ourselves to serve in. The vast majority of wars that the US has entered, there has either been some other motivation that benefits the US's own interest, or they have overstayed their welcome. Until we see true, systemic change in this system, I do not think any of us should dedicate any fraction of our lives to the imperialistic US military.
Having said this, I recognize that one still must be courageous and selfless to go into a battle of any kind. Many people in the US military do not understand the corruption that comes along with it, and choose to serve. My point is this: it is no less traumatizing to be in a corrupt war than it is to be in a just one (if such a thing exists). Therefore, we still must respect and honor our veterans, even if the wars that the US has fought have been unjust.
Lastly, I think that war itself is an inherently immoral human practice. I do not think any lives should be lost over disputes between countries.

Olivia S, Boston MA, USA

In the United States, military service is not one of our civic obligations. Joining the military is entirely optional. One thing the military does offer though is paying for college tuition, so many join in hopes that they will be able to attend college at no cost upon their return. So in this sense, people do not always join out of a desire to serve their countries, but sometimes for financial reasons. As others have mentioned, we are required to serve jury duty and pay taxes, if that counts as "service."

I think joining the military depends on circumstance, but I do not think I would join the military unless the circumstances were dire. Currently, I just cannot picture myself in open combat and killing other people, no matter how bad of a person I would be killing. I also think in war you can't guarantee you are killing only the "bad guys," and I do not think I could handle the mental challenges and effects that come with killing other people

Ian Boston MA, USA

In America, the military is voluntary. In my opinion, joining the military is not the same as serving one's country. I am not convinced that America's actions in the middle east are actually protecting Americans, or serving American interests.

I would not serve in the military. I care about the lives of our troops, but I would not give my life to serve the wants of weapons contractors and oil barons. I think paying taxes, going to jury duty and voting are my civic duties and I will perform them in order to help my country. However, helping Americans does not mean shooting civilians in the middle east.

Albert Boston MA, USA

The United States Military is completely voluntary, but men between 18 and 25 years old have to register for Selective Service, which would make them eligible for the draft, should manpower be necessary for a potential conflict. Of course, we also have to pay taxes, which go towards the government spending. Our judicial system also requires people to serve as jurors in court cases.

My personal thoughts are as follows:

I wouldn't voluntarily enlist in the Military unless I needed money for college or something. I don't necessarily like the prospect of being in the military or what it stands for, but I also wouldn't necessarily have a problem with enlisting should I need the money. To me, being in the military is just another career path. That said, I don't like the idea of taking anyone's life, and I don't intend to be sent home in a flag-wrapped casket anytime soon. In the event the country was engaged in a major conflict and needed to re-instate the draft, I'd be willing to serve in the military instead of serving jail time for draft evasion. I don't think I really have a choice in that scenario.

Taxes are something I'd pay not necessarily because I trust the government in allocating the money towards meaningful causes, but rather because I fear the consequences of not paying my taxes. There's a lot to be said about the current income tax brackets and rates in America, but the bottom line is that I'd rather pay the required fraction of my annual income than do jail time or pay potentially greater fines for tax avoidance.

Here, in Macedonia I am not yet asked to do anything especially because i am a minor, but a lot of people serve the military.As if something was to happen to my family i will of course serve on behalf of my people.I would be ready to do whatever it takes.Some people aren't willing to serve or to do anything for their country and thats why obviously they can choose whether they want to serve the military or not.For now thats the only responsibility for the people in my country.

Tanvi ; Haryana, India

John F. Kennedy, the famous American politician and the 35th American President once quoted, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." I truly believe that patriotism towards our country comes from our heart and is reflected in every sphere of our service towards our nation. I feel that we must always remember to never love a country for her power, wealth or riches rather her selflessness and idealism. Furthermore, I serve my nation in small, every day actions like always disposing trash in the correct waste disposal bins, always following traffic rules like the pedestrian signals and standing strongly in opposition to those who might litter, are corrupt or practice inequality. I try to do my best to achieve this in school, my neighbourhood and even those places where I may visit for holidays or vacations. Further, I like to always follow the rules our government wants us to. For example-the lockdown restrictions and even wearing mask and using sanitisers. I always use recyclable and reusable materials as well. Lastly, I dream to serve my nation by becoming a part of the Civil Services for there is no community service greater than the service to our nation.

Furthermore, if I am asked to serve in the country's military on behalf of my family or community I would be willing to do so. This is because our security and safety lies in our unity. India's history and traditions also signify the need for always standing together. What's more is that, many ancient poems, stories and folk tales-all talk about serving the eternal mother, India. A masterpiece 'Kar Chale Hum Phida' is a Hindi poem that portrays the immense importance of the soldiers of India and shows how important they are to the country-the country's true treasure. By comparing the patriots, and representing the conflict between the good and the evil, the poem summaries how the public feels about its heroes.

Hadeel ,Tyre, Lebanon

In Lebanon, the military is voluntary whereas 15 years ago, it was required (lebanese men were obligated to serve the military after completing their eighteen years of age).

From my own vantage point, it is good that this service is no longer obligatory, although it is important for the safety of our country but it somehow limits the freedom of the concerned ones.

With respect to me, what I'm willing to do as an individual for my society and country is volunteering, participating and being a part of some campaigns and NGOs since I was stunned by the actions they have done after " Beirut Port Explosion ". First with respect to the NGOs, they repaired the houses of those affected by the explosion, they also cleaned streets and house from glass and rubble. Similarly , the Lebanese Red Cross, which instanteously treated more than 6000 wounded people on the ground and carried them to hospitals after the explosion.

In brief, it would be wonderful to be a part of such great humanitarian services in the future, helping my country by offering a help hand to poor people and anyone who needs help for no thing.

Beatriz , Portugal

In Portugal, the armed forces aren't promoted enough since we don't have wars or conflicts within our country or other nations, although in the past we used to have veterans too. Besides that, people see the army or the navy as a workplace and not as a centre of service to the country.
If we want to compare to the American model, we can use the example of the firemen, because they serve the community and the majority of them don't have a salary. However, they are very respected and everyone takes into account their importance and bravery. They also have social and governmental benefits.
Yet, the Portuguese mindset on service relies on the fact that we serve/help our country by helping others around us. There are plenty of charity institutions that are moved by volunteers. There is a huge variety of areas such as helping homeless people, abandoned animals, the elderly, and the disadvantaged people who struggle to have access to the basic things for their living.
From my perspective, I am willing to do any kind of volunteering work, because I would like to have the experience of doing something good on behalf of the community and also because I would like if someone did it for me if I was in their situation.
I think it would be more difficult for me to serve the country more dangerously for example by joining the army and help during a war and that is why I have a lot of respect for who does it.

Hnin Thet Gaygue, Ayeyarwady, Myanmar

that's an incentive to join, but it is never forced on you. The country also requires that citizens pay taxes and attend jury duty when its assigned to them. Jury duty is where a group of 12 randomly chosen citizens serve on a jury in court, to deliver a verdict on a court case.

I'm willing to pay taxes for my country, reasonable taxes, of course. (In the U.S, the rich pay less in taxes than the working middle class. This has been a huge problem, especially when President Trump's tax forms were released.) I'm more than willing to do jury duty, I actually find it really interesting. You get the chance to look in a court trial firsthand, and more than that, have a say in what happens. As for serving in the military as a soldier, I'm not so sure about that one. Not a huge fan of war, guns, physical exertion.. I am willing to serve in the military as a doctor or technician, but I wouldn't want to serve as a soldier in battle. (As many others have stated, being a women sort of gives you a pass on that.)

If something happened to my country, family, or the region I'm in, then I'd honestly stay home and help the military through sending resources or donating money, but I don't want to be there come wartime. There are people that need me at home, and I can't risk it and become a hero. I am still willing to serve and help, but in other ways, through resources and food.

Cecelia , Boston, MA, USA

The US does not have much when it comes to mandatory service, really just taxes and jury duty, which doesn't kick in till you're 18. I'm willing to pay taxes and serve on a jury, or help out by doing community service, but I wouldn't be willing to join the military or go to war. I understand that many Americans join the military to pay for college, and understand that but I don't think I'd be able to do that. I think that in almost every case war is bad and oftentimes I don't argee with the positions of the US military. Honestly my first reponse to the US going to war would probably be fleeing to Canada, because personally I don't feel a patriotic duty to my country and probably wouldn't feel anything going on was justified.

Yu , Hiroshima, Japan

In Japan, I think there are mostly three cilic obligations.
First, we need to pay tax. I don't pay for income taxes, but I do pay for consumption taxes.
Second, adults(20 above) have a jury system, that if you're chosen, you have to go to the trial. On that day, people can get some money as a thanks.
Third, parents have to send their children to school, at least until middle school.

I'm willing to help the country and the people, especially family and friends, but I don't know if I actually could. I don't want to work as a military, so I don't think I can be such a help. The military has been a big help to the country in the pandemic this year, and so I appreciate them every time. Although, getting this situation, military service is such a hard job that I don't think I could be one.

Hi Yu, it's a really similar system here in the U.S too! We have those same civic obligations as well, except for jury duty, I believe the requirement is 18 and up. I agree with you, I'm not that interested in working the military either. I definitely appreciate their service, but that environment really isn't for me —AN

Emily , Boston, MA, USA

The U.S. does not have a mandatory service that Americans must do for the country, but they can serve their country through the military which is a voluntary action. Citizens can also be chosen for jury duty, which is a mandatory service that lasts for however long the case is. I am willing to do anything for the benefit of my community like any community service work but in terms of the military, I personally would not serve on behalf of my people. This is because I think that I would not do much help as a soldier or just being part of the military in general, as I am physically not in shape for it and I do not like the idea of war. The idea of being part of something that could potentially kill so many innocent civilians is not something I would want to do. As for jury duty, obviously it is a mandatory thing, and although it is annoying, I do believe it'll be good to voice my opinions and help in any way I could.

Lola Boston, MA, USA

In America, joining the military is not forced upon us. It's completely voluntary. I know that some people join after high school because they can't afford tuition for college, like my dad did. In highschool, at least for BLS, we have to complete a certain number of community service hours in and out of the school in order to graduate. I know that serving on the jury in court when asked is mandatory, as well as following the law and paying taxes. In general, other than that, all acts of service are optional. It's more of a human decency option, such as treating people with kindness, standing up for others, being the best version of yourself, and representing yourself and your community in the best way. Personally, I'm willing to do anything to help my community or others that need it. If i'm asked to be on the jury of a case, no matter how annoying it may be, I believe voicing my opinion on the matter is super important. It's hard to tell what I would do if something were to happen to my family, country, community, or anybody I cared for right now. Currently, joining the military is out of the question, but it really depends on the circumstances. I think that encouraging people to hate and harm is utterly disgusting. So many people die because of the drama between the leaders of countries, not the citizens themselves. They fight for individuals, rather than the society as a whole.

Amber Boston, MA

Jury duty is something that sounds like a hassle, and I wouldn't want to take part in it if I had the option. Having to go to a court and weigh in on a case which I have no personal interest in for a whole day is not something I'd want to do. My go-to plan would be to express personal biases regarding the case as a way to get dismissed. The only case in which I'd actually want to serve on a jury is if I hated my job and wanted to get paid without going to work.

Adna [illegible] Bosnia and Herzegovina

In Bosnia too, military service is not obligatory. Not many people have a desire to apply for military training voluntarily, but they may if they want.
We have experienced war abut 28 years ago, the organization of our military forces was terrible - there were not enough weapon

I myself would serve in the military in case a war occurs in my country. Balkan people generally tend to be very patriotic and love their place of birth. For me, my country, despite its flaws, is my home and place where I feel most comfortable, so if my people ever needed me to help protect our homeland, that would not be a problem.

Brian [illegible] Boston, MA, USA

In the United States, not much is required from you other than paying taxes and jury duty. Currently no one is forced to join the military and it is completely up to you if you want to join it. In times of emergencies the US can have a draft to fill in vacancies that cannot be met with volunteers. You would only be drafted if you were a male and between the ages of 18 and 25. We haven't had a draft since about 1973. I am not too keen on serving in the military but I am willing to pay taxes and go to jury duty. If the country asks me to do other small things I might be willing to but other than that I don't think I would like to do more than what is asked of me.

Sarah [illegible] Boston MA, USA

In the United States it is not required for you to serve in the military but people choose to serve the country in the military. Usually an average American pays taxes and we have to go to Jury duty when we reach the age of 18.

Personally I am not sure if I would be to serve in the military. I have no real intentions to do as I don't think I could ever bring myself to be put in the position of taking someone elses life just like Andre said to solve a dispute between 2 countries. Of course I am willing to pay taxes and go to jury duty as it something I know will benefit other people. Personally I would like to choose a career to help other people and serve people in a different way.

Andre [illegible], Boston, MA, USA

I know that committing to military service is a voluntary act. However, it is not the only type of service, and that meaning fluctuates based on year. For example, a very basic service one could do is put their mask on and socially distance from others. In more general standards, we are taxed, we have to go to jury duty, etc.

Me, personally, I would be willing to serve the people (even if they are being a bit stupid now during the pandemic). Similar to An, I would be willing to serve in the military as a doctor, nothing more, nothing less. I would be much less than enthusiastic to have to take another person's life in order to satisfy a petty ordeal between two countries. Again, in more general terms, I would also be willing to pay taxes and go to jury duty if it means keeping at least some order and knowing that in at least *some* way, I am helping some people, even if it is to a limited degree.

Kali [illegible] Boston, MA, USA

There is no requirement to join the military in the United States. Those who wish to do so, can only do it if they are 18 years or older. Then they also have to meet certain requirements and then go through training before they're thrown into any situation.

We also have, in case of emergencies, a draft. All male citizens and immigrants in the US have to register for Selective Service after their 18th birthday. Once again, this is only in case of really dire situations and only for men ages 18 to 25. The last time we had draft in the US was around the 1970s.

I'm not sure what role I would play if anything were to happen. First of all, I'm not sure if I would even fit certain requirements, being hard of hearing. I'm also very squeamish; I can't even stand the sight of my own blood. I also feel like I have a big responsibility to my family, who depends a lot on me. I feel like, if a situation arose where my aid was needed, I'd find ways to do it that would fit my strengths. Like my contribution could be more community-based.

When it comes to wars that the US has been involved in, I think that there is a lot of gray areas. There's just this feeling that, sometimes, intentions change. I also feel this sort of distrust in the government since the COVID pandemic has revealed some weaknesses and instability within this country.

An [illegible] Boston, MA, USA

In America, as my peers have said, military service isn't forced upon us but rather, voluntary, and many are encouraged to join. Those who have served in the military are offered benefits, so

in terms of service, at the age of 18 more responsibilities start to flush in. Such as paying taxes, registering for selective service (males), and jury duty. I am willing to pay taxes because there is nothing I can do about it. Since I am a female I don't have to worry about the selective service. And in terms of jury duty, it is not something that I would personally choose but I guess there's nothing I can do about it either. I would rather abide by the law than to face serious consequences for avoiding these responsibilities. I have never liked war and in a perfect world there wouldn't be any, therefore I know that joining the service is not for me. If my family depended on me to do so, I would do it. However, I feel as if what makes a great soldier are those who are willing to do it and cooperate. What would be the point of me joining when there is someone else who is ten times more passionate and is destined to do it?

Joanna Boston MA, USA

The United States does not require much by the means of military service. While there is the Selective Service for men ages 18-25, which is, as Pin Yi said, able to institute a mandatory draft if needed, but there are no real consequences for not registering. The only other service I'm aware of that the USA asks of its citizens is serving as a member of a jury, known as jury duty. Any citizen 18 or older can be chosen for jury duty and must serve it for however long the case lasts.

While I am willing to sit through jury duty, as I believe in the importance of the justice system, I personally would not sign up to serve for the military. The US's military history is one of imperialism and proxy wars (most recently in the Middle East), and I simply do not believe that wars fought by the USA on foreign soil are wars fought for a good cause. Even if there was a hot war fought by soldiers and not drones on US soil, I would not sign up for the military to defend my family. Obtaining arms as a private citizen in the USA is much more doable than in many countries, hence that would be the route I would take to physically protect my family. This, of course, all hinges on the tiny probability that a hot war will be fought on US soil.

Overall, while I do see the importance of civil obligations, with America's reasoning for the vast majority of the military conflicts and wars it has participated in or started and the wielding of sanctions as a means of coercion, I simply neither support nor wish to join the US military. (Nor, for that matter, many of the US's international policies and actions.)

Katherine Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Like my classmates have stated, there are some simple requirements that the citizens are asked to follow as a civil duty. A lot of the time, high school students are required to do a certain amount of community service hours in order to graduate, which I am willing to do. Along with these required hours and the civil duties I will have to attend to when I turn 18, I am willing to help those in need.
By that I mean, if need be, I can sign up to serve, but it would not be my first choice.

Pin Yi C, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

In the United States, citizens are required to serve their country by obeying the law, paying taxes, and serving on a jury when summoned (or as a witness if one is subpoenaed). Although military service is not mandatory (unlike many other countries), men are asked to register with the Selective Service, which has the power to institute a mandatory draft if such a thing becomes necessary.

Personally, I am more than willing to obey the law and pay taxes. Even though jury duty can seem to me to be a pain at times (you basically have to upend your life for a few days or weeks), I understand that it is an important obligation, and still will do it readily enough as long as there is nothing catastrophic or crucially important happening at the moment.

I am going to be honest here: in normal circumstances, I would not sign up to serve in the military. I have the utmost respect for veterans, but I am well aware that I would make terrible soldier. Being female, I think it is unlikely that I would be called to serve during wartime, but if I were for some reason drafted or asked to be in the military, I would still do it, unless the war is completely unjust or immoral.

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04 (U-->Z): : What are You Willing to Do for your Country, Your Neighbors, Your Community?

Here's our topic for this week: In many places worldwide, civic obligation and responsibility include serving one's country, often through the military and/or through some other form of service. That's a huge action with significant consequences for the people who serve. What are you asked to do by your country in terms of service? And what are you willing to do? If something happened--to your family, your community, your region, your country—would you be willing to serve on behalf of your people? Can you explain your thinking with as much specificity as possible?

JUDI FREEMAN DEC 06, 2020 05:17PM

Douglas Boston, MA, USA

We aren't really asked to do anything by the US government, there are a lot of benefits to joining the military in the US but because we're at war in my opinion they don't outweigh the cons. If America wasn't at war I would be fine with compulsory service but because it is no way should that be a thing. I could honestly see myself enlisting in boot-camp and stuff if I didn't have to sign a contract to actually participate in the "War on Terror". However, if there was a war that had actual justification such as the US being invaded by Russia and we weren't the aggressors I would enlist. If my country and in turn democracy was in serious danger I would enlist in a heartbeat, but I don't see that happening for at least 20 years. I don't have a huge amount of patriotism for the US but I would rather have me and my family live under the US government than most other governments.

Michael L., Boston, MA, USA

In the US, Americans are not necessarily required to serve unless the circumstances are bad enough that a draft must take place. The draft would go out to all able-bodied men above the age of 18. Now, in terms of what I would do, I think it depends on the scenario. If something directly involving people I know, or my community, then I would definitely serve to defend if that was necessary. For the country, however, I'm not so sure. If the United States was the aggressor, for something that isn't our right to be a part of, I would definitely not participate. But, on the other hand, if a country made the first move against us, I would most likely serve.

Grace C., Boston, MA, USA

In the United States there is no draft or requirement to serve, but in previous times of war the draft only applied to men, which is still the case to this day. While I do not think there should be a draft unless the lives of those living in the United States are under direct threat, I think that a eligibility for a draft should not be based on gender. If my home was under direct attack, I would like to think that I would voluntarily serve to protect my country. However, I feel that the United States has gotten involved in numerous conflicts it has no right to be a part of, and I do not think anyone should be forced to participate in such a conflict (like the Vietnam War, which many young men were drafted to fight in). I think that while the United States honors veterans with holidays throughout the year, it needs to do a better job helping soldiers who suffer due to their time served, for example those with PTSD or who struggle to find jobs back in the US.

Tapasmi RC, Gurgaon, India

The Indian Constitution does not describe compulsory conscription; soldiers are enlisted of their own volition having volunteered to serve the nation in military spheres and trained accordingly. While women are still not allowed to serve in infantry and the armoured corps, I would be willing to endure training and serve however possible if my nation calls upon me to do so. The last decades have made strides in women being inducted in combat roles and aid in the navy, aviation, defence etc.
Respect for our soldiers' role in upholding the security of our country is a sentiment unanimously shared by Indians as the spirit of brotherhood is a core part of Indian morals, while our philosophy also preaches peace. We are sensitized to the brutality of war but simultaneously taught that our penultimate goal is to propagate amity, in our families, in our country, and internationally. The liberty to choose our own career relegates military enrolment as a voluntary service rather than a forced obligation, and allows us to serve the betterment of the nation as our potential dictates, keeping in mind the spirit of democracy. Our spirit of togetherness lies in our unity. Our struggle for independence in the colonial era rings in the heart of every citizen today, our patriots having paved the way for the privileged life we lead today. Our constitution lists fundamental duties that are not legally enforceable but morally obliged to uphold, ranging from

rendering national service, preserving our heritage, to safeguard public property and strive for excellence in both individual and collective spheres. These values are instilled in our moral duty as citizens by aiding the community, promoting unity in diversity, and being mindful of our environment.

Ahlam N , Sale , Morocco

Serving in military is obligatory for boys , I think military service helps in making strong mentally and physically men to protect our country . Personally , If my country needs me , I'll be ready to serve any time even if I am a girl , I think both genders should protect this country and it's important to keep this country going . And I see military service as an interesting experience to face the real world and to prevent the danger coming in future .

Sofia , Portugal

As in most of the other countries, in Portugal we are also not required military service. Obviously, there are many who volunteer to serve our country in this regard, but I don't think I could ever be one of them (because I actually don't want to either). Personally I think that we, as citizens, should have more concerns, mainly nowadays, with human rights, climate changes, etc. rather than go to the army (but that it's clearly important, I don't want to devalue them). So I am willing to serve my country by providing community service and by raising my voice on such important issues (climate change, equal rights and opportunities for everyone)

Abby B., WY, USA

America does not require military service and there has not been a draft for a long time. Signing up for military service can provide an income and affordable education. Personally, I would not want to serve in the military as a career. I do not believe that I am physically strong enough to serve and I would not want to harm other people or have lasting damage to my mental health. However, if it meant that I could protect the people close to me as a last resort then I would be willing to join the military.

Sydney H, Boston, MA, USA

In America, we are not required to serve in the military. However, all who have served/are currently serving are honored and greatly appreciated. However, in the 20th century, there were drafts into the war and if your name was called, you were required to serve. I do not know much about this topic, but I do know that my grandfather was one of these men who were chosen to serve. Personally, I would not be interested in joining the military because of the risks involved, but much of my family has served. The most obvious of these consequences are death or serious injury, but soldiers experience mental effects as well, for example, PTSD and depression.

Sara N. Beirut, Lebanon

Due to the governmental corruption in Lebanon, citizens aren't involved with the government and do not have any obligatory services towards their country (excluding the mandatory services that have appeared because of COIVD-19). However, there are a few unspoken services between the citizens such as keeping the streets clean and helping each other.
Unfortunately, I don't have to imagine what I would do to help my country because of the August 4th explosion. Mainly because after the explosion that occurred, all of the citizens of Lebanon came to Beirut, by choice, and started helping in many ways. For example, NGOs were created to provide support and other things, people opened up their houses and hotels to anyone who needed a shelter, blood was being donated along with food, people were helping each other evacuate the injured, and help the hospitals that were struggling at the time. Furthermore, those who couldn't participate in those things, due to personal reasons, were spreading necessary information and updates through social media about where blood donations were needed, which hospitals were too full and couldn't take in more people, and etc.

Hawraa k, Lebanon, Tyre

Everyone has heard about the catastrophe that befell Beirut in Lebanon, which was hit by eradicating countless homes and more than thousands of people to become homeless. For this reason, NGOs were formed to support deprived families in attaining self-sufficiency. Thus, they started their work in providing devastated families with a temporary residence in the time they are reconstructing their damaged buildings. Moreover, NGO also focused on preparing daily meals to distribute them to those people in dozens of locations in Beirut. Even though they are concentrating on the demolition, they didn't forget to donate people with a surgical mask to protect themselves from the Coronavirus pandemic. Last but not least, NGOs are a massive action that is holding crucial significances on people who serve, and all of us must work through different forms of service to make our present adequate.

Raphael C., Cebu, Philippines

Here in the Philippines, the people are not required to serve in the military. So when I hear about service, I think of jobs that serve the people and the country -- other than being part of the military. One way to serve for the country, here, is to work in government sectors. An example that I can think of are students who receive scholarships from the government. After they graduate, they are required to serve in the country for a number of years (may it be in healthcare, etc..) before working abroad, if they want to. In this way, the country will benefit from the service of these individuals.

If I were given the chance to bring change and help improve the government, I would definitely serve for the country. I could serve

in different or ways -- working in government sectors, running a position in becoming a public servant/official, etc. I do think that since it's optional, not many people would opt to serve for the country and I believe that it is important for people to know that even small change can bring a big positive impact to a community.

Hnin Ei [illegible] Hara, Myanmar

We don't need to serve in military service like Korea and some countries. If we want, we can serve. As I am a student, I don't need to serve in military service. However, I'm helping my country in other ways like doing volunteer work. Globally, I'm taking part in an Eco bag project from japan. I'll use an eco bag as ideal because plastic can harm our beautiful environment. Because of plastic, a lot of animals are in danger including marine creatures. Plastic bags often clog drains and water supply because of their illegal disposal. So, we should completely ban the use of plastic bags because they are responsible for many problems like pollution, species extinction, health hazard, excessive waste production, etc. that's why I take part in an eco bag project. And I'm also participating in global classroom 2020 every Saturday. There are many students and teachers from Japan, Russia, Malaysia, Philippines, India and so on. We used to discuss one topic for a week. By doing this, I got a lot of knowledge and know the situation of the world. And I realize that every country is not perfect and they also have their own problem. Not only that, I'm taking part in a lot of programs and find how to help my country individually. For locally, when I was a high school student, I participated in cleaning teams. I remember that I cleaned the pagoda with my teacher on the full moon day of Thadingyut. These are the things I'm helping my country with.

Military service is not mandatory for any gender in Nepal. However, it's

Aris T., Nurmijärvi, Finland

Every male who have reached the age of 18 have to either attend military training or do civil services.
For female it's optional.
Both army and civil service takes almost a year if I remember correctly.
I would prefer not joining the army but yes I would "serve" the country if I had to. I am nationalist and I support the ideology that every individual should do something that benefits the country and it's people

Maximilian D., Germany, Pfaffenhofen, Bavaria

Here in Germany we theoretically have a draft but it has been suspended for a few years now. Back then you either had to serve in the military for a few months or do a civilian service (like having to work in a retirement home). So even though it has been suspened its still part of our constitution and can be reactivated any time and it has actually been brought forward a few times to do so. Generally I am actually not opposed to this, having your population go through basic training is in my opinion good for both their physical health and offers the nation better chances in the case of war. Not to forget that the civilian service would help against the shortage of caregivers in retirement homes that we are experiencing right nows.
Regarding an actual war breaking out I have to say that I feel myself fully obliged to serve if my country calls upon me, especially in the case of a defensive war.
So I guess that in that regard I would be willing to die for my country if necessary.

Julia P., Brzesko, Poland

When we hear 'serving the country' we immediately think about military services. That's true but serving your country though military isn't the only way to do it. In Poland, serving in the miliary is suspended. That means when you are obligated to military service, you have to appear in your nearest station and register yourself, but there is no war now, so you don't have to fight. You are obligated, when you are a 19 years old men and you aren't sick. Of course if you are adult woman and you want to register, you can do this. Actually, serving your country though military isn't the only way to do it(as I told before). The question is what you can do to help your nation (when it is in danger) if you don't want to do military services. Well, you can be a person who passes the infomation or a doctor in a hospital. You can be a paramedic, who helps people on a battlefield, too. You can just take care of your family and be a patriot. To be honest, i don't really know if I am brave enough to be a soldier. I don't think so, but if I were educated enough, I could be a doctor or paramedic. When the war's coming everything changes, so it is really hard to predict what you would do. Maybe a lot of people would just escape from their countries to protect their families. I think I could be a volunteer and help my country however I can.

Gabriela V.R., Boston, Massachussetts, USA

In the United States, serving in the military is very noble. However, it is not something that is required of the citizens. I fully recognize how amazing it is for people to risk their lives to serve our country, but frankly I don't think it's something that I would do. I think that many people aren't motivated to join the military because there's a lot of government distrust, and I know many people who only serve because they need access to education which they can't afford. I think that the Vietnam war is just one example where the US government got into a war unnecessary, costing the lives of many, and I am against war and wouldn't want to fight in a one I don't believe in. I would only ever serve if I truly believed in the cause strongly and it was putting me and my family in danger. Things like volunteering with community service aren't

required in the US, but that's something that I do, and will always continue to do because it's great to help out. However, many people just do it because it's a school requirement or a part of their requirement for a crime committed, and our school makes it a graduation requirement for us to volunteer.

Jackson W., Boston, MA, USA

In America, military service is not required. You can choose to join the military when you turn 18. When you become an adult you are required to sign up for the selective service system. If something happened to my family, community, or my country I would be willing to protect it. I don't think I would be willing to join the military but I respect and appreciate our troops. If I were to be drafted I would like to have a non combat job. War is not necessary in most cases. The resources used for a war could be spent better elsewhere.

Shamir R., Boston, MA, USA

In the United States, it is not required for you to go through any sort of mandatory military service. At the age of 18, you are allowed to volunteer to join the military. Once you turn 18, you're also required to register for the Selective Service System. This would mean that at any point, if the military were to call up a draft, they would look through the list of people who registered and try to draft them into the military. Personally, I would not volunteer to join the military as both my parents advise against it, and I wish to live out my life here in the United States instead of fighting off in another country. If something were to happen to my family, I would try my best to protect them. I'm not sure if I would decide to serve on behalf of them. I probably wouldn't, as it is likely far more dangerous to be in the military today, but I don't know if my mindset would change as I grow up. It is possible that my views on the military would change enough to where I may be willing to fight for the United States.

Samuel R., Boston, MA, USA

In the United states, military service is not mandatory, and the only time when people will be forced to fight is when there is a draft, although there has not been a draft since the Vietnam War. Now, our army is made up of people who choose to serve, and the nature of warfare has changed so that it is not necessary to have massive numbers of soldiers in order to win wars. I personally wouldn't choose to serve if it meant going to another country and attacking their people, but I would probably be willing to serve if it was only to defend American soil from an invasion. Unfortunately, as a young man who will eventually have to sign up for the Selective Service System, it may not be my choice. Ultimately, I believe it is wrong to force people to fight against and potentially kill other people, so I do not support any form of mandatory service to one's country. If I did have to serve, I would want to be in a position that doesn't require directly engaging in combat, because I would not only fear being injured or killed, but also potential PTSD and depression.

Azalea T., Boston, Massachusetts, USA

In the United States, we are not obligated to serve in the military, and legally-required "community service" is most often used as a punishment for crime. Men from ages 18 to 25 (with a few exceptions) are required to register for the draft, but the draft has not been used for decades.
Personally, I am opposed to war as anything but a last resort, and I resent the way politicians and military officials have gotten us into endless wars that don't achieve anything, misled the public about them, focused recruitment efforts on lower-income people, and glorified violence. But, I have a lot of respect for people who do choose to serve the country, and I see its value. All four of my great-grandfathers and some other relatives served in the military. I do not think I would join the military in war unless I was absolutely convinced that the cause was urgent and necessary. Out of any branch, I think I would be most likely to join the National Guard because it can be used for the benefit of Americans in situations such as natural disasters.

Katie R., Boston, MA, USA

In the United States, we are not required to serve in the military, but people can volunteer to serve if they so choose. I am not considering joining the military after college because I believe I am better suited for other careers, especially considering how dangerous the military is for women. At least 25% of women serving in the U.S. military have been sexually assaulted, and there are many other ways to serve my country that wouldn't be as dangerous in that way. Like others have stated, being in the military can also be extremely detrimental to one's physical and mental wellbeing. While I respect the sacrifice of those who do choose to serve, I think the only way that I would join the military is if my family or the people I love were in danger, and my volunteering would help them. I do not think that my life is worth more than all of theirs, so if I could protect them by serving, then I would do it.

Greta G., Boston, MA, USA

As others have said, it is not required to serve in the military. Many men from the ages of 18-25 are required to register in case of an emergency where men for a military were needed to be found. I personally not join in the military. I do not believe in many causes of war, and also believe, after watching a documentary of how the government hiding the fact they knew they were going to lose in the Vietnamese war but still sent men to die there, believe that the government is hiding from it's people. In any case of war, I would try and protect my friends and family, as well as other civilians, but this does not mean I would go to war. I never want to kill someone. War causes death for so many innocent civilians, and I would never want to add to that in any way.

Leah P., Boston, USA

In America, drafts for the military have been stopped for decades, to military service is voluntary. Many go to various military academies after high school to get a quality education for free and then enlist in the military to have an income right after the academy to support their family. Others believe that their purpose is to serve as they may have veterans in their family.
I would not serve in the military even if something happened. Military service is very detrimental to mental and physical health. I wouldn't want any trauma like that impeding me creating and maintaining my own family. If money is needed, I would rather get a second or third job and not sleep than serve. I also don't believe that war, violence, and the USA getting involved in foreign conflicts is right.
Still, I have the utmost respect for those who serve, for they sacrifice an amount beyond imaginable for many of us.

Sophia A., Boston, MA, USA

Here in America we are not required to serve in the military. It is greatly appreciated if you do but, it is recognized that their are many other ways to serve your country. Personally, I would serve in the military. In the military I would serve as an analyst or a medical professional. I think it would fulfill my spirit of giving back to people. For the people who are closest to me, and who I love the most I would do anything. I also believe in helping those who can't help themselves, and so if it came down to it I would serve for them. Serving in the military is not my first choice career path because it does come with a lot of downfalls. You are fr from family at points, in very dangerous situations, and many soldiers experience severe PTSD post-war. I think my spirit of helping people can be fulfilled in others ways but, this is definitely an option. As Tiffany said being a responsible, engaged and respectful citizen is doing something great for your country and community. But then again I do not think that war is the solution to peace so, I don't know if I would want to perpetuate the system that promotes killing. The more I think about it I would not serve in the military if it was my choice but, if it was for my loved ones, or others who need it I would.

Tiffany T., Boston, MA, USA

In America, we are not required to be drafted into the military. Soldiers who are part of the military, volunteer to serve our country. In exchange for entry in the military, some join to get access to college and other opportunities. Personally, I would not serve in the military because I do not think that I have what it takes to be a soldier. A soldier has to be strong, focused, and want to put their lives on the line for the citizens of this country. I have also seen a lot of movies and commercials about life in the military, and the thought of me in their shoes is something I can never imagine myself doing.
I do not know anyone personally that has served for the US, but I can think of others way of serving my country that isn't the military. I think by being a good citizen and abiding by the laws, you are serving your community and your country by being a respectable citizen. I honestly do not think that I would ever join the military, under any circumstances. Nevertheless, soldiers who are committed to serving, deserve respect and deserve praise for sacrificing their life to serve for the greater good.

Willa Boston, MA, USA

In America service is voluntary, and the draft was ended decades ago. I agree with Esli, I would not join the army because I generally do not support that type of violence. Being in the military is extremely physically and emotionally taxing, something that I don't think I could endure. I also think that war ends up doing more harm than good, and is often over conflicts that I believe could be solved in other ways. My grandfather served in the Navy, navigating submarines/underwater missiles during the Vietnam war, and many of my other family members have served. However, the military is not a big part of my immediate family's life, and not much emphasis has been put on it in my lifetime. However, I do have great respect for those who devote their lives to the US, and I admire those who were strong enough to do so. I think Sophie made an amazing point that there are other ways to serve your country, such as caring for the environment, being involved in social justice, and fighting for reform, all of which push for the betterment of our country.

Mateo L. La Paz, Bolivia

Bolivian constitution demands a single-year mandatory military service for men between 17 and 19 years old, even though women are not forced to do it many volunteer. Nevertheless, skipping it is quite common despite the importance of the certification of military service document to work in a public institution, for example. I personally believe military service and patriotism, in this specific sense, are merely a disguise to hide political and economic whims of a few powerful people in each country, along the human history, an outstanding percentage of wars can be considered profit-driven campaigns. By demanding military service, the only thing governments are doing is threatening other countries just to give a useless display of military power. If we take pride on being the only civilized, most rational species, why do we resort to the most savage, animalistic way of solving problems? Why do we appeal to large scale conflict if we are so familiar to the dire consequences it bestows upon us? Conflict is inexorable, but in our modern world, problems do not need to be solved with a "who-loses-the-least "game if diplomacy and dialogue are an option. To sum up, I would not be willing to fight other human beings in the name of greed.

Xixin L., Boston, MA, USA

Military service in the United States isn't required but is instead voluntary. Personally, I wouldn't serve in the military and I don't think I would be a good choice either because being in the military

Zoe P., Boston, MA, USA

In the United States, we are not required to serve in the military. It is mainly on a volunteer basis, although most men 18-25 are required to register in the "Selective Service System," which would allow the government to quickly find people for the military if there was a sudden need. Despite our current President making remarks that discredit those in the military, I feel that, overall, American civilians have a deep respect for the sacrifices of those currently, or previously in the military. I don't think I would join the military for the same reason that many others stated, because I wouldn't want to support hurting other people. Although, if my family was in danger or if America has a shortage of military personnel, I would consider joining the military in a role outside of combat, because I agree with the notion that there are countless other ways to contribute to our country. Merely having an occupation that helps others, such as a teacher or doctor, contributes to the well-being of America by advancing the education and health of its people. As to responsibilities that all Americans are obligated to do, the only ones that are punishable when ignored are obeying laws, taxes, jury duty, etc. I believe obligations as citizens also include voting, volunteering, etc., but those are merely encouraged.

Xinyan C., Boston, MA, USA

In the Unites States, military service is voluntary and not required. All male citizens ages 18-26 are required to sign up for the Selective Service System, which is used to draft people for war, but the last draft was back in 1973. I respect the people who are willing to serve on the military, however, I'm not willing to serve on behalf on my country. I agree with Leah that being a soldier can negatively impact the person's health both physically and mentally. And I'm willing to help in the medical department or to help provide resources for soldiers, but I can't even kill an insect let alone having to murder someone else in the battlefield. I think that there are other ways to fulfill my portion of the civic obligations and responsibilities such as paying taxes, voting, following the laws, and actively pushing for change through nonviolent protests. Even though I don't support violence, if something were to happen to my family, then I will be willing to serve to protect my family.

Maianh T., Boston, MA, USA

In terms of service, like many others have stated, the United States does not require service in the military. However, many do volunteer their service for various reasons like the benefits that are provided, the money, or because they truly want to serve the country. I think that the military is often seen as the "backup" or "safety" path, ironically enough for many young adults who cannot afford to attend higher education at that time. As for myself, assuming that I would physically be in good enough condition, I would only be willing to join the military if there was a cause that I had a strong enough belief in (such as if it affected the people around me like my family and friends) .I would not fight and risk my life for something that I did not stand behind in any scenario, even if I needed the money, I would try to find an alternative job or option. If I was fighting for something that I believed in, and I happened to die or be captured as a prisoner, I would be more content than if I had fought without good cause. That being said, I think it is definitely easier said than done to put yourself through physical and mental strain, but hypothetically speaking there would need to be some extreme influence or issue for me to put myself in that position.

Colin [redacted] Boston, MA, USA

In America, we are not required to serve in the military and you only go into the military if you are willing to or volunteer to. However it is greatly appreciated if you do serve. I don't think i would choose to serve because i agree with Esli, i generally don't support or encourage violence really, but i do have so much respect for the people that do serve for their country and put their lives on the line. Both of my parents were in the Navy after college and they've told me a little bit about their experiences in the navy.

Nina A. Skopje, Macedonia Here in Macedonia we are not required to serve in the military. People that are in the military, volunteer to serve our country. Personally, I would not serve in the military , cause I don't think I am enough focused and strong for that. The trainings and the preparing's in the military are scaring me too and I think I would not endure it. Also military service can affect my physical and mental health. I don't want to work that job cause I don't want to die in a war or something. If it ever comes to money I would rather work through night than risking my own life.

Esli R., Boston, USA

In the United States the draft ended a long time ago, and we are not required to serve in the military. Personally, I would not choose to join the military. Generally I don't support violence, and as Leah mentioned, serving in the military often has negative effects on one's health. However those who choose to serve should be shown respect for the sacrifices that they have made. In the event that something happened to our country, I still do not think I would choose to join the military. I really liked how Sophie said "there are many other ways to serve your country." There are other things that can be done to improve our country, and other ways to help that don't involve fighting and violence.

requires a lot of training that would be extremely physically and mentally draining and my body would collapse at that. I respect everyone that volunteers to protect and serve the country on the frontline because that's the courage that a lot of average citizens don't have and everyone should respect who are going to serve and those who have already served. Occasionally I would see videos and news of people disrespecting veterans and it's insane that there are people who feel so entitled to the protection of others and see themselves as the one having more value. I hope that the day never comes when I will be needed in the military and I hope that there would be less conflicts and wars in the world so less people have to suffer.

Lilah, C., Boston, USA

In America, you are not required to serve in the military, you only go into the military if you are willing. Personally, I wouldn't want to serve in the military because that's just not me but I envy the people that serve for their country and put their lives on the line. My great-uncle died in World War 2 so service is a big thing in my family. But that also makes me scared because I don't want to go die because I don't think serving in the military is what I'm suppose to do in life. I feel like if their was a war going on and I really had to serve then that's what I have to do, I honestly haven't thought about it in depth.

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