P.S. to the NEWS
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DRAFT REGISTRATION OF WOMEN

Our nation's only lady Senator has made a major excursion into Senate debate and affixed her name to an amendment which vitally concerns American women. Henceforth, when women across the country think of Senator Nancy Kassebaum, they will associate her with the Kassebaum Amendment. What issue did she choose?

Was it a bill to stop the flood of pornography which debases women in ways so sadistic that they defy most people's imagination? Was it a bill to help reduce the inflation which is destroying the value of our hard-earned dollar and forcing wives and mothers out of their homes by the millions?

No, it was an amendment which would require the draft registration of 19- and 20-year old women at the same time and on the same terms that the draft registration of men will begin this summer. It didn't even include any provision to make a difference of treatment for young women if they are married, pregnant, or mothers.

During the hearings on draft registration, Senator Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), a stalwart opponent of drafting women, asked President Carter's witness the following question. "If the lottery wheel, or whatever device determines which individual goes, falls on a young woman, say, of 21 or 20, whatever her age may be, who is married and just had a baby, does she get called up or does she remain home with the child?" The answer was that she must go and the husband stay with the 6-month-old baby.

Fortunately, to lead the opposition to such nonsense and lack of chivalry, American womanhood found another gallant defender: Senator John Warner (R-Va.). He was persuasive and factual, he marshaled an impressive array of legal and military arguments and authorities, and he showed great leadership in defense of military preparedness.

The United States has never intentionally sent women into military combat situations. All war history confirms the soundness of that decision. Women have the option to serve in the armed services as noncombat volunteers, but, in our American

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culture, men simply do not conscript their daughters, sisters, and wives out to do their fighting for them.

Senator Warner pointed out that, if Congress were to make the mistake of ordering a sex-neutral draft registration, there would be no constitutional way to deny absolute equality for men and women at any other point in military assignments. If the time-honored, legal, constitutional, common-sense difference of treatment between men and women is abandoned for draft registration, it would put young women on the slippery slide into assuming an equal place with men on the battlefield.

Under present military laws and regulations, commanders are permitted to make personnel assignments based on gender in order to exclude women from combat duty. With clear logic, Warner pointed out that if Congress reverses this time-tested principle and establishes gender equality in draft registration, the federal courts will then determine that a gender difference cannot be reimposed at any point throughout a military career.

Warner read his colleagues a report of the Military Manpower and Personnel Subcommittee which said, "It is also clear that an induction system that provided half men and half women to the training commands in the event of mobilization would be administratively unworkable and militarily disastrous."

If equality is the aim of those who seek draft registration for women, then equality must also be the rule in the assignment of those called to duty. The law requires induction on a random basis, and a random selection from men and women who register in equal numbers would produce roughly equal numbers of male and female servicepersons.

The Kassebaum Amendment went down to decisive defeat in a very revealing roll call. The biggest surprise was Senator Birch Bayh (D-In.), the sponsor of most sex-equality legislation of the last decade, who voted no. He's up for election this year. Senators George McGovern, Frank Church, and Edward Kennedy, who are also 1980 candidates, didn't vote. It's obvious that the candidates are hearing from the grassroots.

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