

ARROWOOD LAW

CHARLIE ARROWOOD, ESQ

Selective Service for Individuals Assigned Female at Birth

People who were assigned female at birth are not required to register with Selective Service (the draft). However, if someone who is male with Social Security ever wants to do any of the following, they must either (a) be registered with Selective Service or (b) show proof that they are exempt from registering:

- Apply for federal (and some state) student loans
- Receive Work Study money
- Work for the federal government, including internships
- Work for many state governments
- Attend public universities in some states
- Participate in federal programs like Americorps
- Obtain security clearance for government contractors

So, while a person who changes their gender to male with Social Security is not required to register with Selective Service, none of these agencies will know that once their gender marker has been changed. They will think the person needs to be registered and can deny services if the person is not.

Registering with the Selective Service System

It is easy to register online with Selective Service if you are between the ages of 18-25 (<https://www.sss.gov/Home/Registration>).

Registering is more seamless than getting an exemption letter because you will not have to provide any additional documentation when applying for programs or loans.

The disadvantage of simply registering with Selective Service is that in the unlikely event there is a draft, you could be drafted. However, since people who were assigned female at birth are still not required to register, you would be excused from the draft.

Getting a Status Information Letter

If you do not want to register for the draft or cannot because you are over 26, then you will need proof that you were not required to register. When applying for student loans, for example, the school is supposed to accept proof (a female birth certificate) that the applicant is exempt from registering, but many schools demand to see an official Status Information Letter (SIL). The letter takes a month or so to get, so it's best to apply for the letter if there is any chance you might need it.

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A similar situation would occur when applying for federal jobs or internships. There are online applications to fill out, and it will be difficult to navigate those bureaucracies without having registered with Selective Service or having the SIL.

Selective Service has a [form](#) that you can submit to request the SIL. It has a place for “transgender” and you need to include a copy of your female birth certificate.

The application says it’s only for people over 26 because they only have one form for everyone. People over 26 can still register, so the form is mainly for people assigned male at birth who failed to register on time. But people assigned female at birth who need proof of exemption before they turn 26 are supposed to use this form as well.

The Status Information Letter does not say why you were not required to register, so it would not state that you are trans.

Automatic registration through driver’s license

New York (and possibly other states) has a law that men age 18-25 who are required to be registered with Selective Service and who apply for a state driver’s license or renewal, learner’s permit, or state ID card, consent to automatic registration with the Selective Service System.

Transgender people who have changed all of their documents to male prior to applying for a license or ID will be automatically registered unless you actively take steps to request that they do not do this.