

Dear Friends,

I would like to write to you all expressing my belief in nonviolence and against war. As I am soon to turn 18 years old, I will be required to register with Selective Service. I do not believe that there is any justification for one human being to harm another. Thus, to show my opposition towards violence, I would appreciate it if the meeting would hold a copy of this letter for future reference.

I strongly object to violence on a moral and ethical basis and therefore believe that violence should never be perpetrated towards another human being. Both my parents are pacifists as well, and I have been attending either the Chapel Hill or Raleigh Friends Meeting for all of my life, and both my family and the Quaker meeting have had a large impact on me. Ultimately, however, the belief comes down to a personal decision I have made. I have seen the images of war that are so readily made available by the media these days, and I have been sickened by the hate I have seen on people's faces and the horrifying result of their actions.

I fervently believe that all conflicts can be resolved nonviolently through dialogue and mediation, and that there is never an excuse to use war as a diplomatic tool. There is historical precedent for my belief as well; after the devastation of World War 1, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, signed by 62 nations including the United States, was a treaty that "provid[ed] for the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy." This remains an internationally binding treaty; however, almost every war since the signing of the pact that the United States has been involved in has been a direct violation of this. So not only are my moral and ethical beliefs preventing me from engaging in any kind of war, there is a legal justification for my opposition to war as well.

I would like to reiterate that I do not feel as if I could ever directly be involved in any war, including any non-combatant role in the military. However, I would be glad to serve in some sort of civil service position in the United States if it was required of me. I am certainly patriotic and feel pride in my country, but I believe that there is never any reason to commit violence towards another human being.

Sincerely,
Jackson Vickery