

Dear Chapel Hill Friends Meeting,

I am writing this letter to document my beliefs and feelings about selective service. I hope that this letter adequately explains my reasons for declaring myself a conscientious objector.

Ever since I was a week old, and passed around my meeting as a baby, I have been a part of the Chapel Hill Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). This Quaker community has taught me many valuable lessons and shaped the person that I am today. One of the core beliefs of the Quaker community is that of non-violence and I have continuously learned about this belief throughout my upbringing. I practiced non-violence when I was a child by not playing with toy weapons or violent video games. As I grew older I learned more and understood more about the Quaker core belief of non-violence and practiced it in more sophisticated ways. I started to attend anti-war rallies in Fayetteville, and helped support Quaker House with service trips there. Now my religious belief has become a deep core moral belief that I believe I will hold onto forever.

I have attempted to involve myself with communities that share my belief in non-violence and I am now taking up leadership positions in these communities. I attend Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting retreats and I am on the nurturing committee for that youth group. This past year I was on the nurturing committee for the Friends General Conference High School Program, and this coming summer I am going to be co-presiding Clerk for the high school program.

I also attend Carolina Friends School, a private Quaker school, and am part of the Staff Student Discipline Committee. The Staff Student Discipline Committee is an integral part of the CFS community and it is valued because it is the community's alternative to punishment as retribution. The Discipline Committee's purpose is to look at any given situation and make sure the entire truth is uncovered from any and all perspectives. It is the role of the committee to listen, obtain the entire truth, and then think of a consequence for the perpetrator that restores all the relationship within the community that have been broken. This consequence is what differentiates this discipline system from most because every case is looked at individually and the consequence is created to make sure the perpetrator understands what he or she did wrong. It is made so the perpetrator does not feel like he or she is being punished for what was done, but is supposed to make the perpetrator understand why what they did was wrong, and to perform restitution for any damage caused and restore relationships. When one is just punished for a something bad it is not productive at all, if someone does something bad, one should try to understand why the action was done and then try to have the perpetrator understand why his action was wrong.

My core belief in non-violence is so strong that I have begun to nurture younger members of the non-violent communities I am in. I believe I have started to become a role model for other young Friends who are going through the same process I did of forming their identities and figuring out exactly what they believe. My belief in non-violence is such a part of me, and so strong, that I could not, in good conscience, take part in any war, for any entity, at any point in my life. This would be going against who I am as a person, contradicting my moral and religious beliefs that I have built up my whole life. I could not even participate in a non-combatant role in a war because this would abet those participating in war.

I appreciate this Meeting's support and nurture over the past 18 years, and ask your continued support as I use the selective service registration to declare my position as a conscientious objector.

Sincerely,

Tristan Douglas Green