You have been hired as legislative aide to Congressman Harmon E. Wahrmong, a newly elected Member of Congress from the State of Anxiety. Congressman Wahrmong has the following assignment for you:

“As you may know, Congressman Rangel of New York has re-introduced his bill entitled, a “Universal National Service Act.” The content of the bill is identical to HR 163, which you have already received. I am familiar with the arguments in favor of an all-volunteer force, but I remain unsure about whether I should support the Rangel “draft” bill or not. I therefore want you to write and submit to me a five-page memo making the strongest and most reasonable argument that you can in favor of re-establishing a military draft and creating universal national service in the form contained in Congressman Rangel’s bill.

“It seems likely that, at present, more people who live in the State of Anxiety would support some form of universal national civilian service than would favor re-establishing a military draft. Since the two are combined in the Rangel bill, however, I am asking you for an argument in favor of the package as a whole, a combined national civilian service and military draft. I feel obliged to think carefully about this issue because it is becoming increasingly clear not only that we need the help that a national civilian service could provide domestically, but that considerably more armed forces will be required to deal with the long-term occupation of Iraq and other looming military activities.

“In constructing for me the argument in favor of adopting the Rangel bill, you may choose any three of the following topics to discuss or you may invent topics of your own; but in any case, I want you to restrict yourself to three topics and to five pages. Be sure that you refer explicitly to materials that have already been provided for your public policy class or that you may have discovered in your research. Make the most persuasive argument that can be made for present realities, though to do so it may be necessary to discuss the historical situation in other eras in which a military draft has been in place.

“There is one additional matter. I don’t want you to make arguments that suggest what the electoral/political consequences might be for me if I support or oppose the Rangel bill. But I do see that the adoption of a draft would have a substantial impact on the lives of draft-age citizens and therefore on the tone of life in the entire Nation. So avoid political partisanship and electoral analysis, but you may give me some argument based on the effect that adoption of the Rangel bill might have on the political and cultural life of the Nation. And remember that even this argument must refer to materials from class or research, not on personal speculation.
“Issues from which to draw parts of your argument (use only three):

1) Economic, racial and gender fairness, both in the composition of the military and civilian services, and in the effect on equality in civilian society; whether exemptions should be provided for students, particular occupations or those with children.

2) Effect on the amount, tone and seriousness of participation in the public discourse about foreign policy and the war in Iraq; effect on unity and divisiveness at home; effect on flexibility in making foreign policy.

3) The importance of having CO status available in the bill and whether or not such status should be extended to those who object to a particular war rather than to all war (here you may comment on whether some amendment regarding CO status should be made to the bill).

   [Note that the Court’s opinions in the CO cases have allowed for seemingly secular beliefs to satisfy the religious belief requirement if those beliefs occupy in the life of the candidate for CO the same place that traditional religious beliefs would occupy in the life of a traditionally religious CO applicant. You are not being asked to review whether such a policy is required by the U.S. Constitution].

4) Effect on military readiness, size, morale, status of the military; financial costs of raising armed forces; the economics of preparedness.

5) Psychological/cultural effects (of requiring participation in the military or in civilian service) on the conscience of the nation, on how Americans see themselves and their country, and on those who are subject to be drafted to serve in the armed forces or to do civilian service; the sense of obligation to the Nation that we have or should cultivate.

6) Political-philosophical-practical effects (of having a military and national service draft) on individual liberty as the cornerstone of country and government, (individual liberties for all Americans at home, as well as the liberty of those who are subject to the draft); fear of standing armies.

7) What we could learn from the historical experiences that the country has had with the military draft and with an all-volunteer force (this topic may be part of any of the others or it may be addressed as a separate topic here).

8) You may add your own issue/topic upon which to base the argument you are constructing. You may even decide to take a completely different, but still well-referenced, tack on arguing for the Rangel bill. We will have an extra discussion about the draft on Thursday, November 9th from which it is possible that other topics or ideas may also be generated.

“You should construct a coherent, persuasive and reasonable argument by using topics drawn from three of the above areas or from your own well-referenced analysis. You may wish to analyze the weaknesses in the argument that you make, so that I will be able to gauge its true strength as an argument. But the emphasis of your memo must be on producing an argument in favor of national service and a military draft as combined in the Rangel bill. Do not argue in support of one form of draft only if it is separated from the other. It is Rangel’s whole bill that will be debated and put to a vote in Congress.”

The form of your memo should be:

To: Congressman Wahrmong
From: (your name), legislative aide
Re: Rangel Bill for Universal National Service and Military Draft
Date: 11/20/06