

## Exploring Jewish Conscientious Objection: Past, Present and Future

### PART 3

A seminar by James M. Branum ([JewishCOProject.org](http://JewishCOProject.org))

August 10, 2025 – online and in Oklahoma City

*This is a working outline of today's presentation. We likely will not cover all of this material but I'm sharing it for attendees to be able to refer to for additional reading through the cited sources, etc. I have also added a few extra footnotes (after the presentation) to update some content. ---- Also, please note that this section was more loose and improvisational, hence my notes are briefer.*

Don't forget to mention the book: [Wrestling with your conscience: A guide for Jewish Draft Registrants and Conscientious Objectors - Jewish Peace Fellowship \(PDF Download\)](#)

3 parts:

#### 1. State of Israel

Israeli CO's and Draft Resisters

Short summary

Why important

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbFXEbKHzHA>

#### 2. in the USA today

##### a. Active Duty/Reserve

##### i. Resources

1. [JewishCOProject.org](http://JewishCOProject.org)
2. [CenterOnConscience.org](http://CenterOnConscience.org)
3. [QuakerHouse.org](http://QuakerHouse.org)

ii. For more generalized GI Rights work – [GIRightsHotline.org](http://GIRightsHotline.org)

## b. Possible Future Draft

### i. The Need

### ii. The Law

#### 1. Criteria to be satisfied

- a. Sincerity
- b. Based on Religious conviction or deep non-religious convictions
- c. Opposed to all wars (no selective objection)
- d. Crystallization happened prior to call up (for draftees)/Existed after enlistment (for active duty/reserves)

#### 2. The process

- a. Ground rules set by Congress, as interpreted by the executive branch, and in theory subject to judicial rulings.
- b. Who gets picked – men only (under current rules)
- c. Who is exempt...
  - i. Medical
  - ii. Limited exemptions for schooling
  - iii. Limited exemptions for hardships
  - iv. Conscientious Objection
  - v. Ministers and Ministers-in-training
  - vi. Unknown- What about Non-binary and Transgender people?
- d. The hearing
  - i. Conducted by local draft boards – which historically have varied greatly based on location
- e. Appeals process
- f. What can make the difference – a good well-documented CO file

#### 3. A CO File

##### a. Contents

- i. Essays written by the objector
- ii. Supporting character reference letters
- iii. Documentary evidence of lifestyle of peace, including:
  1. Letters to the editor, press statements, etc.

2. Pictures from protests that one has participated in,
  3. Arrest records (for those who engage in C.D.)
  4. Anything else that can help prove the elements.
- iv. Importance of timing – More credible if packet was created long before a draft was called.
  - v. Importance of frequent updates
- b. How to help
    - i. Draft Counseling
      1. What is it
      2. How to be trained to do it
      3. What resources are available
  4. How to preserve and record the file
  5. Ongoing support

**3. Discussion on Conscientious Objection – outside the context of the draft/military service (if time permits)**