

Things Every Educator Should Know About Military Recruiters in Our Schools

As an educator, you are probably aware that No Child Left Behind¹ requires schools to give military recruiters access to their students equal to that of college and employment recruiters. But equal access is not unrestricted access. Recruiters are not entitled to roam the halls, pull students from class or show up without an appointment.

Schools have the right and the obligation to set standards for the time and place that outsiders may recruit in the school. For example, if each college comes once or twice a year, each branch of the military can come an equal number of times. Given the frequency and severity of recruiter misconduct, it is prudent for schools to institute a policy that reaffirms the school's control over recruitment on campus. Here is some information that may help you to design an appropriate policy for your school.

Educational Priorities

1. Military recruiters present themselves as offering an opportunity to students and a service to schools. However, the Army provides its recruiters with an instruction manual called the School Recruiting Program Handbook, in which the first paragraph states that "School ownership is the goal."²
2. Military recruiters are instructed to always "have something to give [school staff] (pen, calendar, cup, donuts, etc.)" to "establish rapport and credibility." Recruiters are repeatedly reminded that "Once educators are convinced recruiters have their students' best interest in mind the SRP [School Recruiting Program] can be effectively implemented."
3. One of the primary reasons that young people enlist and that educators support this choice is the promise of money for college. Yet the School Recruiting Program Handbook states that the purpose of financial education incentives is:

"To encourage college-capable individuals to DEFER THEIR COLLEGE until after they have served in the military." [emphasis added]
4. Less than half of the recruits who sign up for college money ever receive a penny.³
5. Recruiters are told to present military programs such as the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) and education incentives such as the G.I. Bill so that they will appeal to the school community, while their actual purpose is to increase enlistment.

For example: A flyer designed to "market" the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test states: "The ASVAB program is designed to help students learn more about themselves and the world of work, identify and explore potentially satisfying occupations, and develop an effective strategy to realize their goals" ⁴

However, The School Recruiting Program Handbook states that the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery is: "specifically designed to provide recruiters with a source of prequalified leads...The ASVAB recruiter printout provides information you can't get from any other list. It...provides the recruiter with concrete and personal information about the student."

School Order and Safety

6. A six-month Associated Press investigation found that more than 100 women were raped or assaulted by recruiters in 2005. "The victims are typically between 16 and 18 years old, and they usually are thinking about enlisting. They usually meet the recruiters at their high schools." ⁵

7. Between fiscal years 2004 and 2005, allegations and service-identified incidents of recruiter wrongdoing increased, from 4,400 cases to 6,600 cases, and criminal violations more than doubled.⁶

8. A federal court decision states that military recruiting is a controversial issue and that when representatives of one side of a controversial issue are allowed to present their views in school, representatives of opposing viewpoints must be given equal access as well.⁷

What Schools Can Do

- Implement a sensible recruiter equal access policy, including limits on time, place and frequency of recruiter visits.
- Assure that recruiters are not to be alone with a student and must be supervised at all times.
- If the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery is given, select "Option 8. No release to recruiters" which allows the school to get test results but prevents the military from accessing this information.
- Keep guidance / college / career office stocked with accurate "alternatives to the military" materials.
- Invite a "counter recruiter" to present the other side of this controversial issue each time a military recruiter has been allowed to present their views.
- Report recruiter abuses to the local recruitment command & the Dept. of Education.

Sources:

1. No Child Left Behind Act SEC. 9528
2. School Recruiting Program Handbook, USAREC Pamphlet 350-13
3. George Rachon, Department of Veterans Affairs quoted in: "Military Money for College: A Reality Check" by Sam Diener & Jamie Munro, 2005. And Dept. of Veterans Affairs quoted in "GI Blues," Elizabeth Farrell, Chronicle of Higher Education, May 13, 2005
4. "Helping Teens Explore Their Career Options" www.asvabprogram.com
5. "AP Probe Looks at Recruiters' Misconduct" By Martha Mendoza, The Associated Press Saturday, August 19, 2006
6. "Military Recruiting: DOD and Services Need Better Data to Enhance Visibility over Recruiter Irregularities" United States Government Accountability Office Report to Congressional Requesters August, 2006
7. San Diego Committee v. Governing Bd. United States Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit 790 F.2d 1471, 1986

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