

# Teaching Peace

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A Newsletter for Teachers & Counselors from the Peace Education Center Volume 2 Number 1

## When is a Contract NOT a (fair) Contract?

### ...When it is the Enlistment Document for the U.S. military.

Yes, it looks like a contract, but a contract generally binds both parties. The Enlistment Document only binds the recruit - not the military. Kids can be jailed if they don't live up to its terms, but everything the military "promises" can be voided by the fine print. Recruiters often skip the fine print when talking to kids, and often don't even let them take this document home to study.

**This may be the most important contract a person ever signs. You owe it to your students to help them see exactly what they are agreeing to before they sign.**

This is also an excellent topic for educators teaching contracts or life skills - or teaching kids to read and think!

### Where can you get a copy?

You can download a copy of the enlistment document from:  
[www.truthproject.info](http://www.truthproject.info)

For an annotated copy and other teaching resources go to:  
[www.thehonestrecruiter.org](http://www.thehonestrecruiter.org)

### Don't forget to point out this section:

"Laws and regulations that govern military personnel may change without notice to me. Such changes may affect my status, pay, allowances, benefits, and responsibilities as a member of the Armed Forces REGARDLESS of the provisions of this enlistment document."

*section C.4b.*

### Other Things To Consider:

**1. Length of service.** There is a blank on the form to fill in the length of service. The recruiter might write in 'six years'. But the fine print states the minimum enlistment is eight years! And that's not all... Once their eight years are over, the military can retain them indefinitely "for the needs of the service..." Over 21,000 GIs have been extended in this way since 2003.

**2. Jobs and training.** The recruiter may write in a job or training program chosen by the recruit. But if that program is full, or the recruit doesn't test high enough, then the recruit will be assigned another one. The military does not have to abide by promises made by recruiters.

**3. Reporting legal issues.** Recruiters are under pressure to fill a quota. Many times, they will tell teens to not write down prior arrests that would exclude them from service. But if, during a background check, recruits are found to have lied, they may be in big trouble - even if the recruiter told them what to write.

**4. Medical issues.** Recruiters have been known to downplay medical issues, too, but when medical problems are discovered, kids may be kicked out. They will then have to pay back any bonus money, so suddenly they are jobless and thousands of dollars in debt.

**5. Bonuses.** Bonuses are tied to successfully completing training and even then, the payout may be doled out over many years. If they fail to complete their program, then the bonus may disappear - but not the eight year commitment.

**Did you know??** If kids enlist but change their minds before they report - *they can still get out.* Even if they have a date and a place to report, even if their recruiter tells them they have no choice. U.S. Military Regulations do not allow recruiters to:

"...threaten, coerce, manipulate or intimidate DEP members, nor may they obstruct separation requests..."

*USAREC Reg 601-56§3-1.c*

It has been military policy to grant requests for separation from DEP *before a recruit reports for training.* A lot can change in a student's final months of school. They need to know that they still have choices. Access to this information might save some kid's future!

**Call the G.I. Rights Hotline 1-800-394-9544** for help and more information.

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