



Writing a Statement of Conscience

A **Statement of Conscience** needs little guidance. You simply need a sincere and honest expression of your own beliefs from your own conscience.

When you listen, ask yourself what you believe about war, white dominance, racism, or any forms of violence, prejudice, or privilege exploiting people or nature. Write what you believe about these. When you listen inwardly, however, you do not control what comes. Whatever truth or guidance is working within you, write about that. This is your statement of conscience.

Steps for Writing a Statement of Conscience

1. **Stop**, get quiet, and listen inwardly.
2. **Consider concerns** of war, white dominance, racism, or any forms of violence, injustice, prejudice, or privilege exploiting people or nature.
3. **Take notes** of what rises within you on these or other matters that arise.
4. **Write**: 1) what you believe; 2) what influenced your beliefs; and 3) how your beliefs are evident in your life.
5. **Speak** to others about your beliefs, influences, and how they affect your life.
6. **Read** and note quotes, verses, or other examples of your beliefs.
7. **Formulate a statement**—anything from a few sentences to an essay; it's your statement. Don't strive for perfection; keep it simple, focus on your experience, and add or update later as led.

Listening for Inward Guidance through promptings of love and conscience moves us in unique ways: we name what rings true and what does not. Spiritual integrity calls us to cooperation and noncooperation — both are equally essential for a just, peaceful society. We invite everyone to write a statement of conscience.

Steps for Building a Case File

We're all conscripted. A case file prepares you for a public stand or witness: Selective Service registration resistance, a draft board or war tax resistance hearing, military discharge based on conscience, alternative community service, or lobbying stories and efforts.

1. **Tri-fold your statement of conscience**, tape it closed, and mail it to yourself. The postmark on the paper creates a legally dated record, which serves as strong legal evidence for a "long-standing belief" later in life.
2. **Request letters of support** from community members for your stand on conscience who attest to your sincerity and integrity.
3. **Collect documents** of your actions, participation in events, or writings that reflect your beliefs.
4. **Seek counseling** on registration, alternative service, tax witness, purchasing, and other options or choices.
5. **Submit your statement** to your religious community to acknowledge in their records and keep on file.
6. **Share your statement** widely with family, friends, newspapers, and federal Representatives and Senators.
7. **Post your statement** as a public witness on the [Friends Peace Teams website](#).

Listening inwardly to discern the movement of love and conscience within and among us and the natural world arises from what Quakers call the Inward Guide, which goes by many names – Spirit, God, the Divine, the Inward Light, the Seed. Each person has access to the Inward Guide that illuminates insights, practices, and directions for individuals, communities, and societies.

The Living Spirit works in the world to give life, joy, peace, and prosperity through love, integrity, and compassionate justice among people. We are united in this Power. We acknowledge that paying for war violates our religious conviction. ~ New York Yearly Meeting Declaration of Conscience Against Paying for War, 2006

This is the work of a people of faith. We invite everyone to join this long-standing witness against war and violence in any form and to witness to your religious conviction in each of your lives and communities. Let us act for conscience's sake and experience the liberty of conscience.

WE UTTERLY DENY ALL OUTWARD WARS AND STRIFE and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretense whatsoever; and this is our testimony to the whole world." ~ Declaration of Friends to Charles II, 1660, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Resources

- **Quaker House** • Fayetteville, NC • (910) 323-3912 • quakerhouse.org/co-resources
- **Friends Peace Teams** • (314) 588-1122 • FriendsPeaceTeams.org/Conscientious-Objection-to-War
- **Quaker Religious Education Collaborative** • <https://quakerrecollaborative.org/search-resources>
- **Center on Conscience and War** • Washington DC • 202-483-2220 • 800-379-2679
centeronconscience.org/should-i-register-for-the-draft and GIRightsHotline.org
- **National War Tax Resisters Coordinating Committee (NWTRCC)** • Milwaukee, WI • (262) 399-8217 • (800) 269-7464 • nwtrcc.org/resist/how-to-resist • **National Affiliates:** Community Peacemaker Teams, Center on Conscience & War, Choose Democracy, Episcopal Peace Fellowship, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Mennonite Central Committee, National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence, Nonviolence International, Sojourners, War Resisters League, War Tax Resisters Penalty Fund
- **New York Peace Tax Escrow Account** • nwtrcc.org/resist/redirection/nypteac
- **Committee Opposed to Militarism & the Draft (COMD)** • San Diego, CA • (619) 265-1369 • comdsd.org
- **Resisters.Info** • <https://hasbrouck.org/draft>