

TO PROMOTE RIFLE PRACTICE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS,  
COLLEGES, ETC.

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M E S S A G E

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

A COMMUNICATION FROM THE SECRETARY OF WAR SUBMITTING  
DRAFT OF A BILL TO PROMOTE RIFLE PRACTICE IN PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, ETC.

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DECEMBER 14, 1908.—Read; referred to the Committee on Military Affairs, and  
ordered to be printed.

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*To the Senate and House of Representatives:*

I transmit herewith a communication from the Secretary of War submitting draft of a bill to promote rifle practice in public schools, colleges, universities, and civilian rifle clubs. I approve the recommendation of the Secretary of War and ask for its favorable consideration by the Congress.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
December 14, 1908.

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WAR DEPARTMENT,  
Washington, December 10, 1908.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I have the honor to transmit herewith for the consideration of Congress the draft of a bill to promote rifle practice in public schools, colleges, universities, and civilian rifle clubs.

The National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice at its meeting in January, 1908, adopted a resolution that Congress be asked to make an appropriation to facilitate this object.

Congress having recognized the advisability of promoting marksmanship in the army, navy, and national guard, through the annual contests for the national trophy, it logically follows that steps should be taken to encourage marksmanship in public schools, universities, and among civilian rifle clubs. The President in his message to Congress at the beginning of the present session expressed his views on this subject in the following language:

Congressional assistance should be given those who are endeavoring to promote rifle practice so that our men, in the services or out of them, may know how to use the rifle. While teams representing the United States won the rifle and revolver championships of the world against all comers in England this year, it is unfortunately true that the great body of our citizens shoot less and less as time goes by. To meet this we should encourage rifle practice among schoolboys, and, indeed, among all classes, as well as in the military services, by every means in our power. Thus, and not otherwise, may we be able to assist in preserving the peace of the world. Fit to hold our own against the strong nations of the earth, our voice for peace will carry to the ends of the earth. Unprepared, and therefore unfit, we must sit dumb and helpless to defend ourselves, protect others, or preserve peace. The first step in the direction of preparation to avert war if possible, and to be fit for war if it should come, is to teach our men to shoot.

The Government has committed itself by law to the policy of encouraging military education at certain educational institutions by providing for the detail of officers of the army and furnishing ordnance and ordnance stores. The proposed legislation is therefore in accord with the recognized plan of developing elementary military education, and covers the most important feature in the training of the youth of the country for future military service.

In view of these facts, favorable action upon the proposed legislation is earnestly urged.

Very respectfully,

LUKE E. WRIGHT,  
*Secretary of War.*

The PRESIDENT.

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A BILL To promote rifle practice in public schools, colleges, universities, and civilian rifle clubs.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That for the promotion of rifle practice in public schools, colleges, universities, and civilian rifle clubs, including the cost of arms, ammunition, prizes, and the necessary material and appliances therefor, and for the expense of indoor and outdoor competitions among the students and members attending or belonging to the same, including the necessary traveling expenses and per diems of the persons designated by the Secretary of War to superintend such instruction and competitions, which shall be conducted by the Secretary of War, under the supervision of the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice, there is hereby annually appropriated out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the sum of one hundred thousand dollars.

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