



## McCain blasts draft- dodging Trump for Vietnam ‘bone spur’ excuse

October 23, 2017

Arizona Senator John McCain appears to have taken a swipe at President Donald Trump for avoiding the army draft during the Vietnam War.

In an interview aired on C-Span on Sunday, McCain criticized those who were able to avoid serving in the military by citing medical conditions in comments about draft deferment.

*“One aspect of the conflict by the way that I will never ever countenance is that we drafted the lowest income level of America and the highest income level found a doctor that would say that they had a bone spur,”* McCain said. *“That is wrong. That is wrong. If we are going to ask every American to serve, every American should serve.”*

McCain was speaking about the Vietnam War and its effects on American society. He said the *“gradual escalation”* of the conflict strengthened the enemy’s resolve and led to repercussions like, *“the New Age, the use of drugs [and] demonstrations,”* that split society in the US.

*“It was a tumultuous time, and most of it was bred by the conflict,”* McCain said, before going on to make the bone spur comment.

Trump received five separate deferments from the military draft during the almost-20-year war in Vietnam. The first four were education deferments and the fifth was for bone spurs, bone protrusions caused by a buildup of calcium.

Bone spurs can be treated through stretching, and sometimes surgery. Trump has been hazy on the details of his medical exemption when asked about it, and claimed to have forgotten which heel was affected by the bone spurs. He said his healed up over time.

He was granted a one-year medical deferment and then kept that status from 1968 to 1972. He was then granted 4-F status, meaning he was permanently disqualified from service.

*“For years and years it was the lowest income Americans, which means a lot of minorities, that were forced to go and fight. To me, that’s a black mark on the history of our country, asking*

*those with lowest income level to go and do the fighting for us while the wealthiest stay home,”* McCain said.

Bill Clinton was saved from the draft by enrolling in a military officer training program that he didn't join. Former Vice President Dick Cheney got five deferments, while George W Bush got a position in the National Guard, meaning he didn't have to serve overseas.

McCain is a Vietnam war veteran who was held by the Viet Cong as a prisoner of war for five years. McCain is a vocal supporter of US interventions overseas, so much so that the neo-conservative think-tank the Cato Institute said he is a militant hawk, describing him as being *“even worse than Bush.”*

Trump and McCain have exchanged insults throughout Trump's presidential run, with the president claiming McCain was not a war hero because he had been captured.