
Levi Pennington

People

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Pennington to President Woodrow Wilson on 17 April 1917

Levi T. Pennington

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PACIFIC COLLEGE
LEVI T. PENNINGTON
PRESIDENT

NEWBERG, OREGON, April 17, 1917.

Hon. Woodrow Wilson,
President of the United States,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:—

As the spokesman for Oregon Yearly Meeting of Friends
(Quakers) ^{of} ~~for~~ which body I have the honor to be the presiding officer,
I desire to express for myself and for them the sincere hope that you
may use your influence to save ^{us} ~~them~~ from the necessity of facing a
choice between ^{obedience to} ~~obedience to~~ the commands of
their country and loyalty to ^{our} ~~their~~ concep-
tion of God's will for ~~them~~ ^{us}.

We are a loyal people, true to the nation under which we
enjoy such signal blessings, and ~~most devoted~~ to the flag that we love.
And we desire to serve our country in any way that will not violate
our consciences, nor compel us to violate religious convictions so
deep that now as many times in the past our people in large numbers
would have to choose fidelity to principle, though it might cost us
our lives.

Surely it will not be found necessary to force the Friends
and those who hold a like conviction on the subject of war into a posi-
tion where they must violate their consciences or be deprived of life
or liberty by the country they love because of their fidelity to their
conception of their Christian duty.

May I not, on behalf of Friends in general and of Oregon
Yearly Meeting in particular, ask that Friends be exempted from con-
scription for any form of military service and from training for it?
It is not ~~that~~ ^{for government service} conscription itself that we object to, though we shall
try to see to it that no conscription is ever necessary if service
is open to us that we can conscientiously render. It is not that we

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PRESIDENT

NEWBERG, OREGON.

thousands
fear physical danger and death, as ~~thousands~~ of Friends who have ~~been~~
faced imprisonment, ^{danger} disease and death for their convictions have dem-
onstrated. But the belief that God does not permit us to kill nor to
prepare for killing is so strong with many of us that we must petition
you to use your great power to provide for us some other way of serv-
ing the country we love.

Surely there are other forms of service, which will not vi-
olate our consciences, in which we can serve America. We pray you to
help in ^{securing exemption for} exempting us from the things that we feel we cannot do, and
then whatever service we can conscientiously render to the government,
we shall loyally do, ^{no matter what} whatever the danger or the sacrifice ~~may~~ required.

With assurance of our loyalty to you personally, which has
been repeatedly expressed to you in communications from Oregon Yearly
Meeting, and of our fidelity to America and Old Glory. /

Very sincerely yours,

Clerk of Oregon Yearly Meeting
of the Society of Friends (Quakers.)