

June 29, 2020

Dear Senator,

The undersigned organizations, representing our millions of members across the country, write to you in strong support of the proposed amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 that would reallocate 10 percent of the bloated Pentagon budget toward severely underfunded human needs priorities - many of which are more critical than ever as our country continues to confront the COVID-19 pandemic. We urge you to co-sponsor Amendment 1788 introduced by Senators Sanders and Markey, and vote in support should it reach the Senate floor.

Our militarism budget is out of control. In 2019, the United States spent more money on our military than the next nine countries combined.¹ The Department of Defense's budget eclipses that of federal courts, education, the State Department, local economic development, public health and environmental protection combined,² yet the Pentagon is incapable of passing a basic audit.³

Multiple analyses have determined that U.S. and collective security would not suffer, and in fact would improve by, cutting hundreds of billions of dollars from the runaway Pentagon budget through common-sense steps, like eliminating redundant and unusable weapons systems, ending wars, ceasing reliance on expensive contractors, and rejecting new nuclear weapons development.⁴ These overdue steps would instead allow us to properly focus our investments on our most urgent and pressing human needs. Polling demonstrates that this is a popular idea, and most American voters want to see money redirected from the Pentagon to invest in human security.⁵

The jarring recent images of police with weapons of war in our streets is a stark reminder of how militarism and white supremacy drive misplaced spending priorities both at home and abroad. Meanwhile, all over the country, millions have lost their jobs and access to health care as the novel coronavirus pandemic rages on. The current moment should force us to confront the reality that, for too long, we have invested in the wrong priorities, the wrong tools, and the wrong solutions.

¹ <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2020/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-world-military-expenditure-2019>

² <https://www.nationalpriorities.org/blog/2019/08/09/bipartisan-738-billion-military-budget-deal/>

³

<https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2022270/norquist-with-2-audits-done-dod-still-has-work-to-do/>

⁴ <https://ips-dc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/PPC-Moral-Budget-2019-report-FULL-FINAL-1.pdf>;

<https://peopleoverpentagon.org/guidetocuts/>;

https://static.wixstatic.com/ugd/fb6c59_59a295c780634ce88d077c391066db9a.pdf;

<https://winwithoutwar.org/policy/reimagining-u-s-security-spending-for-the-21st-century-beyond/>

⁵ <https://peopleoverpentagon.org/support/>

As a point of comparison: last year, the Centers for Disease Control budget was \$7 billion⁶, just 7 percent of the the national policing budget⁷, and less than 1 percent of the Pentagon budget.⁸ Those three figures alone tell a tragic story about what and who this country prioritizes and values.

We should no longer tolerate unchecked spending on systems that fuel violence and corporate greed at the expense of the basic needs of our people. This amendment is a crucial step toward a federal budget that actually aligns with our values. We strongly urge you to support it.

Sincerely,

+Peace

350.org

American Friends Service Committee

Beyond the Bomb

CASA In Action

Center for International Policy

Coalition on Human Needs

CODEPINK

Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach

Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces

Council for a Livable World

Criminalization of Poverty Project at the Institute for Policy Studies

Daily Kos

Demand Progress

Democracy for America

Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF)

Dissenters

Environmentalists Against War

Equal Rights Advocates

Faith in Public Life

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Futures Without Violence

Greenpeace

Indivisible

Just Foreign Policy

Justice is Global

Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/budget/documents/fy2019/fy-2019-cdc-operating-plan.pdf>

⁷ <https://populardemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Freedom%20To%20Thrive%2C%20Higher%20Res%20Version.pdf>

⁸ <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/government-news/2019/12/highlights-of-year-end-capitol-hill-legislation/>

Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office
MoveOn
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Domestic Workers Alliance
National Employment Law Project
National Iranian American Council Action
National Priorities Project at the Institute for Policy Studies
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New Internationalism Project at the Institute for Policy Studies
Overseas Base Realignment and Closure Coalition
Pax Christi USA
Peace Action
Peace Direct
People's Action
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Public Citizen
Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft
Roots Action
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Justice Team
STAND: The student-led movement to end mass atrocities
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
Union of Concerned Scientists
Veterans for Peace
Vets for the People
Win Without War
Women's Action for New Directions (WAND)
World BEYOND War
Yemeni Alliance Committee