

February 18, 2021

Dear Members of Congress,

As 31 faith-based organizations from across the United States, representing many different faith traditions, we call on you to prioritize a sustainable, peaceful recovery for the country while developing the government's budget for fiscal year 2022. The Administration has signaled a commitment to investing in green energy and sustainable infrastructure¹, in affordable healthcare, and in economic support for people struggling with the effects of the pandemic². These are essential investments- and we can find the money we need to make these investments a reality by cutting the bloated Pentagon budget.

We are called by our faith traditions to prioritize caring for people, and to turn away from violence and corruption. The Hebrew Bible calls people "stewards" of the land, urges them to feed the hungry and care for the poor, and prophesies nations forging their "swords into ploughshares."

Whether Congress is prioritizing creating jobs, addressing climate change, or repairing relationships with other nations, cutting Pentagon spending is part of the solution. Defense sector spending is notoriously inefficient at job creation- spending in education or healthcare can create double the number of jobs for the same investment³. The Pentagon emits more greenhouse gasses than many countries⁴, and has been devastating communities abroad in endless and unnecessary wars.

Instead of spending money on weapons and war, we need to be investing in things that address the urgency of climate change and build resilient communities- including clean energy and sustainable infrastructure. Ensuring that low-income and marginalized communities have the infrastructure they need for clean air, water, broadband, and public transportation is key. Addressing climate change and sustainable infrastructure will put the country on a path to a more equitable future- and create good jobs at the same time.

We also need reductions in the Pentagon budget in order to invest in public health- an especially essential investment in this time of pandemic. Everyone must have access to

¹ [The Biden Plan to Build a Modern, Sustainable Infrastructure and an Equitable Clean Energy Future](#). 2020. *Joe Biden for President: Official Campaign Website*.

² [Build Back Better: Joe Biden's Jobs and Economic Recovery Plan for Working Families](#). 2020. *Joe Biden for President: Official Campaign Website*.

³ Garrett-Peltier, H., [War Spending and Lost Opportunities](#). *Brown University*.

⁴ Crawford, N.C., 2020. [Pentagon Fuel Use, Climate Change, and the Costs of War](#). *Brown University*.

affordable, quality healthcare. Congress should prioritize funding testing and treatment for COVID, and expansion of Medicaid.

By reducing Pentagon spending, we would also free up funds to invest in foreign assistance, diplomacy, and peacebuilding. Conflict can be solved in nonviolent ways when we address the root causes like global hunger and poverty, and use all of our nonviolent, sustainable foreign policy tools like diplomacy and peacebuilding. Congress must reduce the bloated Pentagon budget, and invest instead in real solutions for communities experiencing conflict.

As the United States works to recover from the economic and public health disaster of COVID-19, it is essential that we invest in clean energy and infrastructure, healthcare, and peacebuilding, instead of giving handouts to defense contractors and pouring taxpayer dollars into endless wars. This year, Congress must pass appropriations bills that cut the topline Pentagon budget, eliminates the unaccountable Overseas Contingencies Operations fund (OCO), and re-invests that money into a sustainable, healthy, and peaceful recovery for our communities.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Baptists
American Friends Service Committee
Bridges Faith Initiative
Center on Conscience & War
Christian Peacemaker Teams
Church World Service
Church of the Brethren, Office of Peacebuilding and Policy
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Disciples Center for Public Witness
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)
InterReligious Task Force on Central America
Islamic Society of North America
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Churches
Pax Christi USA
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Presbyterian Church Office of Public Witness
Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
Provincial Council Clerics of St. Viator

Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Justice Team

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas NH

The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society

Union for Reform Judaism

United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries