



Peace Education Center
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July 11, 2022

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Michigan Coalition to Prevent Gun
Violence

The Honorable Representative Elissa Slotkin,

The Lansing Area Peace Education Center urges you to restrain the juggernaut of military spending. Even though you voted to support amendments in the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) to increase the topline amount to \$37 billion more than was requested by the Pentagon, the President, and even HASC Chair Rep. Adam Smith, we hope that you will reconsider that decision as the NDAA vote approaches in the coming days and weeks.

The quickly escalating cascade of money to the military is neither necessary for our national security, nor for the real global threats that confront us as a people. Rather it robs us and the world of precious funds and resources that could better be utilized to address real human security – food, shelter, access to clean water, etc. The militarism response to global challenges also further ravishes the natural world and increases the danger of climate destabilization for generations to come. The canard being pushed on the public and too many legislators is that the increase is necessary because of inflation. But as Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs [recently reported](#), there are numerous holes in such an argument, starting with the fact that the Biden/Pentagon budget includes inflationary figures.

Representatives Lee and Pocan have introduced amendments to the NDAA that would rescind the \$37 billion (current Rules Committee Amendment #169) and another that would reduce the military budget topline by \$100 billion (current Rules Committee amendment #166) a figure supported by a recent Congressional Budget Office [study](#). We ask you to support at least one of these amendments and to constrain the unbridled military-industrial complex.

You have noted yourself more than once that there is much waste in the military budget. Here's an opportunity to reduce that waste, not expand it. Other studies have noted billions of dollars of waste and of course, the Pentagon has failed to even pass an audit for more than two decades. Billions cannot be accounted for.

There are the unnecessary weapons systems as [identified by the Congressional Progressive Caucus](#) including the F-35, Littoral Combat Ship, the Nuclear Gravity Bomb, the Nuclear Armed Sea Launched Cruise Missile for starters. Pushing these benefits the corporations but robs us as a people real security that could be strengthened with investments in health care, education, and environmental protection (see the examples below).

The increases added by the HASC and SASC are largely driven by the “wish lists” or Unfunded Priorities Lists that this year was, as the [National Taxpayers Union noted](#), a \$24 billion bonanza for military contractors. The folks at the Friends Committee on National Legislation recently compared that list with [the Peoples Unfunded Priority List](#). The tradeoffs show substantially different values:

Make the Child Tax Credit (CTC) Fully Available to Families with Little or No Income

Cost: \$12 billion for one year

Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for Adults Not Raising Children

Cost: \$13 billion for one year

Increase Housing Choice Vouchers

Cost: \$2 billion for one year

Implement Environmental Justice Provisions

Cost: \$16 billion for one year

Fund Global Vaccination Efforts

Cost: \$5 billion for one year

Yes, inflation is at work in the economy and the President’s budget accounts for that and yet as more than one analyst notes, military spending is not affected the same way by inflation as personal or household budgets.

As [a recent analysis](#) (July 6, 2022) from the National Priorities Project depicts even “the House Armed Services Committee has pledged [\\$29.5 billion for nuclear weapons programs](#) within the Department of Energy, signaling a unified commitment to the nuclear enterprise....the [Government Accountability Office](#) has reported that nuclear spending trends under Trump ([trends which Biden has continued thus far](#)) would be unsustainable, amounting to \$634 billion spent through fiscal years 2021 and 2030. To put that into perspective, \$643 billion could offset the estimated net deficit increase of the Build Back Better Act four times over—with money left to spare.”

Analysts from both liberal and conservative sides note that the Ukraine War [is not a good reason](#) to increase the base military budget. If proven to be necessary, the supplementary spending of the kind used already to support Ukraine this year, should be used for a time bound need. It should not be hoisted into the base budget.

Einstein noted that doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results is a definition of insanity. We have continued the unrelenting buildup of weapons of war, extending our

global footprint and gobbling up resources needed to rebuild a future challenged by hyper threats like climate change, global pandemics, ecological unravelling, and gross human inequality. We spend a pittance on these needs, nor on building diplomacy and strengthening international law and conflict resolution.

[Recent polling](#) from Data for Progress indicates 63% of the population do not think we should increase military spending beyond President Biden's request. We are among them. We need you to turn away from accelerating the relentless growth in militarism. We stand ready to support and assist you in building a more peaceful and sustainable future for all.

Sincerely,

Nelson Brown, PEC Co-Chair

Rebecca Payne, PEC Co-Chair