

7 June 2022

Dear Members of Congress,

As faith organizations with deep ties in communities across the United States and around the globe, we know that budgets are moral documents that reflect our national priorities. Our faiths call us to reject war, to love our neighbors, and to invest in human wellbeing. The most serious challenges to the security of Americans arise from non-military threats, such as pandemic disease, climate change, poverty, and racism. This fiscal year presents Congress with an opportunity to invest in areas that address these root causes of insecurity. **We urge Congress to dramatically cut the level of spending allocated for weapons and war in the Fiscal Year 2023 budget far below President Biden's request of \$813 billion and to instead invest that money in programs that serve human needs.**

Our faith traditions denounce war and violence as solutions to global problems, decriing the harm they cause to both the victims and the perpetrators of violence. We assert that regardless of the reason for its onset, war is destructive by nature, resulting in physical demolition, emotional trauma, and ongoing cycles of retribution and violence. To build a true and just peace, we must remove ourselves from the cycle of perpetual warmaking, and end our practice of spending an overwhelming portion of the U.S. federal budget on weapons and war.

These themes are also evident in our sacred scriptures. In Romans 12: 20-21, we read, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Likewise, Pope [Francis has warned](#) that it would be "madness" for Western countries to increase their military budgets in response to the Ukraine war, instead [challenging nations](#) to replace the "perverse and diabolical logic of weapons" with a new strategic approach to international relations that prioritizes peace.

Congress should expand U.S. government funding to address the health, safety, and well-being of people and our planet— not subsidize weapons and war. Without financial investments in global vaccination efforts, COVID-19 will continue to spread, disrupting livelihoods and threatening lives around the world. Similarly, climate change presents an existential threat to our planet and contributes to severe weather events and forced displacement. Poverty and racism deny millions their inherent dignity and perpetuate marginalization and violence. These important challenges cannot be addressed with weapons or military might. The Pentagon receives enormous amounts of money every year, while human needs programs are routinely neglected and have not kept pace with inflation. With just \$100 billion of the \$813 billion requested for weapons and war, Congress could choose to provide nearly 35 million children from low-income backgrounds with healthcare, manufacture 2.5 billion coronavirus vaccines, or

create nearly 580,000 clean energy jobs over the course of one year. These investments will build a more sustainable security for our communities and society as a whole.

In FY23, our faith communities urge Congress to push back on the massive proposed budget increase for weapons and war, and instead call for investments in programs that benefit people in need.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Baptists
American Friends Service Committee
Church of the Brethren, Office of Peacebuilding and Policy
Community Peacemaker Teams
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR-USA)
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate JPIC Office
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Churches
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Office of Public Affairs, Soka Gakkai International-USA
Pax Christi USA
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
The United Methodist Church -- General Board of Church and Society
United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries