



Dear Senator/Representative:

**As you complete the FY 2011 appropriations and consider the FY 2012 budget, we urge you to restrain excessive military spending.**

This year budget debates are taking place in the midst of a struggling economy and concerns about the growing deficit and debt. Dramatic spending cuts and freezes are now being considered in every category except one: military spending. We believe that this unbalanced approach is fiscally irresponsible and does not align with our nation's values. Like any other department, the Pentagon must be held accountable and prove that its programs are a worthwhile use of our limited tax dollars.

Among the many vital domestic programs on the chopping block are education, health care, affordable housing, and energy assistance. Cuts to these programs will compound the strain already placed on our overburdened state and local budgets. Analysts warn that deep cuts will damage our fragile economy now and hinder our ability to compete globally in the future. We know that these cuts will have a devastating impact on those most vulnerable in our communities.

In the international arena cuts proposed to international organizations, humanitarian aid, and disaster relief would take away many of the security tools that defense experts, including Defense Secretary Robert Gates, say that we need. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently said that the proposed FY 2011 House cuts "will be devastating to our national security, will render us unable to respond to unanticipated disasters, and will damage our leadership in the world." Particularly in light of recent events in the world, many of these cuts are shortsighted.

Military spending for the Pentagon, the wars, and nuclear weapons comprises 56% of the discretionary spending requested in FY 2012. While all other discretionary spending is subject to cuts or spending caps, military spending would continue to grow. Simple arithmetic tells us that without cuts to this largest portion of discretionary spending even very deep cuts to domestic and international programs will not alleviate deficit spending and the rising debt. Thus, it is not surprising that the recent bi-partisan National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform called for "substantial defense reductions over the next 10 years." Furthermore, creating jobs is crucial to our economy and University of Massachusetts economists found that *"public dollars invested in clean energy, health care, and education all create significantly more jobs within the U.S. economy than investing an equivalent amount in the military."*\*

We believe budget decisions should reflect our nation's values and we can cut military spending without harming national security or undermining troops. Every dollar we spend on an unnecessary weapon designed to fight the wars of 30 years ago is a dollar we don't have to educate our future workforce or rebuild a crumbling bridge. As you face some of the most difficult budgeting challenges in our nation's history, we urge you to responsibly restrain military spending.

\* The U.S. Employment Effects of Military and Domestic Spending Priorities: An Updated Analysis, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Department of Economics (October 2009)