



**Left-Right Statement to the U.S. House of Representatives:
Vote “No” on Pentagon Increase in House Democratic Budget Caps Bill (H.R. 2021)**

April 8, 2019

We are writing as a coalition of groups on the left and the right to urge Members of Congress to vote “no” on [H.R. 2021, Investing for the People Act of 2019](#), when it comes to the floor for a vote this week. The bill would approve a budget deal that provides for Pentagon spending of up to \$733 billion in fiscal year 2020, an increase of \$157 billion over the existing defense spending cap (\$576 billion) for the year.¹ The \$733 billion Pentagon budget topline in H.R. 2021 includes up to \$69 billion in the plagued “slush fund” account known as the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) fund.

While lower than the President’s request for \$750 billion, which has been reported as a “negotiating tactic” to ensure the most Pentagon spending, this level of Pentagon increase remains unacceptable and unwise — even, to borrow the President’s words, “crazy.”² Armed Services Chair Adam Smith himself questioned the justification for \$733 billion as the “magic” number for the Pentagon topline when the idea was first floated last year, joining a line of defense experts concerned about unsustainable, unaccountable, arbitrarily sky-high Pentagon budgeting.³ The failed audit, the continued drumbeat of reports of Pentagon waste, inefficiencies and mismanagement,⁴ and poll after poll after poll⁵ demonstrate that it is not in the interest of Americans for Congress to infuse massive amounts of new money into the Pentagon. It is urgent that Congress reject the unnecessary Pentagon increase in H.R. 2021.

Signed,

*Center for International Policy
Coalition to Reduce Spending
Council for a Livable World
FreedomWorks
Indivisible
MoveOn
National Priorities Project at the Institute for Policy Studies*

*National Taxpayers Union
PeaceAction
Project On Government Oversight
Taxpayers for Common Sense
Taxpayers Protection Alliance
Win Without War
Women’s Action for New Directions (WAND)*

¹ Congressional Research Service, [“The Defense Budget and the Budget Control Act: Frequently Asked Questions.”](#) 3/18 (page 5)
² Politico, [“Trump reverses course, tells Pentagon to boost budget request to \\$750 billion.”](#) 12/9/18; @realDonaldTrump via [Twitter](#), 12/3/18
³ Adam Smith via Reuters, [“U.S. lawmaker hit backs at Pentagon argument for bigger budget.”](#) 12/12/18. Ben Freeman and William D. Hartung, [“Less war, more spending: The flawed logic of Pentagon budget boosters.”](#) 1/24/19; Bonnie Kristian, [“The Pentagon’s Serial Waste and Shoddy Accounting Don’t Preclude It From Getting More Money, Apparently.”](#) 12/11/18; Danny Davis, [“Pentagon budget increase will lead to a ‘major economic disaster,’ says retired US Army officer.”](#) 2/20/18
⁴ New York Times Editorial Board, [“The Pentagon Doesn’t Know Where Its Money Goes.”](#) 12/9/18; Institute for Spending Reform, [“Guide for a Strong America.”](#); Rolling Stone, [“How To Blow \\$700 Billion.”](#) 3/20/19
⁵ AP-NORC, [“Americans Are Dissatisfied with the Government’s Spending Priorities.”](#) 2018; Gallup News, [“Demand Wanes for Higher Defense Spending.”](#) 3/12/19; Eurasia Group Foundation, [“Worlds Apart: U.S. Foreign Policy and Public Opinion.”](#) 2/19; University of Maryland Program for Public Consultation/Voice of the People, [“Majorities of Republican and Democratic Voters Agree on \\$128 Billion in Deficit Reduction, Raising Revenue and Cutting Spending.”](#) 7/31/18; Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation & Institute via Military Times, [“Survey finds strong support for military members, less support for military funding.”](#) 12/1/18