

**Let's Cut the Bloated Pentagon Budget by 10% and Invest in
Jobs, Education, Housing and Healthcare**
Support the Sanders-Pocan-Lee-Markey Amendment to NDAA

Dear Colleague:

During the consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we will be offering an amendment to cut the \$740.5 billion Pentagon budget by 10 percent so that we can invest that money in jobs, education, healthcare and housing in American communities where the poverty rate is at least 25 percent. This amendment is about rebalancing our national priorities.

In America today, we are experiencing an extraordinary series of crises unprecedented in the modern history of our country. We are in the midst of the worst public health crisis in more than a hundred years. Over the past three months, the coronavirus has infected more than 2.3 million Americans and caused over 120,000 deaths. Incredibly, more Americans have been killed by the coronavirus than the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War, 9-11, the Afghanistan War and the Iraq War - combined.

We are in the midst of the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. During the COVID-19 pandemic, at least 16 million Americans have lost their health insurance, 46 million Americans have filed for unemployment, more than 115 million Americans have seen their incomes go down and American households have lost a breathtaking \$6.5 trillion in wealth. All over this country, tens of millions of Americans are going hungry. They have seen their credit scores deteriorate. And they are scared to death that they will soon be evicted from their apartments or will lose their homes to foreclosure.

Over the last several weeks, hundreds of thousands of Americans across the country have courageously taken to the streets to demand justice for the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks and Ahmaud Arbery, and an end to police brutality. These tragic killings of unarmed African Americans have highlighted the urgent need to rethink the nature of policing and to fix a broken and racist criminal justice system.

Given these unprecedented crises, now is not the time to increase the Pentagon's budget to \$740.5 billion - over half of our discretionary budget. Now is not the time to be spending more on the military than the next [11 countries combined](#). Now is not the time to be spending more on national defense than we did at the height of the Cold War or the wars in Korea and Vietnam. Now is the time to provide jobs, education, healthcare, and housing in American communities that have been ravaged by a global pandemic, extreme poverty, deindustrialization and mass incarceration.

If this horrific pandemic has taught us anything it is that national security means a lot more than building bombs, missiles, jet fighters, tanks, submarines, nuclear warheads and other weapons of mass destruction designed to kill as many people as possible. National security also means doing everything we can to save and improve lives in American communities that have been neglected and abandoned for far too long.

The amendment we will be offering to the NDAA is simple and straightforward.

It would reduce the Pentagon's budget by ten percent – from \$740.5 billion to \$666.5 billion -- while exempting military personnel and the Defense Health Program from any reduction.

The savings from our amendment should be used for programs that create jobs and provide healthcare, housing and educational opportunities in communities with high poverty rates. This would benefit communities in every state in the country and people from all backgrounds. It would be especially relevant, however, to those distressed communities of color - African American, Latino and Native American – that have been ignored for far too long as they continue to suffer from systemic racism.

These funds should be used to:

- **Create Jobs by:** Building affordable housing, schools, childcare facilities, community health centers, public hospitals, libraries, clean drinking water facilities, removing lead pipes, and replacing vacant or blighted properties.
- **Improve Education by:** Hiring more public school teachers to reduce class sizes, increasing teacher pay, providing universal nutritious meals to children and parents, and providing free tuition to residents to attend public colleges, universities or trade schools.
- **Make Housing More Affordable by:** Providing rental assistance and eliminating homelessness.

Funds must not be used for police departments, prisons, or jails.

Let us take this unprecedented moment in American history to rebalance our priorities. Let us invest more in jobs, education, healthcare and housing and less on weapons of mass destruction and endless wars.

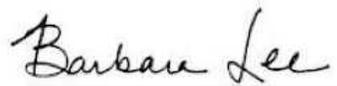
Sincerely,



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator