

Mobilize Public & Civic Voices to Cut Military Spending, Fund Jobs & Services

A campaign to mobilize public bodies, elected officials, civil society and social movement organizations to demand that Congress:

- ❖ **Stop funding the wars, occupations and military activities in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan**
- ❖ **Reorder national priorities now wasted on the bloated Pentagon budget to**
 - **Put people back to work**
 - **Restore and fully fund essential social programs and public services to meet human needs**
 - **Address the fiscal crisis of state and local governments**
 - **Pursue diplomatic, development and other alternatives to military conflict as the first rather than the last means of defending national security.**

Many members of Congress (MOC) who claim they are opposed to the wars and wasteful Pentagon spending nonetheless vote to continue funding them because they feel they need to support our troops in harm's way, or the bill also funds programs they support (the "sugar coating on a poison pill"), or they need support from their party leadership and the president for some other measure or their re-election, or simply because they are not prepared to resist the pressures brought to bear on them for opposing the president and party leadership.

Another possible explanation that is less commonly recognized is that the military-corporate-security establishment (MCSE) has been very successful in spreading military contracts across the country so that nearly every member of Congress has some operation, base or business on which constituents depend for a livelihood and from which local communities derive tax revenues. Advocating demilitarization of the Federal Budget courts the combined opposition of the military itself, military contractors, their employees and the unions that represent them, the business community and local public officials, as well as the political right. Even members of Congress in "safe" districts must pause before deciding to take on that kind of opposition.

We must break the grip that the MCSE has on our politics and economy, and the influence it wields to keep the country on a course that has produced an unbroken series of global conflicts that for them generate incomes, profits, careers and influence, but which in reality do not make us any more secure. Indeed, these conflicts make us less secure.

The fiscal crisis that now afflicts nearly every state, county and city government presents an opportunity to generate pressure on Congress from a different source – local elected officials.

Recently the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) took a step in that direction when it unanimously adopted a groundbreaking resolution calling for the global elimination of nuclear weapons and use of the funds saved to meet the needs of cities.

Cong. Alan Grayson (Dem-FL) has introduced '[The War Is Making You Poor' Act](#) that would cut all supplementary spending for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan while eliminating all federal taxes on annual incomes of \$35,000 (\$70,000 for couples) or less. Following release of a report: [Debt, Deficits, and Defense: A Way Forward](#) issued by the [Sustainable Defense Task Force](#), Reps. Barney Frank and Ron Paul, supported by 55 other MOC, called for deep cuts in military spending.

Today, all but a handful of states and most city, town and county governments, as well as boards of education and other public bodies are taking a hacksaw to the bones of local government, having already used a cleaver on whatever muscle and "fat" might have existed. Government services are being deeply curtailed or terminated altogether. Vital safety net social programs are being axed. Local governments are selling off valuable public assets. Even police and firefighters find their jobs on the chopping block.

It is a time of such profound crisis in governing that even mainstream conservative public officials are clamouring for Federal assistance.

The antiwar, social, racial and economic justice movements have an opportunity to leverage this sentiment and shape it into a political crowbar that can be used to pry open a real debate in Congress about the course our government is pursuing and the cost that course imposes on this and future generations.

The Campaign

- ✓ **Build a broad political coalition across ethnic, racial, political, economic, occupational and interest group boundaries** - among all those impacted by budget and service cuts, unemployment and home foreclosures. *This is an opportunity to develop relationships and forge alliances with other social forces in the spirit of One Nation Working Together.*
- ✓ **Develop a simple model resolution** – one that can be introduced in public bodies and endorsed by public and elected officials. A companion "declaration" can be circulated for organizations to endorse and everyone else to sign. Each community can modify the model to suits own needs and interests.
- ✓ **Demand public hearings or town hall meetings at which the victims of the crisis and affected agencies, organizations and programs can testify to its impact on families and communities.**
- ✓ **Organize large diverse delegations to deliver the adopted resolution to the district's member of Congress.**

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