March 16, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

As Members of the United States Congress sent to Washington by voters urging us to rebuke the values of the Trump Administration, we are eager to work with you to fulfill that mandate.

Our federal budget is a statement of our national values, and part of undoing the damage of the last four years is re-evaluating our spending priorities as a nation. That re-evaluation should begin with the Department of Defense. Hundreds of billions of dollars now directed to the military would have greater return if invested in diplomacy, humanitarian aid, global public health, sustainability initiatives, and basic research.

Recent reporting indicates that your first budget request to Congress will recommend the same level of Pentagon spending as the last fiscal year. While we are heartened that your Administration is not contemplating expanding the Pentagon’s already inflated budget, our new Democratic majorities in Congress along with your Administration should go further. Rather than requesting a flat Pentagon budget, we urge you to seek a significantly reduced Pentagon topline. Thoughtful analysis from experts across the political spectrum shows that significant cuts can be achieved without reducing the support, pay or benefits provided to our men and women in uniform and their families. We could cut the Pentagon budget by more than ten percent and still spend more than the next ten largest militaries combined.

The United States’ war on terror has lasted two decades and cost the U.S. approximately $6.4 trillion. Our men and women in uniform have served bravely and honorably. Yet, the premise of a military-centric foreign policy is a failure. We must end the forever wars, heal our veterans, and re-orient towards a holistic conception of national security that centers public health, climate change, and human rights.

You have spoken frequently about the need to not only reject the destruction of Trumpism, but to build things back better. A broad cross-section of voters and organizations, including conservative, faith-based and progressive groups, support responsible spending reductions at the Pentagon. The same voters who sent you to the White House on this promise sent us to Congress, expecting us to make this vision a reality and to chart a new course. Therefore, we strongly urge you to request a reduced Pentagon budget when you send your Fiscal Year 2022 budget to Congress.
Thank you for the consideration of this request, and we look forward to working with your Administration to implement the changes Americans expect from our leadership.

Sincerely,

Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress

Jake Auchincloss  
Member of Congress

/s/ Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress
/s/ Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress
/s/ Peter Welch  
Member of Congress

/s/ Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress
/s/ Raúl Grijalva  
Member of Congress
/s/ Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of Congress

/s/ Mark Takano  
Member of Congress
/s/ Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress
/s/ Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress

/s/ Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress
/s/ Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress
/s/ James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

/s/ Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress
/s/ Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress
/s/ Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

/s/ Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress
/s/ Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress
/s/ Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

/s/ Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress
/s/ Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress
/s/ Jesús G. “Chuy” García  
Member of Congress

/s/ Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress
/s/ Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress
/s/ Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress

/s/ Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress
/s/ Grace Meng  
Member of Congress
/s/ Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress

/s/ Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress
/s/ Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress
/s/ Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D  
Member of Congress

/s/ Cori Bush  
Member of Congress
/s/ Judy Chu  
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/s/ Mondaire Jones  
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