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TO: The Honorable Detroit City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director 
Legislative Policy Division Staff

DATE: February 19, 2024

RE: **RESOLUTION CALLING ON CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT TO MOVE
SIGNIFICANT FUNDS AWAY FROM THE MILITARY BUDGET TO FUND
SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELFARE**

Council Member Mary Waters requested that the Legislative Policy Division (LPD) provide a resolution calling on congress and the president to move significant funds away from the military budget to fund social services and welfare.

Please contact our office if we can be of any further assistance.

BY COUNCIL MEMBER MARY WATERS

RESOLUTION CALLING ON CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT TO MOVE SIGNIFICANT FUNDS AWAY FROM MILITARY BUDGET TO FUND SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELFARE

WHEREAS, In 2022, the United States spent 12% of its federal budget on the U.S. Military, and each year roughly half of all federal discretionary spending goes to defense-related programs according to the Office of Management and Budget;¹ and

WHEREAS, The United States spent over \$877 billion on the military in 2022, more than China, Russia, India, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom, Germany, France, South Korea, Japan, and Ukraine combined;² and

WHEREAS, In 2023 the Biden administration submitted a Department of Defense budget request of \$842 billion for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024³ which Congress increased to \$886 billion;⁴ and

WHEREAS, As the Pentagon budget nears \$1 trillion the Department of Defense announce it has failed a sixth audit and can't account for half of its assets;⁵ and

WHEREAS, According to the National Priorities Project, a \$100 billion Pentagon cut could pay for: the clean energy and childcare provisions in Biden's beleaguered Build Back Better initiative; power every household in the United States with solar energy; hire one million elementary school teachers; furnish free tuition for 2 out of 3 public college students in the U.S.; send every household in the U.S. a \$700 check to help offset effects of inflation;⁶ and

WHEREAS, Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower recognized that "every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed;"⁷ and

WHEREAS, National polling has shown that the majority of constituents do not want increases in defense budgets, especially at the cost of social services;⁸ and

WHEREAS, A 2022 study conducted by the American Friends Service Committee found that, of the U.S. adults surveyed, 56 percent supported cuts to the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and reinvesting that funding into pandemic recovery, healthcare, and jobs;⁹ and

¹ <https://www.pgpf.org/budget-basics/budget-explainer-national-defense#:~:text=The%20United%20States%20spent%20%24766.15%20percent%20of%20the%20budget.>

² <https://www.statista.com/statistics/262742/countries-with-the-highest-military-spending/#:~:text=This%20amounted%20to%203.5%20percent,Qatar%2C%20Algeria%2C%20and%20Russia.>

³ <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3618367/congress-passes-fiscal-2024-defense-spending-bill-pay-raise-for-service-members/#:~:text=The%20most%20recent%20National%20Defense.allowance%20to%20%24400%20per%20month.>

⁴ [https://www.reuters.com/world/us/biden-signs-886-billion-us-defense-policy-bill-into-law-2023-12-22/#:~:text=WASHINGTON%2C%20Dec%202022%20\(Reuters\),China%20in%20the%20Indo%2DPacific.](https://www.reuters.com/world/us/biden-signs-886-billion-us-defense-policy-bill-into-law-2023-12-22/#:~:text=WASHINGTON%2C%20Dec%202022%20(Reuters),China%20in%20the%20Indo%2DPacific.)

⁵ <https://thehill.com/policy/defense/4313887-pentagon-fails-sixth-audit-in-a-row/>

⁶ <https://www.nationalpriorities.org/blog/2023/02/21/seven-things-we-could-do-if-we-cut-pentagon-100-billion/>

⁷ [Address "The Chance for Peace" Delivered Before the American Society of Newspaper Editors. | The American Presidency Project \(ucsb.edu\)](https://www.americanpresidencyproject.org/address-the-chance-for-peace-delivered-before-the-american-society-of-newspaper-editors/)

⁸ <https://www.citizen.org/news/poll-likely-voters-overwhelmingly-oppose-more-pentagon-spending/>

⁹ <https://afsc.org/newsroom/new-national-poll-shows-majority-support-cuts-pentagon-spending>

WHEREAS, In June 2017, the United States Conference of Mayors, including Mayor Mike Duggan, unanimously passed a resolution calling upon all cities to hold public hearings on the ways that the federal defense budget hampers local spending on essential social services;¹⁰ and

WHEREAS, The Poor People’s Campaign,¹¹ the Cut the Pentagon Coalition,¹² and the Congressional Defense Spending Reduction Caucus¹³ have called for at least a 10 percent reduction in the defense budget to meet human needs at home; and

WHEREAS, Residents of Detroit have a right to know and publicly comment on how their tax dollars are spent and which services they want funded and prioritized; and

WHEREAS, Local governments are often unable to meet the needs of their constituents, partially as a result of lopsided federal priorities embodied in a federal budget that prioritizes defense spending over domestic investment in communities; and

WHEREAS, Detroit would benefit if the federal government spent less on the military and more on transportation, education, housing, healthcare, environmental protection, and public goods and services; and

WHEREAS, In his essential “Beyond Vietnam” speech, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. powerfully declared that “A nation that continues, year after year, to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death;”¹⁴ and

WHEREAS, U.S. Representatives Rashida Tlaib (D-MI-12) and Shri Thanedar (D-MI-13) are cosponsors of the People Over Pentagon Act of 2023 (H.R. 1134), which would remove \$100 billion from the Department of Defense budget;¹⁵ and

WHEREAS, On November 21, 2023, the Detroit City Council demonstrated its willingness to oppose military spending increases by asserting itself nationally as the largest U.S. city by population to call for a ceasefire in Gaza before several other major cities followed; **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED, That the Council of the City of Detroit calls on the U.S. Congress and the President to move significant funds from the military budget in order to fund social services and to hold in-depth public hearings on the basic human needs of City residents that are unmet because of government appropriations for the Pentagon; **NOW BE IT FINALLY**

RESOLVED, That the Detroit City Clerk’s Office provide a copy of this resolution to the Michigan delegation to the United States Congress and President Joe Biden.

¹⁰ https://www.codepink.org/moving_money_from_pentagon_to_cities

¹¹ [Our Demands – Poor People’s Campaign \(poorpeoplescampaign.org\)](https://poorpeoplescampaign.org)

¹² <https://peopleoverpentagon.org/about-us/>

¹³ <https://lee.house.gov/news/press-releases/reeps-lee-and-pocan-introduce-bill-to-cut-defense-spending-by-100-billion-and-prioritize-people-over-the-pentagon>

¹⁴ <https://www.nationalpriorities.org/blog/2022/01/17/martin-luther-king-jrs-internationalist-vision-more-crucial-ever/>

¹⁵ [H.R.1134 - 118th Congress \(2023-2024\): People Over Pentagon Act of 2023 | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](https://www.congress.gov/bills/118/house/1134/all-info)