

Rein in Pentagon Spending to Address the Nation's Real Security Needs

The Coronavirus pandemic has revealed that the country must evaluate how it prioritizes spending on keeping our people safe. The U.S. spends [more on its military than the next seven countries combined](#),¹ yet President Trump's FY 2021 budget request included \$741 billion in Pentagon spending. Congress should reject the increase to the Pentagon's already-bloated budget and seek cuts to top-line Pentagon spending. We need those resources for critical spending on underfunded programs related to weathering the pandemic, natural disasters, and climate change.

Spending Trade-offs

To pay for his proposed Pentagon budget, President Trump calls for major cuts to programs that seek to end and prevent conflict and address pressing health, community welfare, and security needs.

Instead the president's budget proposes cutting² :

- State Department funding by 21%
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funding by 16%
- Department of Education funding by 8%
- Housing and Urban Development funding by 15%
- Department of Transportation funding by 13%
- Department of Labor funding by 11%
- Health and Human Services funding by 9%
- Environmental Protection Agency funding by 26%³

These cuts would have severe impacts on programs already suffering from insufficient funding. The U.S. cannot afford this: we rank [39th in children's wellbeing](#),⁴ are facing a global pandemic, live in a world on the verge of climate catastrophe, and currently have over 40 million unemployed Americans. Now more than ever, we need a budget that represents people's priorities, not the defense industry's.

The Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) Slush Fund

The Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) budget is a massive slush fund; a budgetary gimmick that sidesteps mandatory budget caps meant to keep our nation's debt in check.

- While it was originally authorized as an emergency fund to cover unforeseen needs in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, it is now regularly used to pad baseline Pentagon spending.
- The fund notoriously lacks transparency, which allows the Pentagon to sidestep oversight and accountability standards that baseline Pentagon spending is subjected to.
- President Trump's FY 2021 budget request includes \$69 billion in OCO funding.

¹ Brenes, Michael and Michael Franczak, *2 Easy Ways to Shrink America's Overseas Footprint*, Foreign Policy, February 11, 2020

² Mayes, Brittany Renee, Jennifer Liberto and Damian Paletta, *What Trump proposed in his 2021 budget*, Washington Post, February 10, 2020.

³ Beitsch, Rebecca and Rachel Frazin, *Trump budget slashes EPA funding, environmental programs*, The Hill, February 10, 2020.

⁴ Howard, Jacqueline, *US ranks lower than 38 other countries when it comes to children's wellbeing, new report says*, CNN Health, February 18, 2020

Steps Members of Congress Can Take

- **Oppose any NDAA bill that does not cut Pentagon spending.**
- **Cosponsor [H. Res. 1003](#), introduced by Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA), to cut \$350 billion from the Pentagon budget.**
- **Oppose funding for the defense industry and non-health related Pentagon spending in Coronavirus legislation.**
- **Support eliminating the OCO slush fund.**