

Veterans For Peace Annual Lobby Days

May 18th-20th, 2015

Talking Points: Federal Defense Spending and the Better Off Budget

Audit the Pentagon: Year after year we see Pentagon spending taking over half of the discretionary budget that Congress appropriates each year. In an era of fiscal challenges, the Pentagon should have to exercise a little budget discipline too. Pentagon spending has nearly doubled over the last decade.

- The Pentagon is the only Federal Department that cannot conduct an audit. At \$51 Billion (President's Budget Request) this separate war spending fund would be the 5th largest federal agency in the government. But at the level of \$90 billion – what the House Budget Resolution just passed on March 25 – this war spending account is the 2nd largest federal agency (only exceeded by the Department of Defense).
- Pentagon spending is higher than it was during Vietnam and the entire Cold War.
- Lawmakers and the Pentagon have been using the war budget as a slush fund to circumvent spending caps and pay for items that should be in the base budget. Blindly allocating billions in war funds without specific details about how those funds will be used can only lead to wasteful spending. We cannot afford another war on the nation's credit card.
- Pentagon spending actually ranks last as a way to create jobs when compared to investing the same amount in healthcare, clean energy, or education. It is politically irresponsible to consider reductions in programs that strengthen our economy and benefit American families while turning a blind eye to obvious areas of potential saving in Pentagon spending

The Better Off Budget: When the federal budget invests resources wisely, we can meet the needs of working families and shrink the deficit. The Better Off Budget not only creates jobs, it reduces the deficit by \$4.08 trillion over the next 10 years. It's the right budget for the country, for working families and for our future.

- Creates 8.8 million jobs by 2017.
- Modernizes our defense posture to create sustainable baseline defense spending.
- Closes tax loopholes and ends subsidies provided to oil, gas and coal companies.
- Ends emergency funding for Overseas Contingency Operations.
- Calls for transparency in national security budgets to bring accountability to bulk data collection programs.
- Enhances federal programs targeted at creating equity and improving outcomes for women, people of color, and their families.
- Adopts a cost-of-living adjustment that takes into account realistic retiree expenses and fully funds veterans' programs in advance.