



Allegheny County Council

County of Allegheny
436 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone (412) 350-6490
Fax (412) 350-6499

Legislation Text

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Motion of the Council of Allegheny County expressing the sense of Council regarding Federal budgetary priorities, and advocating for prudent reallocation of certain funding.

WHEREAS, according to the World Bank, from 2010-2019, the United States' military spending fluctuated between \$633.8 billion and \$752.29 billion; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, the United States' military spending of \$731.75 billion accounted for 53% of the country's discretionary spending, greater than the discretionary amounts spent on science, food and agriculture, employment and labor, transportation, international affairs, energy and environment, education, health, veterans' services, housing and community, and general government *combined*; and

WHEREAS, the nation's military spending was \$690 billion for Fiscal Year 2020 according to the United States Treasury, and the budget for military spending in FY 2021 is approximately \$740 billion, a figure representing a 20% increase over the last four fiscal years; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, the United States spent almost ten times as much on its military than it did on education (\$74 billion), and roughly 20 times as much as it did on employment and labor (\$36 billion) or science (\$35 billion); and

WHEREAS, from 2015 through 2019 alone, the United States' military spending totaled over \$3.3 trillion; and

WHEREAS, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, also in 2019, the United States' military spending of \$731.75 billion was greater than the amount spent by the 10 next largest defense spenders in the world (Brazil, South Korea, Japan, The United Kingdom, Germany, France, Saudi Arabia, Russia, India, and China) *combined*, and was nearly double the total military spending of the other nations on Earth; and

WHEREAS, had the United States spent even 10% less on its military from 2015-2019, over \$300 billion would have been available for expenditure in other areas in that time period, and over \$3 trillion would still have been spent on the military; and

WHEREAS, it is the judgment of Council that continuing the current levels of military spending is neither sustainable nor well-conceived, as it diverts significant revenue from vitally important health, community development, educational, infrastructure improvement, transportation, environmental, and other functions; and

WHEREAS, within Congress, United States Representatives Barbara Lee of Texas and Mark Pocan of Wisconsin have established the Defense Spending Reduction Caucus specifically to organize efforts to reduce military spending in a prudent fashion; and

WHEREAS, on March 16, 2021, Representatives Lee, Pocan, and Jake Auchincloss of Massachusetts, together with approximately 50 of their fellow Representatives, urged President Biden to reduce Federal military spending in his proposed FY 2022 budget; and

WHEREAS, in that communication, Representative Lee noted: “[a]s we face a global pandemic and unprecedented economic crisis, the needs of American families far outweigh the need to continue feeding our bloated military defense budget. Analysis from experts across the political spectrum show that we can make significant cuts to our defense budget without compromising our national security or reducing the support, pay or benefits provided to our men and women in uniform and their families. This issue has broad based support from faith groups, conservatives and progressives alike. As Co-chairs of the Defense Spending Reduction Caucus, we are calling on the President to rebalance our priorities to build a safer, peaceful, and more prosperous world, at home and abroad.”; and

WHEREAS, in that same communication, Representative Pocan summarized the stark reality facing the nation: “[t]his crisis has proven that American national security should not be defined by the number of nuclear weapons collecting dust in storage, but by healthcare security, job security, housing security-the security of working families surviving with a roof over their heads, food on the table and money in the bank. We have a duty to invest in the American people more than we invest in defense contractor profits...”; and

WHEREAS, it is the judgment of Council that the security of the United States would be greatly enhanced by prudently curtailing military spending, and reallocating the revenue saved to the health and well-being of the country’s citizens, the strengthening of its communities, and the support of vitally important aspects of American economic and societal strength, including manufacturing, medical capabilities, labor and employment, science, infrastructure improvement and maintenance, and education;

The Council of the County of Allegheny therefore hereby moves as follows:

The Pennsylvania delegation to the United States Congress is hereby encouraged to undertake all reasonable efforts to reduce unnecessary military expenditures in the Federal budget for Fiscal Year 2022 and beyond, and to prudently reallocate those revenues to other endeavors that are no less vitally necessary for the continued vitality and strength of the nation and its communities.