Dear Member of Congress,

As Congress prepares to vote in the coming weeks on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and works to negotiate a spending agreement before the December 11 funding deadline, fiscal responsibility demands that lawmakers take every opportunity to oppose a reckless Pentagon spending increase and end the costly, unauthorized war with Iran.

So do voters. The midterm elections were a clear referendum on the Iran War and the unacceptable costs it has imposed on American taxpayers. Exit polls show that the Iran War was a major or crucial factor for 74 percent of voters.[1]

Now it's up to Congress to act on that mandate. Over the course of this year, Congress has repeatedly voted on and in some cases passed war powers resolutions directing the president to end the war. Those efforts, while an important means of registering congressional opposition, have failed to bring an end to the conflict.

Looking forward, the most important step lawmakers can take to end the war is opposing any Pentagon authorization or spending bill that increases Pentagon spending above the current $1 trillion budget.

In Fiscal Year 2026, Congress funded the Pentagon to the tune of just over $1 trillion, up from about $900 billion the year before. This year, the House and Senate versions of the NDAA would authorize $1.15 trillion, another massive increase. The Defense Appropriations Act that advanced out of the House Appropriations Committee this summer takes a similar approach. Greenlighting this increase would both embolden the administration to continue waging unauthorized wars, and enable it to continue funding them.

Going after the war spending itself is imperative. Blocking a topline Pentagon spending increase would force the Pentagon to prioritize investments in programs most critical to the nation's defense, which should necessarily exclude new funding for a strategically counterproductive war of choice in Iran. However, the pressing need to extricate the United States from this costly war should not overshadow broader reasons to oppose this Pentagon spending increase.

Pentagon spending was out of control long before the Iran War.

Over the first 25 years of this century, military spending grew by 48 percent adjusted for inflation.[2] Then this year alone, it grew by 18 percent. Far from making us safer, this excessive approach has effectively replaced the type of strategic thinking that national security depends on with an all-of-the-above approach that squanders taxpayer dollars on legacy systems that no longer make sense and emerging technology that too often overpromises and underdelivers. Rejecting another increase would force a strategic reckoning that would ultimately strengthen national security.

Reining in Pentagon spending is also critical for the nation's fiscal health. The nation is more than $40 trillion in debt, with interest payments on that debt surpassing $1 trillion annually. The public

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[1] "2026 Exit Polls." *NBC News*. Nov. 4, 2026. https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2026-elections/exit-polls

[2] Grazier, Dan, Julia Gledhill, and Geoff Wilson. "Current Defense Plans Require Unsustainable Future Spending." *The Henry L. Stimson Center*. July 16, 2024. https://www.stimson.org/2024/current-defense-plans-require-unsustainable-future-spending/

debt-to-GDP ratio has crossed the 100 percent threshold, raising the specter of a host of economic consequences, from rising interest rates to slower income growth to greater risk of an economic crisis.[3] This is itself a national security issue, as money spent on interest payments will increasingly crowd out the availability of funds for everything else, including the nation's defense.

Pumping the brakes on runaway Pentagon spending should begin this year with Congress rejecting another massive increase. However, our nation's long-term fiscal and national security depends on Congress taking on the difficult but necessary task of actually cutting wasteful Pentagon spending from the current budget.

In July, Taxpayers for Common Sense and the Project on Government Oversight released a joint cut list detailing over $518 billion in potential cuts to procurement and research programs in the Pentagon's budget request that Congress could make without harming national security.[4] We hope this can serve as a guide for lawmakers working to negotiate a more fiscally responsible Pentagon spending agreement whether during the lame duck session or in the next Congress.

In the meantime, we urge all lawmakers to speak out and vote against any Pentagon authorization or spending bills that increase Pentagon spending above the current $1 trillion budget. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Steve Ellis
President

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[3] Haring, Jordan. "Examining the Consequences of a High and Rising National Debt." *American Action Forum*. Dec. 15, 2025. https://www.americanactionforum.org/insight/examining-the-consequences-of-a-high-and-rising-national-debt/

[4] Murphy, Gabe, Greg Williams, and Virginia Burger. "How to Cut Half a Trillion Dollars from the Pentagon Budget Request and Strengthen National Security." *Taxpayers for Common Sense.* July 2, 2026. https://www.taxpayer.net/national-security/how-to-cut-half-a-trillion-dollars-from-the-pentagon-budget-request-and-strengthen-national-security/