

## **Invest in Communities, Not Violence**

November 2023

For far too long, the U.S. has clung to a budget that prioritizes war, deportations and detentions, and policing at the expense of human needs. It's time to reinvest these taxpayer dollars into real human needs — healthcare, education, housing, and a just energy transition to name a few. Here's how legislators have splurged on militarism, and what could happen if those funds instead benefited people and communities.

### **\$1.1 Trillion on Militarism in FY 2023**

In FY 2023, out of a **\$1.8 trillion** federal discretionary budget, **\$1.1 trillion — or 62%** — was for militarized programs, including war and the military, deportations and detentions, and prisons and policing.

- Less than **\$2 out of every \$5** in federal discretionary spending was available to fund positive investments in people and communities.
- The U.S. spent **\$16** on the military and war **for every \$1** that was spent on diplomacy and humanitarian foreign aid.
- The U.S. spent **\$51.1 billion** for homeland security, half of which goes to the agencies responsible for detentions and deportations, Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE, **\$8.8 billion**) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP, **\$17.4 billion**). This is nearly triple the spending for substance abuse and mental health programs.
- The U.S. federal budget allocated **twice as much** for federal law enforcement, which includes federal prisons, the FBI and other law enforcement agencies (**\$31 billion**), as for child care and early childhood education programs (**\$15 billion**).
- Since 2001, the U.S. has added **\$2** to the discretionary budget for militarism **for every \$1** added to invest in communities.

### **\$21 Trillion on Militarism Over Twenty Years**

In the two decades following 9/11, the U.S. spent **\$21 trillion** on foreign and domestic militarism.

- Over those twenty years **\$16 trillion** went to the Pentagon and **more than half** of that, **\$7.2 trillion**, went to Pentagon contractors.
- In its first twenty years, spending on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reached **\$1.4 trillion**. Of that, about one-third, **\$442 billion**, went to ICE and CBP.
- In the span of twenty years, spending on ICE and CBP **more than doubled**, from **\$12 billion** in FY 2002 to more than **\$25 billion** in FY 2021, adjusted for inflation.
- Federal prison funding has increased by **more than 11 times** since 1976, exploding from **\$901 million** in 1976 to **\$10 billion** in 2021, adjusted for inflation. The number of people

incarcerated in federal prisons increased ninefold, from **24,000** in 1980 to more than **219,000** by 2013.

### **The Human Costs of Militarism**

- The post-9/11 wars have contributed to **4.5 million** deaths, including **thousands** of U.S. troops and civilian contractors, and the displacement of **38 million** people.
- More than **5 million** people have been deported since the founding of DHS. There have been at least **287** fatal encounters with CBP since 2010.
- Every year, **hundreds of thousands** of immigrants are locked up in over **200** ICE detention centers, where they often face abusive conditions while they await determination of their immigration status.
- In 2022, police killed **1,239** people — more than 3 people per day.
- There are **1.9 million** people currently incarcerated in the U.S.

### **A Better World is Possible (and Affordable)**

- A **\$100 billion** annual cut to military spending **could have gone towards**:
  - **10 times as many households receiving public housing (10.39 million)**, or
  - **More than 1 in 3 children aged 0-5** going to Head Start (**7.81 million**), or
  - **Nearly 1 in 3 veterans** receiving medical care (**5.88 million**), or
  - **More than 7 in 10 uninsured adults** receiving health care (**20.24 million**), or
  - Solar power for **every household** in the U.S. (**131.2 million**), with billions of dollars to spare
- For the nearly **\$26 billion** that ICE and CBP received in 2023, **we could** hire **230,000** registered nurses to address shortages, provide early childhood education for **more than half a million** kids, or build solar farms to power **more than half the nation's households**.
- Over the long term, reinvesting in human needs over militarism could be transformative. For far less than the **\$21 trillion spent on militarism in the 20 years** after 9/11, the **U.S. could allocate** enough funds to do ALL of the following:
  - **\$4.5 trillion** to **fully decarbonize** the U.S. electric grid
  - **\$2.3 trillion** to create 5 million jobs at \$15 per hour with benefits and cost-of-living adjustments for 10 years
  - **\$1.7 trillion** to **erase student debt**
  - **\$449 billion** to **continue the extended Child Tax Credit** for another 10 years
  - **\$200 billion** to **guarantee free preschool** for every 3-and-4-year old for 10 years, and raise teacher pay