



EXPLAINER



Ten Better Uses for Ten Percent of the Pentagon Budget

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As part of the annual must-pass military spending and policy bill (the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, or “NDAA”), progressive lawmakers have put forward a proposal to cut the massive \$740 billion Pentagon budget by 10 percent.

With the Pentagon budget at historically high levels, and with additional increases under President Trump, a ten percent cut is an overdue correction to the bloated Pentagon budget.

While the Pentagon will spend [close to \\$74 billion](#) on our endless wars this year, a 10% cut to the Pentagon (\$74 billion), could be reinvested in:

1. **Ending Homelessness:** House every one of the more than [half a million](#) homeless people in this country with money to spare.¹
2. **Infrastructure Jobs:** Create more than [one million good jobs](#) in cities like Flint, Michigan, building desperately needed new infrastructure.
3. **COVID testing:** Conduct [2 billion](#) additional COVID tests, compared to the [46 million](#) done so far – that’s 44 times as many tests, or enough to offer six free COVID tests to every person in the United States.
4. **Racial Equity in Schools:** Close the [\\$23 billion funding gap](#) between majority-white and majority non-white school districts.
5. **Free College:** Fund free college educations for more than [2 million](#) low income students, or the poorest [ten percent](#) of current college students.
6. **Clean Energy:** Fund enough [renewable energy](#) to power almost [every household](#) in the US.
7. **Green Jobs:** Create [one million](#) well-paying clean energy jobs, enough to transition nearly every worker in the [traditional coal, oil, and gas sectors](#)
8. **Teachers:** Hire [900,000](#) new public elementary school teachers, adding about [nine new teachers](#) to every public elementary school in the country.
9. **COVID unemployment relief:** Purchase enough N95 face masks for all of the 55 million essential workers to use one a day for more than a year.
10. **Face Masks:** Purchase enough [N95 face masks](#) for all of the [55 million](#) essential workers to use one a day for more than a year.

A \$74 billion cut is a strong step toward better spending priorities, and could make a tremendous difference in other programs ranging from health care and education to job creation at a time when it is desperately needed.

¹ Assuming an annual cost of \$30,000 per person, in keeping with high-end estimates from the [Urban Institute](#).