

Dear Members of Congress:

Federal spending restraints are a constant topic in the midst of both a struggling economy and growing concerns about the deficit and debt. While there is an effort to cut spending across the broad array of annual discretionary spending programs, Pentagon spending, which comprises 56% of the discretionary budget in the FY 2012 Request, continues to grow. Without cuts to Pentagon spending, even very deep cuts to all other discretionary funding taken together will fall far short of alleviating deficit spending and the rising debt. Pentagon spending needs to be on the table as we consider our fiscal future.

As a community of advocates, we are committed to creating good jobs here in America, providing our families with security and building a brighter future for our children. If we invest some of the billions we spend on the military in other sectors of our economy, we would actually generate MORE jobs, strengthening the middle class and protecting essential services that help our families. Economists at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst found that public dollars invested in clean energy, health care, and education all create significantly more jobs within the U.S. economy than investing an equivalent amount in the military.\*\* As we struggle with high unemployment rates across the nation, this is a critical point to consider.

We want a safe and secure nation. The safety of our residents is of utmost importance. We are committed to providing for those who serve our country. Proposals to cut military spending should not threaten these priorities. But the Pentagon budget should not be immune from oversight and fiscal responsibility. Like any other department, the Pentagon must be held accountable for its spending and be able to prove that its programs are a worthwhile use of our limited tax dollars.

We believe budget decisions reflect our values, and we believe that we can responsibly reduce military spending without compromising our nation's security. We can shift from spending on outdated, unnecessary weapons to investments in projects that keep us secure and help us prosper- first responders, teachers, bridges, roads, and rails. As you face some of the most difficult budgeting challenges in our nation's history, we urge you to consider responsible cuts to military spending.

Sincerely,

\*\*The U.S. Employment Effects of Military and Domestic Spending Priorities: An Updated Analysis, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Department of Economics (October 2009)