

December 3, 2020

Presidential Transition Team  
Herbert C. Hoover Building  
1401 Constitution Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Transition Team,

As faith-based organizations from across the United States, representing many different faith traditions, we call on you and the incoming Administration to hold to campaign promises while developing the government's budget for fiscal year 2022. Throughout his campaign, President-elect Biden has committed to investment in green energy and sustainable infrastructure<sup>1</sup>, in affordable healthcare, and in economic support for people struggling with the effects of the pandemic<sup>2</sup>. These are essential investments- and we can find the money we need to "Build Back Better" by cutting the bloated Pentagon budget.

We are called by our faith traditions to prioritize caring for people, and to turn away from violence and corruption. The Hebrew Bible calls people "stewards" of the land, urges them to feed the hungry and care for the poor, and prophesies nations forging their "swords into ploughshares."

Whether the President is prioritizing creating jobs, addressing climate change, or repairing relationships with other nations, cutting Pentagon spending is part of the solution. Defense sector spending is notoriously inefficient at job creation- spending in education or healthcare can create double the number of jobs for the same investment<sup>3</sup>. The Pentagon emits more greenhouse gasses than many countries<sup>4</sup>, and has been devastating communities abroad in endless and unnecessary wars.

Instead of spending money on weapons and war, we need to be investing in things that address the urgency of climate change and build resilient communities- including clean energy and sustainable infrastructure. Ensuring that low-income and marginalized communities have the infrastructure they need for clean air, water, broadband, and public transportation is key. As the

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<sup>1</sup>[The Biden Plan to Build a Modern, Sustainable Infrastructure and an Equitable Clean Energy Future](#). 2020. *Joe Biden for President: Official Campaign Website*.

<sup>2</sup> [Build Back Better: Joe Biden's Jobs and Economic Recovery Plan for Working Families](#). 2020. *Joe Biden for President: Official Campaign Website*.

<sup>3</sup> Garrett-Peltier, H., [War Spending and Lost Opportunities](#). *Brown University*.

<sup>4</sup> Crawford, N.C., 2020. [Pentagon Fuel Use, Climate Change, and the Costs of War](#). *Brown University*.

Biden campaign plan acknowledges, addressing climate change and sustainable infrastructure will put the country on a path to a more equitable future- and create good jobs at the same time.<sup>5</sup>

We also need reductions in the Pentagon budget in order to invest in public health- an especially essential investment in this time of pandemic. Everyone must have access to affordable, quality healthcare. The administration should prioritize funding testing and treatment for COVID, and expansion of Medicaid.

By reducing Pentagon spending, we would also free up funds to invest in foreign assistance, diplomacy, and peacebuilding. Conflict can be solved in nonviolent ways when we address the root causes like global hunger and poverty, and use our nonviolent, sustainable foreign policy tools like diplomacy and peacebuilding. We must reduce the bloated Pentagon budget, and instead invest in real solutions for communities experiencing conflict.

As the United States works to recover from the economic and public health disaster of COVID-19, it is essential that we invest in clean energy and infrastructure, healthcare, and jobs, instead of giving handouts to defense contractors and pouring taxpayer dollars into endless wars. This year, the Biden Administration must develop a budget that cuts the topline Pentagon budget, eliminates the unaccountable Overseas Contingencies Operations (OCO) fund, and re-invests that money into a sustainable, healthy, and peaceful recovery for our communities.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Baptists  
American Friends Service Committee  
Bridges Faith Initiative  
Center on Conscience & War  
Christian Peacemaker Teams  
Church World Service  
Church of the Brethren, Office of Peacebuilding and Policy  
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach  
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces  
Disciples Center for Public Witness  
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries  
Franciscan Action Network  
Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)  
InterReligious Task Force on Central America  
Islamic Society of North America  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

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<sup>5</sup> [The Biden Plan to Build a Modern, Sustainable Infrastructure and an Equitable Clean Energy Future.](#) 2020. *Joe Biden for President: Official Campaign Website.*

National Council of Churches  
Pax Christi USA  
Pennsylvania Council of Churches  
Presbyterian Church Office of Public Witness  
Presbyterian Peace Fellowship  
Provincial Council Clerics of St. Viator  
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Justice Team  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas NH  
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries