Dear Washington State Representatives and Senators:

We are from organizations in the diverse communities you represent. This spring when you passed the state budget, it was a painful challenge for you. In November you face the task of making yet more drastic cuts, at the same time that the Congressional Super Committee is mandated to make deep cuts in the federal budget. This will in turn cause even greater pain and insecurity in our communities. It is time for bold solutions. The suffering is intolerable.

We urge you to take a stand against further cuts by passing a Joint Memorial to the President and Congress, much like the US Conference of Mayors’ resolution of June 20, 2011 which, “... calls on the President and US Congress to end the wars as soon as strategically possible and bring the war dollars home to meet vital human needs, promote job creation, rebuild our infrastructure, aid municipal and state governments, and develop a new economy based upon renewable, sustainable energy and reduce our federal debt.”

A look at the federal budget reveals both a major cause of and potential solution to our budget crisis. Over half of federal discretionary funding goes to the military. Washington State taxpayers have already paid $28 Billion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, with another $3.8 Billion proposed for the 2011 fiscal budget. (National Priorities Project, June 2011)

Have these huge expenditures made us more secure? We need jobs. The unemployment rate in this state as of April 2011 is 8.9%. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics) We need education. Nearly $2 Billion of new cuts impact education, most hitting our K-12 children. (KUOW - NPR, May 27, 2011) We need health care. This budget slashed health care for hundreds of thousands of low-income Washingtonians. Many more cuts -- including to jobs, housing, libraries, transportation, arts and culture, renewable energy and the environment -- are all too familiar to you.

If we were to spend our tax dollars on the needs of our communities, we would build real security. This year’s war appropriations from Washington alone could hire 57,146 elementary school teachers or provide 2.3 million low-income children with healthcare or give 500,087 scholarships to university students! (National Priorities Project) We have not experienced major environmental disasters and rising sea levels, but those threats loom over our children’s future. As Washingtonians, we MUST wean our state from dependence on military income, and use the funds instead to support a sustainable future for all our residents.

A majority of Americans call for an end to the wars. (ABC News/ Washington Post poll, March 2011) We call for deep cuts in military spending and for restoring federal funds for human needs. (Reuters poll, March 2011) As our state representatives, your voices can make a crucial difference in redirecting some of the bloated military budget back to our struggling state. We will stand with you when you arrange a budget priorities meeting between state and federal representatives, and when you support a Joint Memorial calling on our federal government to invest in our real wealth – the people, workers, children, veterans, elderly, and the environment of our State.

Inspire us with hope in our future. We’re counting on you to help BRING OUR BILLIONS HOME!

Sincerely,

Susan Segall
Regional Director
American Friends Service Committee

Ellen Finkelman
Organizer
Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation
Based on President Obama’s 2012 federal discretionary budget sent to Congress in February 2011. Percentages are rounded to create this image.
Lynn Magnuson  
United Methodist Church  

Maxine S. Manning  
Broadview Community UCC  

Brian Martel  
University Friends Meeting  

Henry W. McGee Jr.  
Professor of Law, Seattle University  
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Amanda McKeraghan  
Director, Stevens County Libraries*  

The Reverend David Mesenbring  
Saint Mark’s Episcopal Church  

Rev. Sharon L. Moe  
Superintendent - Tacoma District, Pacific Northwest Conference The United Methodist Church  

Margaret Nisly  
Seattle Mennonite Church  

Weldon Nisly  
Pastor, Seattle Mennonite Church  

Liz Norton  
Washington CAN!  

Seattle City Councilman Mike O’Brien  
City of Seattle Council Position 8  

Elliott O’Sheehan  
Community Organizer for Social Justice  

Robin Olson  
AFCW Local 21  

Keith Orchard  
Veterans for Peace  

Estella Ortega  
Executive Director, El Centro de la Raza  

Aaron Ostrom  
Executive Director, Fuse Washington  

Jim Page  
Associate Member, Veterans for Peace  

Dan Pens  
University Friends Meeting  

Daniel Peplow, PhD  
Rancher, White Swan  

Ruby Phillips  

Reverend Timothy Phillips  
Seattle First Baptist Church  

Mary Margaret Pruitt  
Retired School Nurse  

Paul Pruitt  
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Polic e Accountability Chair, NAACP/Seattle Chapter  

Bill Shaver  
Seattle Mennonite Church  

Patricia Shaver  
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Beverly Sims  
Health Educator, Renton  

Sandra Smith  
University Friends Meeting  

Dr. Vicki Sonntag  
EcoPraxis  

Douglas Sorin  
Marketing and Communications Coordinator, Faith Trust Institute  

Mary Spokane  
Move to Amend - Olympia  

Terri Stephens  
University Friends Meeting  

Pastor Dan Stern  
Broadview Community UCC  

Neurita Steward  
SEIU 775 NW, Spokane  

Melissa Stone  
Our Marysville  

Anne Sunrise  
Olympia  

Ray Thomas  
University of Washington Medical Center  

Megan A. Thompson  
Community Organizer  

Dr. Michael Trice  
Associate Dean of Theology and Ministry, Seattle University  

Ron Turner  
University Friends Meeting  

Heather Villanuen  
Community Organizer  

Greg Voelker  
Olympia  

Reverend Harriett Walden  
Mothers for Police Accountability  

Thea Ward  
Broadview Community UCC  

Thomas Ward  
Broadview Community UCC  

*organization listed for identification purposes only
Cliff Wells  
12st LD Snohomish Democrats  
USMC Post Vietnam

Geraldine Welsh  
Community Activist, Seattle

Andrew Westerhold  
Licensed Acupuncturist

Nicole Williams  
SEIU 775 Spokane

Sam Wilson  
Broadview Community UCC

Alice Woldt  
Director, Washington Association of Churches

Abby Wolfe  
SEIU 925

Michael Woo  
Director, Got Green

Heather Yancey  
University Friends Meeting

Ruth Yarrow  
Co-President, Abe Keller Peace Education Fund

Michael Yarrow  
Co-President, Abe Keller Peace Education Fund

Lea Zengage  
Director  
Justice Works!

*organization listed for identification purposes only