



# U.S. Military Spending

Historically, military spending has been the single largest portion of Federal Funds budget. Since World War II, the percentage that goes to the military — current and past spending — has varied from 45 to 90 percent.

## U.S. Federal Funds Budget

Income tax money goes only into the Federal Funds part of the budget. The percentages are federal funds, which do not include trust funds such as Social Security that are raised and spent separately from income taxes. What you pay (or don't pay) with your income tax return by April 15 goes only to the federal funds portion of the budget. "Current military" spending (\$948 billion for FY 2020) adds together money allocated for the Dept. of Defense plus the military portion from other parts of the budget (e.g., Dept. of Energy maintains nuclear weapons). "Past military" (\$696 billion for FY 2020) represents veterans' benefits plus much of the interest on the debt (largely created by past wars and enormous military budgets).

For the latest budget breakdowns, see *Where Your Income Tax Money Really Goes*.

## What About the "Good" Parts of the Budget?

Often people are concerned that by not paying federal taxes they will also be withdrawing their support from human services programs like food stamps, housing, education and public transportation. Therefore, some people withhold only the percentage of their tax money that goes to the military. But the government does not allow you to designate the purpose for which your tax money is used. A percentage of whatever you pay will be used for military expenditures.

One way to gain control of your tax money is not to voluntarily submit it to the government. Most war tax resisters redirect their tax money (both the military and non-military portions) to programs that meet human needs. By doing so, more money goes directly to socially useful programs than by paying through the tax system.

## How Is Federal Income Tax Collected?

During every payroll period, workers have a portion of their salary removed and sent to the Federal government. This procedure, called "withholding," is meant to add up to the worker's total tax due for one calendar year. Thus when income tax forms are filed on April 15 taxpayers should owe or be refunded only a small amount. What you pay in withholding throughout the year and any additional amount on April 15 goes to the Federal Funds part of the budget. Other sources of Federal Funds income include federal taxes on tobacco, alcohol, telephone service, corporations, customs, estates, etc.

Each year when the government announces the budget, they mix Federal Funds with Trust Funds (such as Social Security), to create a "Unified Budget." But in reality, Trust Funds are completely separated from Federal Funds. Trust Funds are collected separately, held in trust by the government and are not part of the Congressional spending authority (although Congress will authorize borrowing from these funds; some self-employed resisters refuse to pay into Social Security because of this borrowing). The presentation of a Unified Budget began during the Vietnam War and is misleading, because it makes the human needs part of the Budget seem larger and the military portion seem smaller.

## How Could Our Tax Money Be Used?

You can only spend money once. If our tax dollars are spent on the military, they cannot be used to meet basic human needs. At a time when people in the U.S. suffer — from hunger, poor health care, insufficient day care, substandard housing, inadequate mass transportation, deficient education, meager pollution control, and an inefficient profit-oriented energy program — it is easy to see how money could be better spent.

Many argue that military spending creates jobs, but dollar-for-dollar the same amount of money creates nearly twice as many jobs in education or health care as in the military. Additionally, military-related jobs do not result in socially useful goods. Millions of people are underfed, unemployed and homeless while billions of dollars are spent to fuel, house and store weapons, tanks, planes and ships, and to recruit and train our youth in the ways of war. Skilled scientists and engineers are perfecting methods of destruction rather than developing products that improve the quality of life. In addition, taxpayers end up paying again to clean up after the military — one of the worst polluters on the planet.

We cannot know all the ways that military spending negatively affects our economy, but we know that it fuels inflation and is the biggest contributor to the deficit.

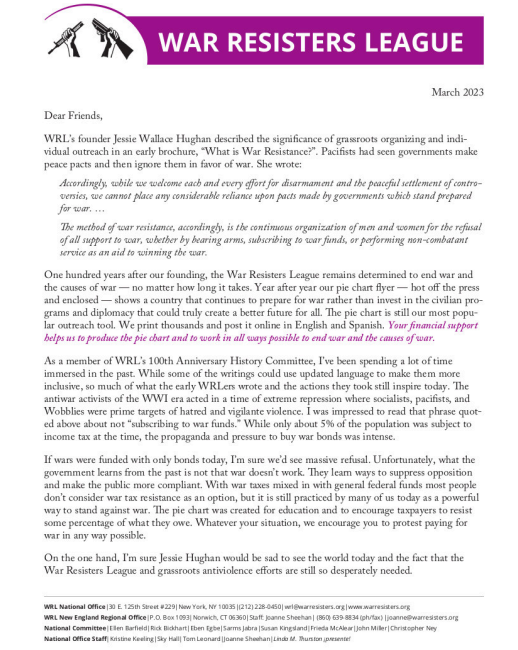
Perhaps the most disastrous effect of military spending is that countries around the world are encouraged to buy more weapons. Increased militarization contributes to the escalation of international tensions resulting in numerous conflicts. Each day thousands die of hunger as scarce resources are diverted to arms. Who knows which violent conflict might lead to the next major war?

## More information and resources on War Tax Resistance:

- [What is War Tax Resistance?](#)
- [How To Resist War Taxes](#)
- [Consequences of War Tax Resistance](#)
- [U.S. Military Spending](#)
- [History of War Tax Resistance](#)
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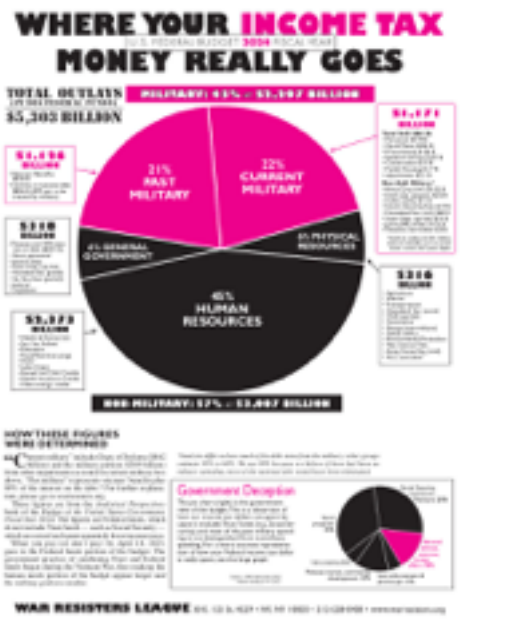
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WRL's famous "pie chart" flyer, *Where Your Income Tax Money Really Goes*



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And there's almost 2 more weeks to take action!  
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