

Talking points Our National Priorities and the Federal Budget

- Leaders in Washington, DC are talking about ways to cut federal spending. While there is an effort to cut spending across the broad array of annual discretionary spending programs, military spending, which comprises 56% of the discretionary budget in the FY 2012 Request, continues to grow. If Congress only focuses on non-defense spending, even deep cuts will barely make a dent in overall spending levels.
- Defense Secretary Gates says, "We can't hold ourselves exempt from the belt-tightening. Neither can we allow ourselves to contribute to the very debt that puts our long-term security at risk."
- Without even including the costs of the wars we are fighting, the Pentagon budget has risen by nearly 50% in real terms over the past 12 years.
- Nearly every group that came together to address the deficit last year, including the Bowles-Simpson Commission, agreed that military spending must be reined in.
- **Investing our tax dollars in non-military sectors would create *more* jobs.** University of Massachusetts economists studied how many jobs could be created with \$1 billion of federal spending, and found some amazing results; every other sector did better than military spending! Yes - investing in education, healthcare, mass transit, weatherization, or middle-class tax cuts creates more jobs with our budget dollars!
- (please personalize) In the state of (your state), we're facing challenging state budget issues right now. We know that more federal dollars invested in (our schools, our healthcare system, our hospitals, community care for seniors, our trauma network, light rail, public transit, energy efficiency, weatherization etc) would bring jobs and the great benefits of much needed services for our citizens. Congress needs to hear from us about sensible budget priorities!
- I have joined with fellow legislators to send a message to Congress. Across the nation, over 330 women legislators have joined in signing a letter to our Members of Congress, urging that any serious conversation about federal spending must address sensible reductions to military spending. Experts agree that we can be safe and secure at home while still reducing military spending. Now I'd say that's TRUE national security that we can rely on!