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- National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs
- National Women's Political Caucus
- Older Women's League
- Ploughshares Fund
- Unitarian Universalist Association
- Women's Campaign Fund
- Women's Policy Group
- Women USA Fund, Inc.
- YWCA of the USA

WILL is a program of WAND
(Women's Action for New Directions)

www.wand.org

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Dear Members of Congress:

We write today to share our concerns regarding the dangerously ill-advised priorities in our country's security spending. In the budget request for Fiscal Year 2009, the Administration has proposed increasing Pentagon spending by \$29 billion beyond inflationary growth when compared to FY08 levels. *Security is the most important responsibility of elected officials.* We urge you to redirect the proposed increase for the Department of Defense and the nuclear weapons-related activities of the Department of Energy to programs that will keep Americans safe and healthy at home.

Increasing funding for the Pentagon, while cutting funds for vital security programs, does not make Americans more secure; nor does it reflect the values of the public. The Administration's request for the Department of Defense and the nuclear weapons portion of the Department of Energy is \$541 billion for FY09, 7.5% more than last year's budget request. (This does not include the \$200 billion or more that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are expected to cost in FY09.) We believe this is not the best use of our federal tax dollars.

Disasters like 9/11 and the Minneapolis bridge collapse laid bare many of the shortcomings in America's crumbling infrastructure. In a post-Katrina era, we know the consequences of budget shortfalls for emergency preparedness. We need increases, not cuts, for things that would help us respond more effectively to domestic disasters. Instead, the proposed FY09 budget request cuts funds to cities and states for security, law enforcement, firefighters and emergency medical teams by 47 percent, or \$1 billion.

We call upon Congress to increase our emergency preparedness, to support public health services, and to improve the security of our ports, chemical plants and public transportation infrastructure. Without adequate federal funding, state and local governments will shoulder increasingly debilitating burdens to meet these critical needs.

We need to provide real security to Americans on other levels, as well. We need to safeguard our children's health (through SCHIP), and do all we can to invest federal funds in programs that create jobs and stimulate the economy. And we do better with money in public projects. A recent economic study from the University of Massachusetts - Amherst* found that *investing federal funds in public projects (such as transportation and health care) yields more jobs and economic return than investing in the military.* It is time to consider a new approach to our future security and economic stability.

As elected officials from state legislatures across the country, we want our neighbors and constituents to be safe and economically secure. We want to provide that assurance in sustainable, measurable, and affordable ways. We ask you to work with us to meet the needs of our citizens.

Sincerely,

339 Women State Legislators from across the country
(see following pages)

*Alternative Public Spending: Effects on Job Creation, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Economics Department (October 2007)

SAVE THE DATE!

WAND/WiLL National Conference 2009

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