To all U.S. Senators and Representatives:

As you work on the upcoming appropriations decisions this year, we, the undersigned women state legislators, ask you to consider the profound impact these decisions will have on our ability to balance state budgets, meet the needs of our residents, and invest in future generations.

To rebuild America from the devastation of the COVID-19 crisis, we need to rethink how we define security. For too long, Congress has allocated half of our discretionary tax dollars to the Pentagon. Yet this spending did not prevent the spread of this deadly pandemic, protect our frontline workers from dying, or stop a massive recession. And women, in particular, bear the brunt of the economic downturn compounded by the lack of social safety net. As a nation that prides itself on its global leadership, the past year has been eye-opening and disheartening.

That’s why we are urging you to shift our spending priorities away from weapons and war fighting and towards investments in our country’s recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. It’s time to show the world new leadership that focuses on building the well-being of our people, not the war machine.

We are asking you to:
- Pause funding for nuclear weapon systems upgrades
- Decrease topline defense spending by 10%
- Terminate wasteful defense contracts that finance redundant construction projects and produce surplus military equipment and weapons

For each unnecessary Pentagon project, there is an opportunity cost. For example, the price tag for dangerous new missile systems is $100 billion, which could instead pay 1.24 million elementary school teacher salaries for a year or cover 7.38 million four-year university scholarships. We encourage investments in programs that create economic power for all Americans. Federal investments in clean energy, education, and healthcare all create more jobs per dollar than funds put towards war-spending.

By reining in out of control Pentagon spending we can divert funds to prevent another deadly catastrophe, the climate crisis. The military is the largest institutional consumer of fossil fuels in the world and emits more greenhouse gasses than Portugal. For over 30 years, both parties have addressed climate change as the national security threat that it is.

Under the guise of patriotism and national security the Pentagon budget has grown unchecked for decades, enriching defense contractors while leaving the American people unprotected against daily threats and indignities. Despite a long history of waste, fraud, and failed audits, its budget has been increased every single year. Many American families have had to tighten their belts and learn to live with less this year, it is time for the Pentagon to do the same.

Sincerely,
The Undersigned State Legislators
Fund Communities, Build Security: Women Legislators for Strategic Budgeting

Alaska
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson

Colorado
Representative Yadira Caraveo
Representative Lisa Cutter
Representative Cathy Kipp

Connecticut
Senator Marilyn Moore

Florida
Representative Angie Nixon

Georgia
Senator Nan Grogan Orrock
Representative Becky Evans
Representative Kim Schofield

Hawaii
Representative Amy Perruso
Representative Tina Wildberger

Illinois
Representative Carol Ammons
Representative Robyn Gabel
Representative Rita Mayfield
Representative Joyce Mason

Indiana
Representative Patricia Boy

Iowa
Representative Marti Anderson

Kansas
Senator Pat Pettey

Maine
Representative Valli Geiger
Representative Amy Roeder
Representative Maureen Terry

Maryland
Delegate Pamela Queen
Delegate Sheila Ruth
Delegate Julie Palakovich Carr
Delegate Nicole Williams

Massachusetts
Representative Mindy Domb
Representative Natalie Higgins
Representative Lindsay Sabadosa

Minnesota
Senator Jennifer McEwen
Representative Rena Moran

Missouri
Representative Ingrid Burnett

Montana
Representative Mary Ann Dunwell
Representative Andrea Olsen

New Hampshire
Representative Heidi Hamer
Representative Nicole Klein Knight
Representative Lee Oxenham
Representative Ellen Read

New Mexico
Senator Mimi Stewart
Representative Deborah Armstrong
Representative Debbie Sarinana

New York
Senator Alessandra Biaggi

North Dakota
Representative Mary Schneider

Ohio
Representative Catherine Ingram
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Representative Dacia Grayber

Rhode Island
Senator Kendra Anderson
Senator Meghan Kellman

South Carolina
Representative Annie McDaniel

Tennessee
Senator Heidi Campbell

Texas
Representative Toni Rose

Utah
Senator Jani Iwamoto
Representative Elizabeth Weight

Vermont
Representative Sara Coffey
Representative Kimberly Jessup
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Senator Lena Taylor
Representative Lisa Subeck