POWER OF THE PURSE
Women Legislators for a Principled Budget
To all U.S. Senators and Representatives:

As women legislators, we represent millions of people in diverse communities across the country. We work frequently with our partners in Congress to create policies and programs that reflect our shared responsibility to strengthen America. As you work on upcoming appropriations decisions—we ask that you consider the profound impact it will have on our ability to serve our constituents and especially the impact this proposal would have on women.

As elected officials, we are using our collective voice to urge you to not accept drastic cuts to domestic programs without first considering cuts to our bloated Pentagon budget. Budgets are a statement of values, and this budget shows us the President values big corporations, defense contractors who profit from war, and making life easier for his rich friends. We, however, value investments in education, HHS, and HUD—programs Trump has cut over the last four years to continue wasteful forever wars. The strength of our nation is not measured by the countless military missions we fight overseas but in the fights elected officials wage to invest in our constituents.

The glaring emphasis on making cuts to non-defense discretionary spending does not align with pressing state priorities. Cuts to the Department of Health and Human Services impact all regions—from urban centers to rural areas. Chronic illnesses cost the United States approximately $5,300 per person per year, attributing to 90 percent of the country’s health expenditures. Rather than cutting health funds, the President’s budget should be putting more money into safety-net hospitals, telemedicine efforts, and initiatives aimed at preventative care. Over 700 women die every year from pregnancy-related complications, two-thirds of which are preventable. If the President’s aim is to secure our nation, securing access to healthcare is an important step in that direction.

Since 2015, the share of federal spending on K-12 education has dropped by 12 percent. In particular, funding for school construction has stalled, while nearly half of school buildings nationwide are over 50 years old. Crumbling structures, busted ventilation systems, and old pipes affect how children learn. Providing more funding for school construction projects is a step towards closing the education gap.

The cost of state response to natural disasters and mitigation has increased for the third straight decade, putting a squeeze on state budgets when we are looking to provide affordable housing and fund public pensions. Pre-disaster efforts provide not only savings to states but also to the federal government. We call on Congress to provide that funding by redirecting money that would otherwise go to building new nuclear weapons (we hope to never use), retiring old planes (that are perfectly fine), and staying in endless wars (we were supposed to be done fighting).

The administration argues that the proposed budget will further strengthen and protect the nation. However, the Overseas Contingency Operations fund remains one of Washington’s obvious slush funds where resources are squirreled away under the guise of emergency funding for combat. While the Department of Defense seeks to hoard funds that the Pentagon cannot even account for, money for SNAP, CHIP, and other sorely needed domestic programs are on the chopping block. Families, especially those with a single breadwinner, will bear the brunt of those cuts.

Across the country, women sit down at the kitchen table every day to make tough choices as they craft their family’s budget and put their hard-earned money where it makes the most sense. This budget proposal does not honor the sacrifices these families make. Instead it draws us deeper and deeper into perpetual war under the guise of national security. The goal of national security cannot be fully met without ensuring that the 372 million people living in the U.S. are secure in their home and health.
Sincerely, The Undersigned State Legislators

Alaska State Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson
Alaska State Representative Harriet Drummond

Alabama State Representative Merika Coleman

Colorado State Representative KC Becker
Colorado State Representative Lisa Cutter
Colorado State Representative Cathy Kipp
Colorado State Representative Brianna Titone

Connecticut State Senator Marilyn Moore
Connecticut State Representative Anne Hughes
Connecticut State Representative Susan Johnson
Connecticut State Representative Robyn Porter

Delaware State Representative Elizabeth Lockman

Florida State Senator Lori Berman
Florida State Representative Kamia Brown
Florida State Representative Fentrice Driskell
Florida State Representative Patricia Williams

Georgia State Senator Gloria Butler
Georgia State Senator Nan Orrock

Hawaii State Senator Rosalyn Baker

Iowa State Representative Marti Anderson
Iowa State Representative Ruth Ann Gaines
Iowa State Representative Mary Mascher

Illinois State Representative Carol Ammons
Illinois State Representative Robyn Gabel

Kansas State Senator Mary Ware
Kansas State Representative Sydney Carlin
Kansas State Representative Stephanie Clayton

Massachusetts State Senator Jo Comerford
Massachusetts State Representative Mindy Domb
Massachusetts State Representative Natalie Higgins
Massachusetts State Representative Kay Khan
Massachusetts Former State Senator Pamela Resor
Massachusetts State Representative Lindsay Sabadosa
Maryland State Delegate Pamela Queen

Maine State Senator Shenna Bellows

Michigan State Senator Rosemary Bayer

Minnesota State Representative Alice Hausman
Minnesota State Representative Rena Moran

Missouri State Representative Ingrid Burnett
Missouri State Representative Sarah Unsicker

Mississippi Former State Representative Kathy Sykes

Montana State Representative Jasmine Krotkov
Montana State Representative Sue Malek
Montana State Representative Andrea Olsen

North Dakota State Representative Mary Schneider

New Hampshire State Representative Heidi Hamer
New Hampshire State Representative Rebecca McBeath
New Hampshire State Representative Lee Oxenham

New Mexico State Senator Mimi Stewart
New Mexico State Representative Karen Bash
New Mexico State Representative Patricia Roybal Caballero

New York State Assemblymember Jessica Ramos

Ohio Former State Senator Charleta B Tavares
Ohio State Representative Jennifer Wiest

Oregon State Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer

Pennsylvania State Representative Melissa Shusterman

Rhode Island State Representative Teresa Tanzi

South Dakota State Representative Susan Wismer

Utah State Representative Elizabeth Weight

Virginia State Delegate Kaye Kory
Vermont State Representative Sara Coffey
Vermont State Representative Mari Cordes
Vermont State Representative Kimberly Jessup
Vermont State Representative Joan Lenes
Vermont State Representative Ann Pugh
Vermont State Representative Mary Sullivan
Vermont State Representative Theresa Wood

Wisconsin State Representative Melissa Sargent
Wisconsin State Representative Lisa Subeck

West Virginia State Delegate Barbara Fleischauer
West Virginia State Delegate Margaret Staggers
West Virginia State Delegate Linda Longstreth
West Virginia State Delegate Cindy Lavender-Bowe
West Virginia State Delegate Danielle Walker
West Virginia State Delegate Lisa Zukoff
West Virginia State Delegate Amanda Estep-Burton

Wyoming State Representative Andi Clifford