

We Need a Smaller Pentagon

Sorry, but we have too many other needs in this country to spend \$858 billion on a department that can't even pass an audit.

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Can you imagine the audacity to fail a multi-trillion dollar audit of public funds, and then ask for even more of those taxpayer dollars?

Pentagon leaders just did exactly that.

This month news broke that the agency once again failed to pass a basic audit showing that it knows where its money goes. And instead of holding out for any kind of accountability, Congress stands [ready to give a big raise](#) to an agency that failed to account for more than 60 percent of its assets.

This is a sign of an agency that is too big, plain and simple.

Other major government agencies have long since passed audits. But the Pentagon — with its global sprawl of more than [750 military installations](#), expensive contractors, and boondoggle weapons systems — is so big and disjointed that no one knows where its money goes.

Here's a simple solution: the Pentagon needs to be a lot smaller.

After 20 years of war, when government spending is desperately needed elsewhere, the Pentagon's [fifth failed audit](#) in as many years — it's never, ever passed — should be the last straw.

Instead, recent reports suggest that Congress is moving toward an [\\$858 billion budget](#) for the Pentagon and nuclear weapons — and that figure may grow even more. The increase alone from last year's spending would [more than double the entire diplomacy budget at the State Department](#).

This isn't using our taxpayer dollars wisely. It's robbing programs that we need, like the discontinued Child Tax Credit expansion that [cut child poverty by half](#). The only winners here are the military contractors who commandeer roughly [half of the Pentagon's budget](#) in any given year.

For what taxpayers spend on Lockheed Martin in a typical year alone, we could instead [give every American child a strong start](#) in life through quality childcare and preschool. Which would make us stronger?

It looks like the people in this country are starting to catch on, though: A new poll shows that just [48 percent of Americans trust the military](#), down from a high of 70 percent in 2018.

It's not because they don't trust the troops. It's because after 20 years of ill-begotten wars, the brass expects to get \$858 billion of our hard-earned tax dollars when they can't even account for half of what they've already gotten. Sorry, but we have too many other needs in this country for that to make sense anymore.

With the tide of public opinion turning, the days of endlessly growing Pentagon budgets are numbered.

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