

Proclamation Calling on Congress to Fund Urgently Needed Services in Albany County and Throughout the United States by Reducing Military Spending

WHEREAS, the members of the Albany County Legislature and the constituents we represent want to ensure the safety, as well as the physical and mental well-being, of U.S. soldiers, veterans, and their families; and

WHEREAS, the severity of the ongoing economic crisis has created budget shortfalls at all levels of government and requires us to re-examine our national spending priorities; and in Albany County there is a structural budget deficit approaching \$20 millionⁱ, causing layoffs, cutbacks and continued destruction of the public education system; and

WHEREAS, every dollar spent on the military produces fewer jobs than spending the same dollar on education, healthcare, clean energy, or even tax cuts for household consumption; and the current unemployment rate in Albany County is 7.9%ⁱⁱ (nearly 24,000 people)ⁱⁱⁱ; and this includes the current African American unemployment rate of 15.9%^{iv}; and

WHEREAS, U.S. military spending has approximately doubled in the past decade, in real dollars and as a percentage of federal discretionary spending, and well over half of federal discretionary spending is now spent on the military, and we are spending more money on the military now than during the Cold War, the Vietnam War, or the Korean War; and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have cost Albany County taxpayers over \$1.77 billion since 2001^v; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. military budget is by far the largest in the world, and almost equals the military spending of all other nations combined; and

WHEREAS, the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform proposed major reductions in military spending in both its Co-Chairs' proposal in November 2010 and its final report in December 2010; and the U.S. Conference of Mayors passed a resolution in June 2011 calling on Congress to redirect spending to domestic priorities; and the people of the United States, in numerous opinion polls, favor redirecting spending to domestic priorities and withdrawing the U.S. military from Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, the United States has armed forces stationed at approximately 1,000 foreign bases in approximately 150 foreign countries; and

WHEREAS, the United States is the wealthiest nation on earth but trails many other nations in life expectancy, infant mortality, education level, housing, and environmental sustainability, as well as non-military aid to foreign nations; and in Albany County 13.5% of residents are without health care insurance,^{vi} 30.7% of African Americans and 22.6% of Hispanics are living in poverty,^{vii} 14.3% of children and youth with ages up to 17 years old lived in poverty in 2009,^{viii} and 80 veterans are homeless on any given night^{ix};

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Albany County Legislature calls on the U.S. Congress to bring all U.S. troops home from Afghanistan and significantly cut the Pentagon budget, and to take the money saved by those actions and fund education, public and private sector family-sustaining job creation, care for veterans and their families, special protections for military sector workers, environmental and infrastructure restoration, and human services that our counties, cities and states so desperately need; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to President Barack Obama, the New York Congressional delegation, the Governor of New York, the New York State Legislature, and all government departments in Albany County.

ⁱ Conners, Michael. "What a Week!" *Times Union*. January 21, 2012. Last viewed online July 23, 2012 at <http://blog.timesunion.com/conners/date/2012/01/>

ⁱⁱ Economic Research Tool. Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. Last viewed online August 7, 2012 at <http://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/series/NYALBA1URN>

ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Commerce. United States Census Bureau. State & County QuickFacts. Last viewed online August 7, 2012 at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/36001.html> - 2011 population estimate = 303,500

^{iv} U.S. Census Bureau. American Fact Finder. Last viewed online August 7, 2012 at http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_S2301&prodType=table – percentage based on this 2010 1-year estimate

^v National Priorities Project. Cost of War Calculator. Last viewed online August 7, 2012 at <http://costofwar.com/state/NY/county/albany-county/>

^{vi} New York State Community Action Association. "New York State Poverty Report." February 2010, p. 6. Last viewed online August 7, 2012 at

http://www.virtualcap.org/downloads/US/US_Reports_NY_Poverty_Report_2010.pdf

^{vii} *Ibid.*

^{viii} The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Data Center – Kids Count. Last viewed online August 7, 2012 at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/stateprofile.aspx?state=NY&loc=4848> – figure is for 2009

^{ix} U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. HUD's 2011 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs. Homeless Populations and Subpopulations. Last viewed online August 7, 2012 at http://www.hudhre.info/CoC_Reports/2011_ny_503_pops_sub.pdf

Proclamation of the undersigned Albany County Legislators: