

August 31, 2021

Dear Members of the House Armed Services Committee,

The undersigned organizations from across the political spectrum urge you to support the amendment offered by Rep. Veronica Escobar (TX-16) and Rep. Ro Khanna (CA-17) to the Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to rein in the Pentagon's military surplus equipment transfer program, known as the 1033 Program. This amendment would end the indiscriminate transfers of military-grade weapons from the Pentagon to federal, state, and local Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs). The proposed language has passed three times in the House, twice through the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act and once in the Defense Appropriations bill.

Since its inception in the 1990s in response to the "War on Drugs," the 1033 Program has resulted in the transfer of more than \$7.4 billion in equipment to more than 8,000 federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies across the country.<sup>1</sup> Items received through the 1033 Program include armored vehicles, rifles, and aircraft.

Numerous research studies have indicated that not only is the 1033 Program ineffective, as it fails to reduce crime or improve police safety, but it is also unsafe, and associated with more civilian deaths.<sup>2</sup> Military equipment is disproportionately deployed in communities of color.<sup>3</sup> As recognized by former President Obama, decades of police militarization has led to LEAs appearing more like an occupying military force than community members working to protect and serve their neighbors.

In recent years, the 1033 Program has expanded as part of the militarization of our southern border as Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) have also received enormous amounts of excess military equipment.

In June 2020, after the murder of George Floyd, Data for Progress polled voters regarding their opinions about police, police violence, and proposed reforms.<sup>4</sup> This poll found that there is strong bipartisan support for banning the transfer of military equipment to civilian police. Overall, Republican and Democratic voters support ending the transfer of military equipment and weapons to law enforcement by a margin of 18 percentage points.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Briant Barrett, "The Pentagon's Hand-Me-Downs Helped Militarize Police. Here's How," Wired. <https://www.wired.com/story/pentagon-hand-me-downs-militarize-police-1033-program/>.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Mummolo, "Militarization fails to enhance police safety or reduce crime but may harm police reputation," PNAS. <https://www.pnas.org/content/115/37/9181>

<sup>3</sup> Briant Barrett, "The Pentagon's Hand-Me-Downs Helped Militarize Police. Here's How," Wired. <https://www.wired.com/story/pentagon-hand-me-downs-militarize-police-1033-program/>.

<sup>4</sup><https://www.dataforprogress.org/blog/2020/7/1/voters-dont-want-police-departments-to-have-military-equipment>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.dataforprogress.org/blog/2020/7/1/voters-dont-want-police-departments-to-have-military-equipment>

On April 6, 2021, twenty-nine Members of Congress sent a letter to President Biden calling on him to issue an Executive Order on the 1033 Program consistent with the legislative language of this amendment, calling it “a reasonable step towards demilitarizing our police forces while preserving the safety of our communities.”<sup>6</sup> A month later, more than 150 national organizations, from across the political spectrum, representing tens of millions of their members, wrote to Members of Congress in support of ending the Pentagon’s 1033 Program all together.<sup>7</sup>

This commonsense amendment which has bipartisan support in Congress, would make our communities safer by getting weapons of war and military equipment off of our streets and out of our communities.<sup>8</sup>

Accordingly, we urge you to use the opportunity of the full committee markup of the FY2022 National Defense Authorization Act to vote in favor of this amendment.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Yasmine Taeb at [yasminetaeb@gmail.com](mailto:yasminetaeb@gmail.com) and Noah Gottschalk at [Noah.Gottschalk@oxfam.org](mailto:Noah.Gottschalk@oxfam.org).

Sincerely,

About Face: Veterans Against the War  
ACCESS of WNY  
Action Center on Race & the Economy  
Advocacy for Principled Action in Government  
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)  
American Friends Service Committee  
American Humanist Association  
American Muslim Bar Association (AMBA)  
Arab American Institute (AAI)  
Arab Resource & Organizing Center (AROC)  
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action  
Beyond the Bomb  
Borderlands for Equity  
Bridges Faith Initiative  
Center for American Progress  
Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)  
Church of Scientology National Affairs Office  
Church World Service  
CODEPINK

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<sup>6</sup><https://hankjohnson.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/rep-johnson-urges-president-biden-issue-eo-police-militarization>

<sup>7</sup> <https://drugpolicy.org/sites/default/files/end-1033-sign-on-letter.pdf>

<sup>8</sup><https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1694/cosponsors?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22stop+militarizing+law+enforcement+act%22%5D%7D&r=1&s=1>

Common Defense  
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)  
Daily Kos  
Defending Rights & Dissent  
Due Process Institute  
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)  
Episcopal Peace Fellowship  
Faith in Public Life  
Freedom Network USA  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Government Information Watch  
Grassroots Global Justice Alliance  
Historians for Peace and Democracy  
Human Rights First  
ICNA Council for Social Justice (ICNA CSJ)  
Japanese American Citizens League  
Jetpac Resource Center, Inc.  
Just Futures Law  
Justice For Muslims Collective  
Keystone Progress  
Labor Against Racism and War  
La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)  
Law Enforcement Action Partnership  
Massachusetts Peace Action  
MoveOn  
Muslim Justice League  
National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC)  
National Education Association  
National Immigrant Justice Center  
National Iranian American Council Action  
National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
New Internationalism Project at the Institute for Policy Studies  
Our Revolution  
Oxfam America  
Pax Christi USA  
Peace Action  
Poligon Education Fund  
Presente.org  
Progressive Democrats of America  
Project Blueprint  
Project On Government Oversight

Public Citizen  
Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft  
R Street Institute  
Restore The Fourth  
Rethinking Foreign Policy  
Revolutionary Love Project  
RootsAction.org  
Secure Families Initiative  
Sierra Club  
Sikh Coalition  
Southern Anti-Racism Network  
Southern Border Communities Coalition  
Sunrise Movement  
The Advocates for Human Rights  
Tunisian United Network  
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society  
US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR)  
US Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO)  
Veterans for American Ideals  
Veterans For Peace  
Washington Against Nuclear Weapons  
Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Win Without War  
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center  
Women for Weapons Trade Transparency  
Women's Action for New Directions (WAND)  
World BEYOND War  
X-Lab  
Yemeni Alliance Committee  
Yemen Relief and Reconstruction Foundation