

To: Interested Parties

From: Data for Progress and the Justice Collaborative Institute

Re: The Congressional Progressive Caucus's Department of Defense Priorities Are Popular With Voters

Date: July 21, 2020

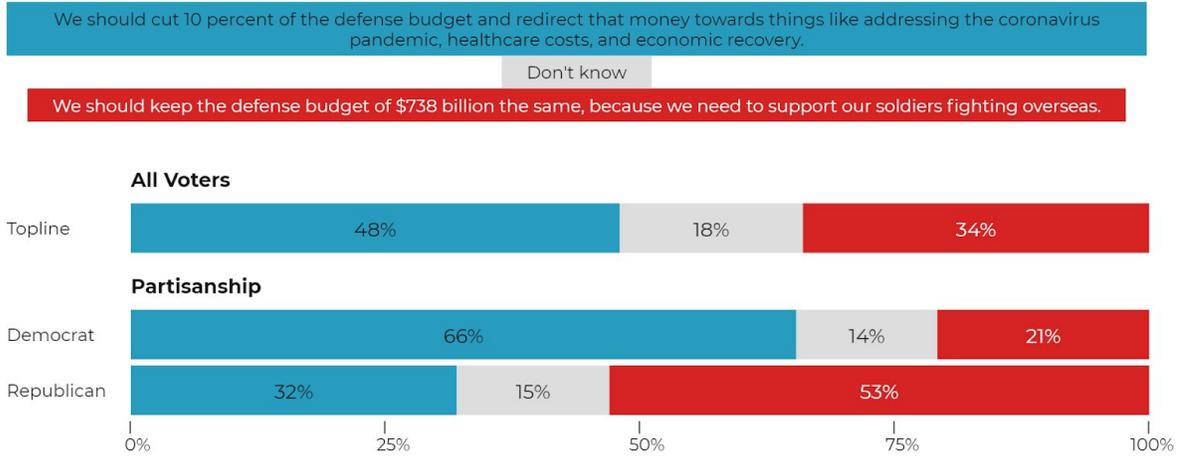
Across two surveys, one conducted from July 15 through July 16 and the other on July 17 of 1,235 and 1,225 voters, respectively, we asked voters their opinion on progressive priorities with regards to the Defense Department Budget. This week, Representatives Mark Pocan, Barbara Lee, and Pramila Jayapal, and Senators Bernie Sanders, Ed Markey, and Elizabeth Warren have introduced amendments to the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that would reallocate ten percent of the Pentagon's budget towards urgent needs such as the response to the coronavirus pandemic, economic recovery, and healthcare costs.

To test support for this proposal we first asked voters whether they'd prefer a ten percent decrease in defense spending so that money can be reallocated for addressing the coronavirus pandemic, healthcare costs, and economic recovery; keeping the defense budget of \$738 billion the same; and don't know.

We found that, among all voters, voters prefer cutting the defense budget by a 14-percentage-point margin. Attitudes were loosely correlated with partisanship with voters who self-identify as Democrats prefer cutting defense spending by a 45-point margin while voters who self-identify as Republicans prefer maintaining defense spending by a 21-point margin.

Voter Support Cutting Defense Spending

What comes closer to your view?

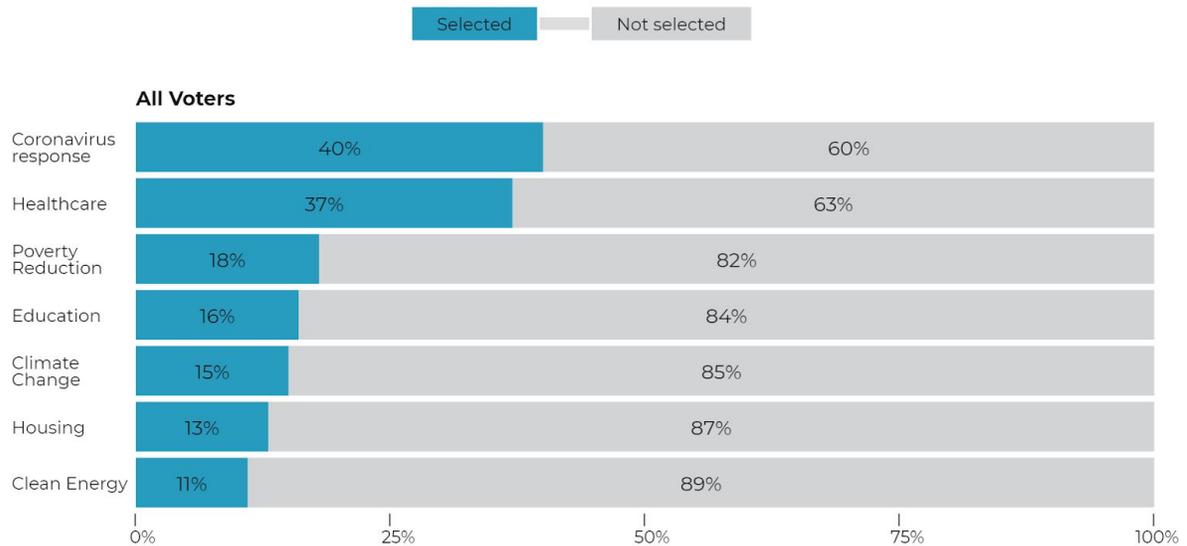


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We then asked voters where they'd like to see the defense budget reallocated. Here, voters were provided seven options. Two of these options -- "none of these," and "I do not think we should reduce the defense budget" -- were exclusive, meaning that if the voter selected it, this could be their only answer. For the other six options, each voter could select up to three responses for where they would reallocate a hypothetical ten percent of the defense budget. Forty percent of voters want this money reallocated to the coronavirus response with 37 percent of voters wanting it allocated to healthcare. Additionally 18% of voters selected poverty reduction as one of their top three choices when asked how they would reallocate spending, followed by education and climate change at 16% and 15% respectively.

If Defense Spending Was Cut A Large Block Of Voters Want That Aid Redicted To The Coronavirus Response

If Congress cut the federal defense budget by 10 percent, where would you like to see that money reallocated? You may select three.



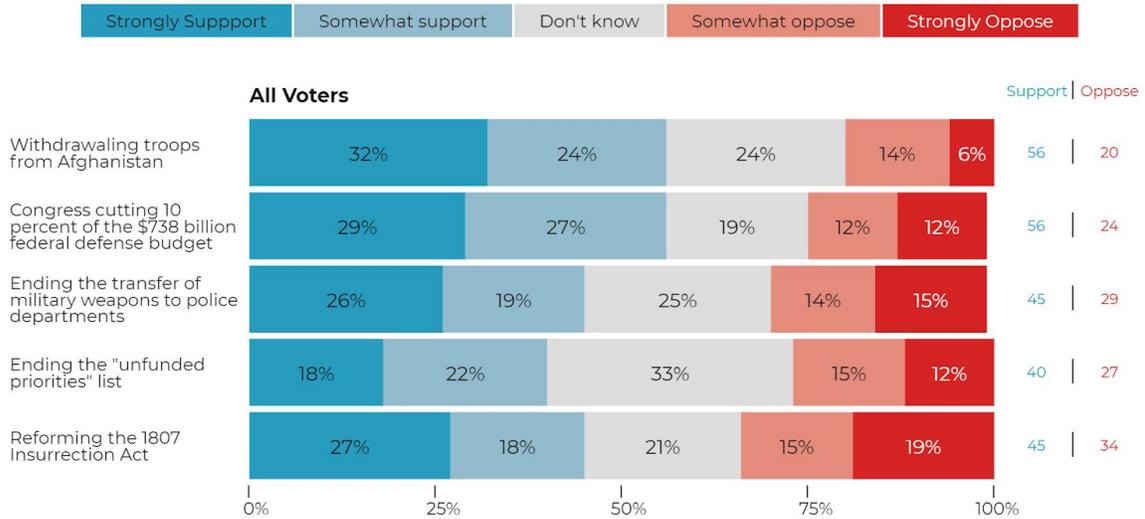
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We then asked voters whether they would support or oppose five progressive proposals regarding the defense department. All enjoyed net support. Representative Ilhan Omar's amendment calling for the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan enjoys support from a majority (56 percent) of voters and is the most popular proposal we tested. Next year marks the 20th anniversary of the war in Afghanistan and there is broad support to end it.

Similarly popular is the cutting of defense spending, which nets a 32-point margin of support. The ending of transfers of military weapons to police departments was supported by a 16-point margin. The ending of the "unfunded priorities list netted a 13-point margin of support while reforming the 1807 insurrection act to prevent the domestic deployment of active duty U.S. troops against civilians enjoyed an 11-point margin of support.

Voters Support Progressive Department Of Defense Priorities

Would you support or oppose the following proposals?



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Methodology

Due to rounding, some values may sum to 99 or 101 percentage points.

From July 15 through July 16, 2020, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 1,235 likely voters nationally using web-panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of likely voters by age, gender, education, race, and voting history. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error is +/- 2.8 percentage points.

On July 17, 2020, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 1,225 likely voters nationally using web-panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of likely voters by age, gender, education, race, and voting history. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error is +/- 2.8 percentage points.

Question Wording

What comes closer to your view?

- We should cut 10 percent of the defense budget and redirect that money towards things like addressing the coronavirus pandemic, healthcare costs, and economic recovery.
- We should keep the defense budget of \$738 billion the same, because we need to support our soldiers fighting overseas.
- Don't know

If Congress cut the federal defense budget by 10 percent, where would you like to see that money reallocated? You may select three.

- *Healthcare*
- *Housing*
- *Education*
- *Clean energy*
- *Climate change*
- *Coronavirus response*
- *Poverty reduction*
- *None of these*
- *I do not think we should reduce the defense budget*
 - Yes
 - No

Would you support or oppose Congress cutting 10 percent of the \$738 billion federal defense budget—with the guarantee that none of these cuts would affect American military personnel's pay or healthcare — to pay for other needs like fighting the coronavirus, education, healthcare, and housing?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

Some are proposing ending the “unfunded priorities” list. These are items the military would like Congress to fund if lawmakers decide to add more money to the Pentagon’s proposed budget and the use of this list often leads to increased defense spending. Would you support or oppose ending the “unfunded priorities” list?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

Would you support or oppose making it illegal for government agencies to transfer military weapons intended for modern warfare, like mine resistant armored vehicles, to civilian police departments?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

Currently, the President of the United States can use an 1807 law called the Insurrection Act which grants them the authority to, under certain circumstances, deploy active duty U.S. military personnel within the U.S. to perform, for instance, policing functions. Now, some are proposing that this law be revised to prevent the President from using active duty U.S. military personnel against civilians. Would you support or oppose this proposal?

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

Would you support or oppose a proposal to withdraw all United States military personnel from Afghanistan by October of 2021? For context, the U.S. has had combat troops deployed to Afghanistan for 19 years, or since 2001.

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know