

Draft Resolution—Multnomah County Bring the War \$\$ Home

Resolution calling for immediate redirection of funds from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to domestic human services priorities to meet the pressing needs in our community.

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR
MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

A. The severity of the nation's ongoing economic crisis has created budget shortfalls at all levels of government and requires us to re-examine our national priorities. Significant financial resources are needed to rebuild our society—aiding state and local governments to maintain and restore public and social services, including programs for education, health care, the social safety net, public safety, environmental clean-up and stewardship, alternative renewable energy, rebuilding physical infrastructure, and urgently needed measures to support job creation in both the private and public sectors.

B. The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners and the people of Multnomah County support our brave men and women in uniform and their families. We also acknowledge that as of December 18, 2011, President Barack Obama officially ended U.S. troop deployment in Iraq.

C. More than 6,000 members of the U.S. armed forces have lost their lives in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, including at least 128 from Oregon; over 120,000 Iraqi and Afghan civilians have been killed since the beginning of coalition operations. Thousands more U.S. military personnel and Iraqi and Afghan civilians have suffered devastating physical and mental injuries, and those countries have sustained widespread destruction and environmental devastation.

D. Since 2001, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have cost the United States more than \$1.1 trillion. The cost to the taxpayers of Multnomah County Oregon for these wars since 2001 has been over \$2.4 billion. The entire costs of these wars, including costs of caring for wounded service members and payment on the debt incurred by the wars has been estimated at between \$3 and \$6 trillion dollars.

E. If the \$2.4 billion taxpayer dollars spent so far by Multnomah County citizens on the Iraq and Afghanistan wars were instead allocated to human services, education and environmental programs, Multnomah County could have funded any one of the following for one year:[1]:

- * 1.3 million Annual Energy Costs for a Household
- * 1.2 million Children Receiving Low-Income Healthcare
- * 36,544 Elementary School Teachers * 36,729 Firefighters
- * 426,795 Head Start Slots for Children
- * 915,558 Households Converted to All Solar Energy
- * 1.9 million Households Converted to All Wind Energy
- * 302,404 Military Veterans Receiving VA Medical Care
- * 510,611 People Receiving Low-Income Healthcare
- * 318,599 Scholarships for University Students for One Year

F. The budget of the Department of Defense has increased significantly since 1998 to a staggering \$725 billion — not including indirect military spending by other agencies — more than all other discretionary spending combined. The cost to taxpayers of Multnomah County of this 2012 Department of Defense Budget is \$891 million.

G. Between 2005 and 2010 U.S. taxpayers paid \$146 Billion for contractors to directly support military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.[2] Currently there remain over 8000 private contractors in Iraq. Despite the official end to the war in Iraq, there remains an enormous U.S. footprint that continues to destabilize that nation. Additionally, the cost of private contractors continues and adds a huge burden to the ongoing budget crisis.

H. Ending the war in Afghanistan and reducing the U.S. footprint in Iraq and redirecting war spending to domestic programs will allow us to better meet vital human needs at home.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE Board of Commissioners of Multnomah County Oregon, on behalf of the people of Multnomah County:

Section 1. Calls upon the President of the United States, Barack Obama, to end the wars by withdrawing all U.S. troops from Afghanistan and reducing the U.S. footprint in Iraq and Afghanistan by removing the private contractors from both countries in a safe, rapid and orderly fashion that fully protects American and coalition troops, and Iraqi and Afghan populations from harm, and to support efforts led by international organizations to rebuild both countries.

Section 2. Calls upon the U.S. government to cancel the contracts with private military contracting firms which have caused additional drain on our nation's economy.

Section 3. Urges the Congressional Delegation of Oregon to vote for legislation to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan by withdrawing all U.S. military forces and contractors in a safe, rapid and orderly fashion that fully protects American troops, coalition troops, and Iraqi and Afghan populations from harm, and to support efforts led by international organizations to rebuild both countries.

Section 4. Urges the Congressional Delegation of Oregon to redirect the monies saved, by ending the wars and withdrawing U.S. military forces and contractors, to meet the pressing needs of American citizens.

Section 5. A suitable copy of this resolution shall be sent to Barack Obama, President of the United States, all members of the Oregon Congressional Delegation, the Oregon State Legislature, and Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber.

Section 6. This Resolution is effective immediately upon its passage by the Board of Commissioners of Multnomah County Oregon.

[1] <http://nationalpriorities.org>

[2] Schwartz, M. & Swain, J., *Congressional Research Service: DOD Contractors in Afghanistan and Iraq: Background and Analysis, May 13, 2011, accessed on 1/7/2012 at www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R40764.pdf*

Draft presented by community members 01/23/2012