Poverty – Militarism – Nuclear Weapons

*I was guest for Kim Dobson’s “Parallel University” radio program on KAOS 89.3 FM on Thursday June 9, 2022. During the radio interview, I connected the dots between poverty, militarism, nuclear weapons, and other important issues.*

Glen Anderson (360) 491-9093 **glenanderson@integra.net** [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org)

Context for this interview: The Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Olympia Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, and Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights (POWER) are local organizations promoting the Poor People's Campaign for the June 18, 2022 Moral March on Washington DC. We are having an event in Olympia June 17th, to support the DC march, and sending several representatives to participate.

The Poor People’s Campaign describes itself as “A National Call for Moral Revival.” Their website is [**www.poorpeoplescampaign.org**](http://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org). Here in Washington State, the website is [**www.washingtonppc.org**](http://www.washingtonppc.org)

To support this, the local organizers asked Glen Anderson to be a guest on Kim Dobson’s “Parallel University” radio program on KAOS, 89.3 FM. The program is airing as 12 noon Thursday Jun3 9, 2022. They asked me to talk about **our militaristic economy and specifically how nuclear weapons diverts the vast wealth of America away from the legitimate needs of housing, medical care and education.** This is part of a nationwide effort to promote morality in the direction of our country.

Below is the information I summarized and paraphrased for the radio interview. This document also includes links to more information.

**Introduction and Overview:**

Three organizations in the Olympia WA area (the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Olympia Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, and Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights [POWER]) are promoting the Poor People's Campaign for the Moral March on Washington DC on Saturday June 18, 2022. We are having an event in Olympia on Friday June 17 to support the DC march, and sending several people there to participate.

The Poor People’s Campaign describes itself as “A National Call for Moral Revival.” Their national website is [**www.poorpeoplescampaign.org**](http://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org). Here in Washington State, the website is [**www.washingtonppc.org**](http://www.washingtonppc.org)

This article expands on what Glen Anderson said on a radio interview. Local organizers asked Kim Dobson to interview Glen for Kim’s radio program to discuss **the relationship between poverty in the U.S. and our militaristic foreign policy, which includes an addiction to nuclear weapons.** His radio program aired on KAOS 89.3 FM on Thursday June 9, 2022. Here is a link to the recording: [**Parallel U 6-9-2022.mp3 Glen Anderson Poor People's Campaign**](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bA8nvItFoxtaSzvCDtoOcMHp9wmgrV_h/view?usp=sharing)

**During the interview, Glen Anderson discussed how militarism – including nuclear weapons -- diverts the vast wealth of America away from the legitimate needs of housing, medical care and education.** Racism and the climate crisis are also part of the mix, but the one-hour radio interview was too brief to make the connections with all of the many issues the Poor People’s Campaign connects.

This hour’s radio program supports the Poor Peoples Campaign’s nationwide effort to move the U.S. away from all kinds of cruelty (poverty, war, and so forth) and replacing those with public policies that will be morally good, humane, and sustainable.

**This interview flowed through several parts:**

1. Glen started this interview by pointing out some of the current realities.
2. Then he asked us to pay attention to people’s feelings, values and needs regarding these realities.
3. In the interview’s second half, he suggested some solutions to the problems.

**Consider the recent and current realities about poverty, military spending, and nuclear weapons:**

**Poverty, economic inequality, etc.:**

The latest figures from the US Department of Agriculture show that **more than 38 million people** in the United States experienced hunger in 2020. Households with children were even more at risk. Now, as many as 1 in 6 kids are facing hunger this year. But federal intervention could help – if Congress would fund it – but Congress does not help enough.

Glen said that on August 12, 2021, he received an article reporting that **nearly half of American workers** do not earn enough to afford a one-bedroom rental – and reporting that **a minimum wage job is not enough** to afford a two-bedroom rental anywhere in the U.S. About one in seven Americans fell behind on rent payments while housing costs continued to increase during the pandemic.

Poor people find it very hard to pay rent: [**https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/aug/12/housing-renter-affordable-data-map?utm\_term=fe7dbf2c1843ea560294d8f4da39daaf&utm\_campaign=GuardianTodayUS&utm\_source=esp&utm\_medium=Email&CMP=GTUS\_email**](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/aug/12/housing-renter-affordable-data-map?utm_term=fe7dbf2c1843ea560294d8f4da39daaf&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayUS&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=GTUS_email)

On August 2, 2021, he received an article explaining that poor Americans pay an invisible “time tax” – hours of work to apply for “safety net” programs, provide documentation, take drug tests, and so forth. In these ways, the government punishes poor people for their own poverty instead of recognizing the **systemic causes** of poverty. We need straightforward remedies instead of the current “blame-the-victim” programs.

Applications for benefits across key parts of the so-called “safety net” – from food stamps to unemployment insurance to Medicaid – require individuals to waste hours of their life proving eligibility, completing confusing paperwork, taking drug tests, or otherwise battling with federal and state bureaucracies to get benefits supposedly meant to help them.

And, as with many things in the United States, this time tax hits people unevenly: poor Americans and people of color are more likely to spend their hours navigating the system, while wealthier (often white) Americans are rarely asked to, say, pee in a cup to get an automatic tax break on their home. The result of this institutional runaround is fewer people getting the benefits they need. For example, only 1 in 6 eligible persons receives food stamps. Also, people who are oppressed by poverty have less control over something pretty basic – their time. Annie Lowry wrote an article about this in the July 2021 issue of ***The Atlantic***: [**https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2021/07/how-government-learned-waste-your-time-tax/619568/**](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2021/07/how-government-learned-waste-your-time-tax/619568/)

**Military spending:**

The U.S. spends much, much more on the military than any other nation on earth. In 2020, the top 10 spenders on their militaries were:

* The United States — $778 billion.
* China — $252 billion [estimated]. **The U.S. spent THREE TIMES AS MUCH as China did.**
* Russia — $61.7 billion. **The U.S. spent TWELVE TIMES AS MUCH as Russia did.**

Each of the other 7 nations that own nuclear weapons spent less than $73 billion in 2020.

* India — $72.9 billion
* United Kingdom — $59.2 billion
* Saudi Arabia — $57.5 billion [estimated]
* Germany — $52.8 billion
* France — $52.7 billion
* Japan — $49.1 billion
* South Korea — $45.7 billion

**Except for China and Russia, all of the other top 10 spenders were U.S. allies.**

On January 31, 2022, the National Priorities Project ([**www.nationalpriorities.org**](http://www.nationalpriorities.org)) – a savvy non-profit organization that contrasts the budgets for military spending with the budgets for humane civilian purposes – sent out information about the federal budget. Their information came from a publication produced by the Poor People’s Campaign ([**www.poorpeoplescampaign.org**](http://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org)) and some other good organizations. The publication contrasted what they called “A Moral Budget” vs. “A War Budget.” They reported that at the end of 2021, [**Congress FAILED TO PASS a $170 billion-a-year investment**](https://click.everyaction.com/k/41281524/328110935/336974470?nvep=ew0KICAiVGVuYW50VXJpIjogIm5ncHZhbjovL3Zhbi9FQS9FQTAwMy8xLzc1MjEwIiwNCiAgIkRpc3RyaWJ1dGlvblVuaXF1ZUlkIjogIjFmMTYwOTk1LWNlODItZWMxMS05NGY2LWM4OTY2NTBkNDQ0MiIsDQogICJFbWFpbEFkZHJlc3MiOiAiZ2xlbmFuZGVyc29uQGludGVncmEubmV0Ig0KfQ%3D%3D&hmac=I2rczaLC_P1dWG3rCji2qSxsHHT0TuhJLT982tFYoMs=&emci=ad4731c1-ba74-ec11-94f6-c896650d4442&emdi=1f160995-ce82-ec11-94f6-c896650d4442&ceid=3993183) in families, child care, and climate, while **a vast bipartisan majority APPROVED** a **Pentagon budget more than four times as high.** See the report here:[**https://www.nationalpriorities.org/analysis/2021/moral-budget-vs-war-budget/?emci=ad4731c1-ba74-ec11-94f6-c896650d4442&emdi=1f160995-ce82-ec11-94f6-c896650d4442&ceid=3993183**](https://www.nationalpriorities.org/analysis/2021/moral-budget-vs-war-budget/?emci=ad4731c1-ba74-ec11-94f6-c896650d4442&emdi=1f160995-ce82-ec11-94f6-c896650d4442&ceid=3993183)

The publication lists what the “Build Back Better” funding would have accomplished and what’s in the National Defense Authorization Act. Congress **failed to pass the “Moral Budget,”** but it did **overwhelmingly pass the “National Defense Authorization Act,”** which lavishly funds military violence. These two bills represent diametrically opposed views of how to address the challenges of our time: a **moral budget** vs. a **war budget**. Congress is NOT on our side!

On December 20, 2021, several organizations released their publication about this gross injustice. The joint publication came from the **Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival**; **Institute for Policy Studies**; **Repairers of the Breach**; and **Kairos: The Center for Religion, Rights, and Social Justice***.* You can download the report at this link: [**Download PDF Version**](https://media.nationalpriorities.org/uploads/publications/ppc-bbb-fact-sheet.pdf)

On April 5, 2022, Ralph Nader’s organization, Public Citizen ([**www.citizen.org**](http://www.citizen.org)) sent out some information about military spending. The next three paragraphs use their dollar amounts and Glen’s additional reasoning.

The U.S.’s military budget for this year is a staggering $782 billion. For 2023, President Biden is asking for $813 billion **— an additional $31 billion** more than the current bloated military budget. Republicans (and some Democrats) in Congress are pressing for even more than that.

The Ukraine crisis is NOT a valid reason Biden’s request for $813 billion. It is ***more than 13 times what Russia spends*** on its military. In fact, this is more than the combined spending of **the *next 13 countries*** on the list — China, India, Russia, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Germany, France, Japan, South Korea, Italy, Australia, Israel, and Canada.

The article sent by Public Citizen said: **“Throwing ever more money at the Pentagon is not about supporting the troops, improving national security, or making the world safer for democracy. It is about members of Congress using Russia’s invasion of Ukraine as an excuse to funnel even more of our tax dollars to their friends at Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, and Northrop Grumman.”**

On April 2, 2022, another organization Glen trusts and supports – Roots Action ([**www.rootsaction.org**](http://www.rootsaction.org)) – sent out some information – and he edited it slightly for the next four short paragraphs:

**Last year Congress increased military spending.** It does that every year. But last year it did it even more stupidly and cruelly than usual: President Biden asked for a $12 billion increase. Republicans asked for a $25 billion increase **beyond that**. The **Democratic Congress ultimately passed even more than the Republicans had proposed.**

**This year, Biden proposed increasing military spending by $31 billion over last year’s spending.**

**ACTUALLY, THE PUBLIC WANTS TO SPEND LESS because we have better sense than Congress does – and WE ARE NOT CORRUPTED BY CAMPAIGN DONATIONS FROM WEAPONS MANUFACTURERS.**

We should be insisting that they **publicly and emphatically commit to voting No on any bill that funds military spending at more than 90% of the past year's level**.

Here is what the politicians keep **saying** and **doing**:

* Politicians keep saying that the U.S. cannot afford to clean up the environment or protect the climate.
* Politicians keep saying that the U.S. cannot afford to end homelessness and poverty.
* Politicians keep saying that the U.S. cannot afford to provide good health care for everybody – and cannot afford good education – and cannot afford serious efforts to protect everybody from COVID.
* **But – DESPITE THOSE DENIALS – they ALWAYS KEEP SPENDING MORE AND MORE for war, including nuclear weapons.**

**We must tell the politicians to STOP those horribly immoral budget priorities – and now also STOP claiming that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine makes them spend more.** The U.S. military spending was ALREADY FAR TOO MUCH for many decades before Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 – and about twelve times as much as Russia’s military budget.

**Nuclear Weapons:**

About 13,000 nuclear warheads existed worldwide in 2021, according to [**www.armscontrol.org**](http://www.armscontrol.org).

Nine nations have nuclear weapons. About 90% of them belong to Russia and the United States.

While many nuclear warheads are ready to use immediately, some others are retired (intact, awaiting dismantlement).

After George W. Bush and Donald Trump destroyed several important treaties that limited nuclear weapons of the U.S. and Russia, the New START Treaty was practically the only such treaty left between the U.S. and Russia. Trump was allowing it to expire, but in January 2021 Joe Biden extended it for 5 years. New START caps each country at 1,550 strategic deployed warheads. See information at this link: [t**he provisions of the New START agreement**](https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/NewSTART)

Both Russia and the U.S. are under New START’s limit of 1,550 each. Each one has a few thousand missiles that are not currently ready to launch.

**Russia** (6,257 total) **has 1,458 ready-to-launch:** 1,458 strategic warheads deployed on 527 intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and strategic bombers.

**United States** (5,550 total) **has 1,389 ready-to-launch:** 1,389 strategic nuclear warheads deployed on 665 intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and strategic bombers. The U.S. also has an [**estimated**](https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/yb21_10_wnf_210613.pdf) 100 B-61 nuclear gravity bombs that are forward-deployed at six NATO bases in five European countries.

**While Russia and the U.S. each has about 1,400, China has 350, France 290, the UK 225, Pakistan 165, India 156, Israel 90, and North Korea 50. All together those 7 nations have about 10% of the world’s deployed nuclear weapons while 90% are owned by Russia and the U.S.**

In 2019 the nine nations that have nuclear weapons spent $72.9 billion on them, and the U.S. spent about half of that total. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN, [**www.icanw.org**](http://www.icanw.org)) issued a report on this in May 2020. You can download it from their website, [**www.icanw.org**](http://www.icanw.org). The direct link is: [**https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ican/pages/1549/attachments/original/1589365383/ICAN-Enough-is-Enough-Global-Nuclear-Weapons-Spending-2020-published-13052020.pdf?1589365383**](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ican/pages/1549/attachments/original/1589365383/ICAN-Enough-is-Enough-Global-Nuclear-Weapons-Spending-2020-published-13052020.pdf?1589365383)

**In 2019 the U.S. spent very nearly as much on nuclear weapons as ALL OTHER nations combined. These are the dollar amounts in 2019:**



[**Download the report**](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ican/pages/1549/attachments/original/1589365383/ICAN-Enough-is-Enough-Global-Nuclear-Weapons-Spending-2020-published-13052020.pdf?1589365383)

**How do we feel about these problems?**

Trump had escalated military spending to an unconscionable level – and now Biden is HORRIBLY ESCALATING military violence beyond that! VOTERS STRONGLY OPPOSE Biden’s huge military budget!

In February 2022 Rep. Pramila Jayapal denounced Biden’s $770 BILLION Pentagon budget proposal as “absurd.”

An article from February 16, 2022, includes these points:

“The expected budget request, first reported by Reuters Wednesday, is tens of billions of dollars more than former Republican President Donald Trump ever requested and contrasts with widespread public demand for increased investment in middle- and lower-class Americans and an end to bloated military budgets.”

“The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) pointed to recent polling by the organization which showed that 54% of adults in the U.S. want ‘the exact opposite’ of increased military spending.”

The article also quotes William Hartung, one of our nation’s best-informed experts on military spending, who said, “Devoting this enormous sum to the Pentagon at a time when the greatest challenges to our security—from pandemics to climate change—are not military in nature is both misguided and counterproductive.”

You can read the article at this link: [**https://www.commondreams.org/news/2022/02/16/bidens-770b-pentagon-budget-proposal-denounced-absurd?utm\_campaign=weekendreading&utm\_source=weekendreading0219&utm\_medium=email&ms=EMA22WR0219&emci=9ef8af22-1590-ec11-a507-281878b83d8a&emdi=53fc3d06-8891-ec11-a507-281878b83d8a&ceid=882844**](https://www.commondreams.org/news/2022/02/16/bidens-770b-pentagon-budget-proposal-denounced-absurd?utm_campaign=weekendreading&utm_source=weekendreading0219&utm_medium=email&ms=EMA22WR0219&emci=9ef8af22-1590-ec11-a507-281878b83d8a&emdi=53fc3d06-8891-ec11-a507-281878b83d8a&ceid=882844)

How do **YOU** feel about the bi-partisan mania for excessive military spending while the federal government refuses to fund programs to end homelessness, end poverty, provide safe drinking water, protect our health, clean up the environment, and provide high quality education?

Glen encourages **YOU** how **YOU** feel at the **HEAD** level and at the **HEART** level.

Besides FEELING, we need to take smart ACTIONS. Glen discussed actions we could take to solve the problem after briefly mentioning what the public values and needs.

**The public’s values and needs call for a profound change from the status quo:**

**The entire concept of militarism is based on the mistaken assumption that killing people in other countries solves problems.** Military violence is cruel – and brings out the worst of people, including racism and hatred of “The Other.” Military violence violates humane values. Governments reject humane values because they prioritize war over life.

**We can do better than that!**

Poverty and militarism violate our core values and needs. Ordinary people strongly need and support profound:

* Fairness
* Compassion
* Respect for living beings
* Safety and security for all people and our environment

Americans like to THINK we live in a democracy. Actually, we live in a REPUBLIC, where we elect other people to run local, state and national governments. If we REALLY had a DEMOCRACY, then “WE THE PEOPLE” would be DIRECTLY DECIDING what our governments would do – at the local, state and federal level.

The American people WANT MORE DEMOCRACY – and MORE HONESTY. Instead, Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court have been allowing extremely rich people and big businesses to BRIBE political candidates with Big Money donations for their campaigns, and those economic elites spend many millions of dollars lobbying the politicians after they are elected.

Solving the problems about excessive military spending – and the government’s refusal to end poverty – requires that we REFORM ELECTIONS AND GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTIONING IN SEVERAL WAYS.

**Let’s solve the problems in smart ways:**

**We need remedies that are smart and compassionate.**

**We need remedies that fix our nation’s unjust systems.**

Glen’s June 2022 TV program focuses on how Big Money corrupts our elections, and it proposes some solutions. Thurston County’s people with cable TV can watch the TV interview three times each week throughout June on cable channel 22: every Monday at 1:30 pm, every Wednesday at 5:00 pm, and every Thursday at 9:00 pm.

People EVERYWHERE can visit his blog to watch it at ANY TIME – and read the thorough summary he typed up (with links to more information). Visit [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org), click “TV Programs,” and scroll down to this episode’s title, **“Big Money in Elections Corrupts Our Government.”** The direct link is [**https://parallaxperspectives.org/big-money-in-elections-corrupts-our-government**](https://parallaxperspectives.org/big-money-in-elections-corrupts-our-government)

Too often we hear ordinary people and politicians blame the victims. Trump specialized in this. He kept calling people “losers.” He did not mean that they were losing because capitalism is unfair – or that they were being hurt by systemic social injustice and discrimination. No, Trump’s accusation of “loser” **was personal blame against the individuals** who have been victimized by cruel systems in our society and our economy.

In order to solve the problems, we must recognize that **OUR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS cause the problems and make people poor**. Also, **OUR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS divert our nation’s resources into military violence and corruption.**

Here is a good example from our local level: The Thurston County WA Voters Pamphlet for the August 3, 2021, primary election included statements from candidates.  A number of candidates addressed homelessness in ways that **blame the victims**. Those candidates complained aboutsubstance abuse and mental illness.  Why do almost no candidates recognize **systemic problems that cause homelessness**?  These include:

* The horribly widening gap between very rich people and everybody else
* Stagnant wages (relative to inflation) since the mid-1970s
* Real estate developers’ exploitation and gentrification that force people into homelessness
* Persistent biases (against racial minorities, LGBTQ persons, young people, low-income people, etc.)
* Congress’s persistent refusal to create a system that would provide high quality health care at affordable prices for every person in America

Smart and ethical information does exist. But ALMOST NO candidates publicize the smart, ethical information! Also, ALMOST NO candidates go beyond “lip service” and actually push hard for legislation that would strongly promote and protect our best values, such as truth, fairness, compassion, and social/economic justice.

Glen invites people to visit his blog to watch some of his TV programs (and/or read the thorough summaries he typed up) about these persistent, underlying problems. The TV programs’ topics include homelessness, systemic economic injustices, local government abuses that serve real estate developers at the expense of people who need affordable housing, local environmental abuses, and so forth. Plenty of information is at his blog, [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org).

* My May 2021 TV program featured nationwide experts addressing **nationwide economic justice issues** in bold, informative ways:  [**https://parallaxperspectives.org/economic-justice-a-bold-new-agenda-watch-video-and-read-summary-more-info**](https://parallaxperspectives.org/economic-justice-a-bold-new-agenda-watch-video-and-read-summary-more-info)
* Two previous TV programs had addressed the “Missing Middle” and related exploitations by the real estate development sector and the City of Olympia:  March 2019:  **“What’s Wrong with the Missing Middle”** [**“What’s Wrong with the Missing Middle” – Glen's Parallax Perspectives**](http://parallaxperspectives.org/tv-program-whats-wrong-with-the-missing-middle)   AND   April 2020:  **“Affordable Housing: Facts vs. Myths about the ‘Missing Middle'”** [**“Affordable Housing: Facts vs. Myths about the ‘Missing Middle’” – Glen's Parallax Perspectives**](http://parallaxperspectives.org/affordable-housing-facts-vs-myths-about-the-missing-middle)
* You might also find insights from this TV program about homelessness:  July 2019:  **“Houselessness, Human Dignity, and the Right to Survive”** [**“Houselessness, Human Dignity, and the Right to Survive” – Glen's Parallax Perspectives**](http://parallaxperspectives.org/tv-houselessness-human-dignity-and-the-right-to-survive)

New legislation in Congress asserts that it’s not only possible to end poverty, but morally necessary. **In June 2021, Glen read about a new plan to end poverty in the United States:** [**https://www.nationofchange.org/2021/06/08/a-plan-to-end-poverty-in-the-united-states/**](https://www.nationofchange.org/2021/06/08/a-plan-to-end-poverty-in-the-united-states/)This article was written by Sarah Anderson, a nationwide expert on economic justice. Glen interviewed her for his May 2021 TV program. You can watch it through the “TV Programs” part of his blog. Here is the direct link: [**https://parallaxperspectives.org/economic-justice-a-bold-new-agenda-watch-video-and-read-summary-more-info**](https://parallaxperspectives.org/economic-justice-a-bold-new-agenda-watch-video-and-read-summary-more-info)The article begins with these short paragraphs:

“Amidst partisan haggling over President Biden’s infrastructure proposal, the Poor People’s Campaign and several lawmakers recently outlined a comprehensive moral vision for the nation. They believe it’s not only possible to end poverty in this country, but morally necessary.

“’It’s unforgivable that [**250,000 people**](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3134519/) die every year in this country from poverty and inequality,’ said Rep. Barbara Lee during a press conference to unveil a sweeping congressional resolution for a “Third Reconstruction.”

“The resolution’s title draws on the transformational history of the First Reconstruction following the Civil War and the Second Reconstruction of the 20th century civil rights movement — two periods during which multi-racial coalitions achieved significant strides towards racial and economic justice.

“Rep. Pramila Jayapal stressed that a new era of transformational change will require new policy choices. ‘We allow poverty to continue,’ she said, ‘when 55 of the largest corporations paid not one dollar in taxes last year, when we let our health system be focused on profits — not patients.’

“Lee and Jayapal were flanked by Poor People’s Campaign co-chairs Rev. Dr. William Barber II and Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis.

“’What is the cost of inequality?’ asked Barber, pointing out that billionaire wealth has increased by [**more than $1.3 trillion**](https://inequality.org/great-divide/updates-billionaire-pandemic/) during the pandemic while millions have fallen into poverty. ‘This is a moral issue, rooted in the moral commitments of our Constitution. The first thing we had to do is establish justice, promote the general welfare, and to ensure equal protection under the law.’”

“The [**congressional resolution**](https://lee.house.gov/imo/media/doc/LEE_037_xml.pdf) lays out a roadmap for achieving those lofty goals.”

In late December 2021, more information about the federal budget came out. Glen mentioned this information earlier in this article – just after discussing nuclear weapons spending – and provided the web link from a different co-sponsoring organization. Now here is similar information about the federal budget from another organization that researches and reports on such matters, the Institute for Policy Studies ([**www.ips-dc.org**](http://www.ips-dc.org)): [**https://ips-dc.org/fact-sheet-moral-budget-war-budget/?emci=8bfcfcad-605f-ec11-94f6-0050f2e65e9b&emdi=d20c4fc1-755f-ec11-94f6-0050f2e65e9b&ceid=3993183**](https://ips-dc.org/fact-sheet-moral-budget-war-budget/?emci=8bfcfcad-605f-ec11-94f6-0050f2e65e9b&emdi=d20c4fc1-755f-ec11-94f6-0050f2e65e9b&ceid=3993183)

Glen has read IPS’s materials and donated financial support since the 1970s. The article linked above contrasts the “Build Back Better Act” and the “National Defense Authorization Act.” It calls these – respectively – a “Moral Budget” and a “War Budget.” Congress failed to pass the “Moral Budget,” but it passed the “War Budget” with a gigantic bi-partisan majority. We must keep putting pressure on Congress to fund human needs instead of military violence

The peace organization World Beyond War produced a powerful billboard about military spending and hunger. It says, “3% of U.S. military spending could end starvation on earth.” A document explaining the numbers is at this link: [**https://worldbeyondwar.org/explained/**](https://worldbeyondwar.org/explained/)

On February 21, 2022, a Quaker-based organization, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC, [**www.afsc.org**](http://www.afsc.org)) sent a document titled, [**How to build support for cutting Pentagon spending:**](https://click.everyaction.com/k/41705389/329982574/2035699833?utm_campaign=weekendreading&utm_source=weekendreading0212&utm_medium=email&ms=EMA22WR0212&nvep=ew0KICAiVGVuYW50VXJpIjogIm5ncHZhbjovL3Zhbi9BRlNDL0FGU0MvMS81NzE0OCIsDQogICJEaXN0cmlidXRpb25VbmlxdWVJZCI6ICIyNjkyMjdkYi0wNzhjLWVjMTEtYTUwNy0yODE4NzhiODNkOGEiLA0KICAiRW1haWxBZGRyZXNzIjogImdsZW5hbmRlcnNvbkBpbnRlZ3JhLm5ldCINCn0%3D&hmac=subfy6Vi6tl_TKn70pCxoGAgWzzQ9zcaDUWnRXjj5TQ=&emci=10884070-1489-ec11-a507-281878b83d8a&emdi=269227db-078c-ec11-a507-281878b83d8a&ceid=882844). A new AFSC poll found most people want to reduce military spending—and reinvest that money in programs that benefit everyone. AFSC offered some tips ([**Here are some tips**](https://click.everyaction.com/k/41705390/329982575/-543473851?utm_campaign=weekendreading&utm_source=weekendreading0212&utm_medium=email&ms=EMA22WR0212&nvep=ew0KICAiVGVuYW50VXJpIjogIm5ncHZhbjovL3Zhbi9BRlNDL0FGU0MvMS81NzE0OCIsDQogICJEaXN0cmlidXRpb25VbmlxdWVJZCI6ICIyNjkyMjdkYi0wNzhjLWVjMTEtYTUwNy0yODE4NzhiODNkOGEiLA0KICAiRW1haWxBZGRyZXNzIjogImdsZW5hbmRlcnNvbkBpbnRlZ3JhLm5ldCINCn0%3D&hmac=subfy6Vi6tl_TKn70pCxoGAgWzzQ9zcaDUWnRXjj5TQ=&emci=10884070-1489-ec11-a507-281878b83d8a&emdi=269227db-078c-ec11-a507-281878b83d8a&ceid=882844)) you can use in talking with other people to build more support for cutting U.S. spending on weapons and war. **AFSC proposed these four tips with some supporting information:**

**1. Remind people that war is a way to divide us—and that we must reject false divisions along lines of race and class.**

* The United States should be a place where everyone can thrive. That means we cannot let politicians divide us based on what we look like, where we come from, or how much money we have.
* And yet, when the U.S. bombs communities abroad, buys weapons instead of paying for health care, and invests in military contractors instead of sustainable jobs, that’s exactly what they’re doing–dividing us.
* When you’re talking with others about Pentagon spending, remind them that war is the product of artificial division. It's up to us to recognize the dignity of each human being, no matter what. Once we do that, we can all work together to make life better for everyone.

**2. Remind people that when we work together, big changes are possible.**

* Going up against Congress and special interests feels intimidating, but we’ve done it before! When people have joined together across divisions, we’ve won big changes like civil rights and higher wages.
* Today individuals, community groups, and organizations are collaborating to reduce military spending. Last year, 26,000 people signed AFSC’s petition calling for cuts to the Pentagon budget. And over 30 faith groups signed our letter to President Biden asking that his budget include less money for the military.
* By coming together, we can demand our leaders deliver better health care, schools, and jobs—instead of more money for weapons, war, and defense contractors.

**3. Share the truth about how this money is spent.**

* The Pentagon’s bloated budget is more than a number. It represents massive human suffering, corporate and political corruption, and a waste of taxpayer dollars.
* Since 9/11, more than 929,000 people have died due to global military conflict, and 38 million more have been displaced. The human suffering caused by war is compounded by militarism's contribution to climate change. The U.S. military is one of the world’s top producers of greenhouse gasses and the largest institutional consumer of oil.
* Corruption runs rampant in the war machine. Each year, about half of the money spent on the Pentagon goes to private defense contractors that build weapons, surveillance systems, and other tools of war. These defense contractors spend millions of dollars each year lobbying the government to make decisions that are good for their bottom line—not for our communities.
* Despite the massive amount of spending each year on the military, the Pentagon has never passed an audit. Waste, fraud, and abuse run rampant within the department.

**4. Remind people about what’s important—things like health care, economic opportunity, and housing.**

* True safety for our communities happens when we invest in health care, economic opportunity, and housing. When we ensure people have the resources they need to thrive, we can create safer, healthier communities for all.
* If Congress had chosen to spend money on our communities instead of weapons and war this year, we could have paid for over 21 million four-year university scholarships or created over 10 million clean energy jobs!
* So the next time you’re talking about Pentagon spending, say something like: “Our strength comes from our ability to work together—bringing together people from different places and different races. For the U.S. to be a place where everyone can thrive, we cannot let the 1% and the politicians they pay for divide us against each other based on what someone looks like, where they come from, or how much money they have. We need to join together to build a better and more peaceful future, just like we’ve won civil rights and higher wages in the past. By coming together, we can demand our leaders deliver better health care, schools, and jobs, not more money for weapons, war, and corporate defense contractors.”

Let’s pursue other strategies for ending poverty, such as challenging capitalism and its systemic abuses. The “free market” caused the problem of economic inequality, including homelessness – and the “free market” ideology is making it worse now. The “free market” cannot solve homelessness or poverty. We must recognize housing as a human right. The federal government must take strong actions. The article at this link provides information and insights for promoting bold federal actions to make housing a human right: [**https://www.alternet.org/2022/04/housing-is-a-human-right/?utm\_source=&utm\_medium=email&utm\_campaign=10206&recip\_id=22838&list\_id=2**](https://www.alternet.org/2022/04/housing-is-a-human-right/?utm_source=&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=10206&recip_id=22838&list_id=2)

Taxing extreme wealth could lift 2.3 billion people out of poverty. For years Chuck Collins has been writing very knowledgeable and insightful articles about economic inequality. Chuck Collins directs the Program on Inequality for the Institute for Policy Studies ([**www.ips-dc.org**](http://www.ips-dc.org)), an organization Glen has been financially supporting since the 1970s. He co-edits [**www.Inequality.org**](http://www.Inequality.org) at that organization. The article linked here summarizes some important information and urges us to vigorously tax rich people: [**https://www.cnn.com/2022/01/19/perspectives/inequality-poverty-wealth-tax/index.html?emci=e3d071d9-e57a-ec11-94f6-c896650d4442&emdi=cb630e18-f07a-ec11-94f6-c896650d4442&ceid=3993183**](https://www.cnn.com/2022/01/19/perspectives/inequality-poverty-wealth-tax/index.html?emci=e3d071d9-e57a-ec11-94f6-c896650d4442&emdi=cb630e18-f07a-ec11-94f6-c896650d4442&ceid=3993183)

The article begins with these paragraphs:

“The pandemic has shone a spotlight on how inequality kills. As inequalities in income, wealth and access to health care have accelerated, the world's most economically precarious people have suffered far more than their fair share of death and economic loss.

“As a new Oxfam report points out, inequality contributes to the deaths of more than 21,000 people each day. And make no mistake — the pandemic is making inequality worse. Oxfam reports that 99% of the world's workers earned less money than they would have if the pandemic hadn't happened.

“Meanwhile, the world's 500 richest people saw their wealth increase by $1 trillion last year. And here in the US, the combined wealth of our 745 billionaires has increased by over $2 trillion since the pandemic began.”

On February 16, 2022 the Statewide Poverty Action Network ([**www.povertyaction.org**](http://www.povertyaction.org)) sent information explaining that Washington State needs a GUARANTEED BASIC INCOME!!! Their article says each of us is the expert in our own lives and knows how to take care of our needs better than anyone else. Direct, unrestricted cash provides the dignity and choice to be able to care for ourselves and our families. This year, House Bill 2009 was introduced to start a statewide Guaranteed Basic Income program. But with the shorter session in even years, the Housing, Human Services, and Veterans Committee prioritized renter protection bills and there was not enough time for a public hearing on HB 2009. [**https://povertyaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/GBI-Pilot-Program-Fact-Sheet\_HB-2009\_2022.pdf?emci=686d7484-b18e-ec11-a507-281878b83d8a&emdi=8b1090ff-548f-ec11-a507-281878b83d8a&ceid=8365**](https://povertyaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/GBI-Pilot-Program-Fact-Sheet_HB-2009_2022.pdf?emci=686d7484-b18e-ec11-a507-281878b83d8a&emdi=8b1090ff-548f-ec11-a507-281878b83d8a&ceid=8365)

In late July 2021, U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar introduced a Guaranteed Income Bill to Send American Adults $1,200 a Month. See this: [**https://truthout.org/articles/omar-unveils-guaranteed-income-bill-to-send-american-adults-1200-a-month/**](https://truthout.org/articles/omar-unveils-guaranteed-income-bill-to-send-american-adults-1200-a-month/)

This article begins with these paragraphs (edited slightly here):

Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minnesota) plans to introduce a bill that would create a guaranteed income program that would send $1,200 a month to most Americans. The bill, she argues, could be a major step toward ending poverty in the U.S.

The SUPPORT Act would send $1,200 a month to U.S. adults making up to $75,000 a year, or a head of household making up to $112,500 a year, with supplemental income for children, according to HuffPost. The bill would phase out payments at higher income brackets.

The bill strives to include groups that are traditionally left out of government aid like the recent COVID stimulus checks. Undocumented immigrants who file taxes with an ITIN would be included. People without banking accounts or people experiencing homelessness could also access payments through a banking system run by the United States Postal Service.

The SUPPORT Act has been cosponsored by Reps. Cori Bush (D-Missouri), Pramila Jayapal (D-Washington), Dwight Evans (D-Pennsylvania) and Jamaal Bowman (D-New York). It faces long odds in Congress.

An article at HuffPost says Rep. Omar said: “For too long we have prioritized endless growth while millions are homeless, hungry or without healthcare. … We as a nation have the ability to make sure everyone has their basic needs like food, housing and healthcare met.”

A study by the Federal Reserve published in 2019 found that almost 40 percent of Americans didn’t have $400 in savings, leaving them vulnerable if unexpected expenses were to arise.

**Please share this article with your friends. Anyone can visit** [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org) **and click any of these issue categories on my blog: “Peace,” “Military Spending,” Nuclear Weapons,” “Race,” or Economics.”**