

Military Spending and Homelessness

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The President's Budget request for Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) suggests giving the Department of Defense a budget of \$524 billion. Additionally, there is a request for \$59 billion for Overseas Contingency Operations, totaling to \$583 billion for defense spending in FY17.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development has a remarkably smaller budget request at \$48.9 billion for FY17. \$2.7 billion is devoted to funding "homeless assistance grants", which is an increase compared to just \$1.79 billion in FY10. In addition, a mandatory funding of \$11.3 billion over the next ten years has been suggested to end family and chronic homelessness, and much of the budget is intended to fund programs that provide housing and rental support to low income families. However, the ratio of resources spent on defense versus homelessness is still incredibly skewed.

For the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the President has a budget of \$181.2 billion for FY 2017. The Veterans' Affairs budget allocates only \$1.6 billion to combating homelessness, compared to \$3.222 billion in FY10, even though the Dept. of HUD reported in 2015 that roughly one in ten people who are homeless are veterans.

As we have seen from our history with the Vietnam War and the War on Poverty, armed conflict distracts our nation from dire domestic problems. The amount that the government spends on war compared to what it spends on homeless assistance programs and taking care of its war veterans alarmingly show where the values of our nation lie. The federal government has the resources to provide significant aid to homeless people but still lacks the will to end homelessness in America.

Resources

Department of Defense. "Consolidated DoD FY17 Budget Fact Sheet."

http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/features/2016/0216_budget/docs/2-4-16_Consolidated_DoD_FY17_Budget_Fact_Sheet.pdf (accessed December 13, 2016).

Department of Housing and Urban Development. "Proposed FY17 Fact Sheet."

<http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=ProposedFY17FactSheet.pdf> (accessed December 13, 2016).

Department of Veterans Affairs. "FY17 VAs Budget Fact Sheet."

<http://www.va.gov/budget/docs/summary/Fy2017-VAsBudgetFactSheet.pdf> (accessed December 13, 2016.)

Department of Housing and Urban Development. Office of Community Planning and Development. *The 2015 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress*, by Meghan Henry, Azim Shivji, Tanya De Sousa, and Rebecca Cohen. <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2015-AHAR-Part-pdf> (accessed December 13, 2016).