

Press Release 2023

Tax Day 2023

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Divesting from the US Military: “War Tax Resisters” Protest with Their Money

War tax resisters are taking to the streets to call for an end to endless war. They are divesting from the taxes that fund war and investing in people, planet, and justice. Since the beginning of 2022, the US has dedicated over \$30 billion of military aid for war in Ukraine. Most of these funds will be used by the Department of Defense to replenish the military equipment and weapons that have been sent to Ukraine. Essentially, the funds are being used to purchase more military equipment and weapons from US weapons manufacturers.

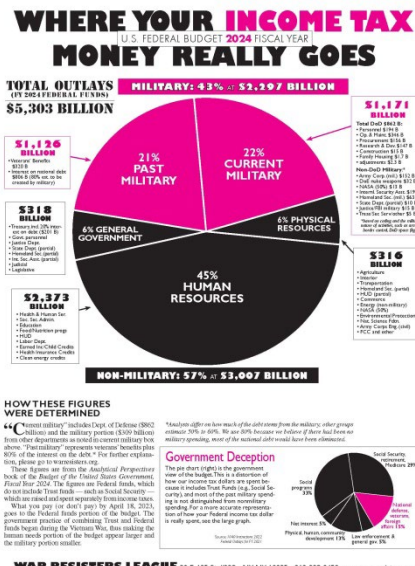
The United States’ endless war on terror continues with drone warfare in Afghanistan. And the US continues its military presence outside its borders with over 800 military bases. In addition, the recently signed National Defense Authorization Act approved \$45 billion more in funding for fiscal year 2023 than President Biden requested.

Since US military spending only continues to increase with no end in sight, we are divesting from war by refusing to pay the federal tax dollars that fund it. Some will refuse all or a portion of their tax debt while others live below the taxable income level. We invite everyone to join us in this public campaign of civil disobedience to war and war funding.

Thousands of people across the United States—from Chico, California to Manhattan—are protesting the US military budget on or around Tax Day (April 18). They will promote war tax resistance and highlight the deep flaws of our current budget.

Local actions will feature a “Back Sale for the Military Victims” in front of Milwaukee’s Army Reserve, “Burma Shave” sign displays during rush hour in Portland, Oregon, a vigil outside Manchester Fuel Depot outside of Seattle (the largest Department of Defense fuel depot on the West Coast) and redirection ceremonies where activists redirect their withheld federal taxes dollars to underfunded organizations.

The proposed federal budget for fiscal year 2024 continues to take our country in the wrong direction. The proposed budget would raise military spending to 43% of current federal spending with \$2.3 trillion dedicated to past and present military expenses.



Erica Leigh of Seattle, Washington, says, “I want to live in accordance with my values and paying for militarism does not fit into that.” Maria Smith of Cleveland, Ohio states that she is “totally transparent on my tax form,” she just refuses to pay for killing at home and abroad. Her war tax resistance “embraces the full amount of my commitment to nonviolence.” Chrissy Kirchhoefer of St. Louis comments, “At the heart of this war tax resistance has always been relationships with each other and ourselves, as we relate to and create the world in which we want to live.”

Highlighting the connection between the US military and environmental harm, NYC War Resisters League will continue its collaboration with Extinction Rebellion NYC and other climate action groups. The US military is the largest institutional user of oil in the world. War Resisters League member Ruth Benn states, “War tax resistance is a quarterly, paycheck-to-paycheck or even daily act of resistance to war, depending on your method, but it can be quite solitary. If nothing else, the annual tax day (thanks, IRS!) gives us a chance to act together.”

The National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee (NWTRCC) has coordinated tax day actions since 1983. NWTRCC is a coalition of local, regional, and national groups providing information and support to people who are conscientious objectors to paying taxes for war. NWTRCC partners with the Global Days of Action on Military Spending coordinated from Barcelona, Spain to join protests of war spending in the US with a demand for global disarmament and a shift in priorities to sustainable development.

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Resources:

War tax resisters are available for interviews. Please contact NWTRCC, 1-800-269-7464, nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org, for contacts in your area.

Up-to-date list of Tax Day actions, <https://nwtrcc.org/tax-day-actions-2023>

“Where Your Income Tax Money Really Goes” — War Resisters League pie chart, <https://www.warresisters.org/resources/wrl-pie-chart-flyers-where-your-income-tax-money-really-goes>

Global Day of Action on Military Spending, <https://demilitarize.org>

Climate Crisis, Taxes, & War, <https://nwtrcc.org/war-tax-resistance-resources/readings/environment-taxes-and-war/>