



Veterans For Peace
Chapter 23, Rochester, New York
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<https://www.veteransforpeacechapter23.org/>

June 10, 2020

Senator Kristen Gillibrand
Kenneth B. Keating Federal Office Building
100 State Street, Room 4195
Rochester, NY 14614

Dear Senator Gillibrand:

In this period of multiple crises facing our nation, it is easy to be caught up in the turmoil engulfing the business of governing. At the same time, we know the business of government is continuing and legislation is being introduced, and acted upon, in Congress. This letter is to request a response to a prior meeting with your staff, and add additional concerns that have arisen in the last month, regarding demands to reallocate portions of our bloated national defense budget.

It's been over a month since 20 fine New York voices of peace and justice (Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Ithaca, Binghamton, Albany, Hudson Valley, Yonkers, NYC, Staten Island, Queens) spoke with Mike Bardin, your military aide on May 7, 2020. Our focus was basic— what major reductions in the 2021 United States military budget will Senator Gillibrand propose?

It is not hyperbole to note that we have found our real enemies and they are not people in foreign lands. Our real and present dangers are pandemic, climate change, racism, poverty, and the militarization of police forces. We insist that you act in the name of the people of New York State, the people of the United States, and our sisters and brothers everywhere.

We insist that you take moral action, legal action, honest action, courageous action, and press your colleagues on the Senate Defense Authorization Committee to make vast redistributions of military funding to real needs.

Our strong request to you is to answer us in this lockdown of Senate doors and robotype phone connections. You need to speak to us soon. There are just days to your decision. Please do what the New York State people want and what you must also want. Make major redistributions from military funding to human needs in shaping the National Defense Authorization Act.

Additionally, we are calling for repeal of the 1033 Program, and demand legislation restricting the use of force by police. Don't put military weapons in the hands of police.

Yours in Peace,

Rev. James L. Swarts
President, Veterans For Peace, Chapter 23, Rochester, NY
On behalf of the Chapter 23 Executive Committee

And in conjunction with the May 7th meeting team:
Charley Bowman, Buffalo Environmental Engineer
Victoria Ross, Executive Director of the WNY Peace Center
James Swarts, Rochester President Veterans for Peace
Clare Grady, Ithaca Catholic Worker
James Ricks, Ithaca Catholic Worker
Ariel Gold, Ithaca National Co-Director Code Pink
Roy VanNostrand, Syracuse VFP, Attorney
Carol Baum, Syracuse Peace Council
Ed Kinane, Syracuse Upstate Drone Action
Michaela Czerkies, Syracuse Peace Council
Ann Tiffany, Syracuse, Upstate Drone Action
Gary Doupe, Bainbridge, United Methodist Pastor
Tim Taugher, Binghamton, Pastor St Francis of Assisi Church
Jack Gilroy, Endwell, President, Broome County Veterans for Peace
John Amidon, Albany, President Albany VFP
Nada Khader, Director, Westchester WESPAC
Nick Mottern, Director of www.knowdrones.org
George Mack, retired NYC Transit Shop Steward
Susan Schnall, NYU Health Professor, President, NYC VFP
Sally Jones, NY State Peace Action Fund Chair