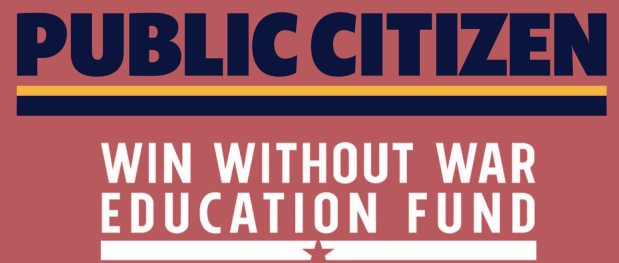


Glorifying Pentagon Excess Is Not Patriotic

Background and Messaging Guidance



President Trump's military parade will take place this **Saturday, June 14th in Washington DC**, on his 79th birthday. Residents of the capital are bracing themselves for the event as they witness military tanks [rolling into](#) the DC metro area. The parade is estimated to **cost \$45 million**, **utilize 7 million pounds of hardware**, and **cause damages to the DC road system that could cost up to \$16 million to repair**.

Although Trump and his cronies tout the parade as a show of military might, **veterans overwhelmingly disapprove of the endeavor**. Instead of ostentatious authoritarian peacocking, **veterans favor a fully-funded VA and direct support to current and former servicemembers** through healthcare, childcare, and military housing initiatives.

President Trump's decision to deploy the National Guard and Marines to Los Angeles despite state and local officials' objections, and to give Defense Secretary Hegseth open-ended authority to "employ" other armed forces to suppress protests, **places this weekend's parade in an even more sinister context**.

Organizers and public officials taking part in [No Kings demonstrations](#) across the nation on Saturday can use the following messaging guidance to highlight how **this vanity parade, the ballooning Pentagon budget, and unlawful domestic military deployments** are connected features of his authoritarian power grab.

Bottom line: The military parade is a costly and self-aggrandizing authoritarian display that exposes the ways Trump is harming the very communities he's sworn to protect.

A Would-Be Dictator's Dream

Trump is abusing his office and wasting taxpayer dollars on a self-aggrandizing political stunt. Alongside the ongoing troop deployment to Los Angeles, he is politicizing the military for his personal gain. They are tests of both how far he can push the military to comply with his authoritarian vision and how much the people of the United States will resist.

- In the United States, military parades have primarily marked the ends of large wars and **the subsequent safe return of servicemembers**. Trump's parade breaks that tradition.
- Billed as a tribute to the U.S. Army's 250th anniversary, June 14th was **going to be a low-key affair** until Trump took office and decided that his birthday needed a parade.

- From Mussolini to today's despots, a leader rolling tanks and troops in front of cameras and the public is a **feature of authoritarian governments**, meant to **showcase dominance** and **instill fear, not pride**.
 - **Autocrats also put soldiers in the streets** – as Trump and Defense Secretary Hegseth are [unlawfully](#) doing this week in California to intimidate protesters and support deportation operations.
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A “Big, Brutal” Budget Bill

While Americans are distracted by Saturday's spectacle, Trump's far-right lackeys in Congress advance a dystopian budget bill that pushes massive tax cuts for the rich and huge giveaways to war profiteers, all at the expense of our healthcare, nutrition, and support for veterans and those needing a leg up.

- **Creating a trillion-dollar police state is not patriotic.** It's directly at odds with maintaining a functioning democracy and protecting citizens' rights to life, free speech, assembly, protest, and ability to engage safely with the state.
 - If enacted, that bill would **enact sweeping tax breaks for billionaires and cut Medicaid and SNAP for millions of Americans**, the largest [attack to the social safety net](#) in decades. That's 2 million [children](#) and 56 thousand families with [veterans](#) going hungry.
 - The bill also contains **\$150 billion in additional Pentagon spending**, including \$25 billion for the President's misguided “Golden Dome” missile shield, \$34 billion for new warships, and \$14 billion for the development of autonomous weapons.
 - The House-passed bill also contains **[well over \\$100 billion](#) for Trump's cruel mass deportation campaign**, including \$45 billion for new immigration detention centers and \$27 billion for arrest operations – **the same kinds of raids on homes and workplaces that are currently terrorizing communities across the United States**.
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Trump's Trillion Dollar Target

Waste doesn't stop with the Big, Brutal Bill. The army parade will be a stark reminder of our misplaced national priorities – how we can spend more on our military than the [next nine countries combined](#), even as we gut public health, education, and basic services.

- **The United States already spends [\\$895 billion](#) a year** on war, waste, and defense contractor profits at the Pentagon – significantly higher than any other agency in the discretionary budget.
- President Trump and Secretary Hegseth are jointly pushing to increase that to [more than \\$1 trillion](#) annually. And **corporate defense contractors will get [roughly 50%](#) of that money**.
- Despite its infamy for cost overruns and administrative waste, **the Pentagon has [never passed an audit](#)**.
- Yet Elon Musk's **DOGE has prioritized targeting programs at the Pentagon that made the military more inclusive**, including initiatives to support women and minority groups in the armed forces, instead of the real and rampant [waste](#), [fraud](#) and abuse swirling from the Pentagon's spigot.

- \$45 million for a birthday parade may seem like couch change compared to a trillion-dollar budget, but **even the trade-offs for that amount are staggering**. In lieu of a military parade, the Southern Poverty Law Center estimates that [\\$45 million could provide](#):
 - School lunches for more than 14 million high school students.
 - A year of Medicaid coverage for almost 6,000 eligible people
 - A year of subsidized housing assistance for 4,500 Georgia households
 - A year of disability compensation for more than 7,200 military veterans
 - A year of SNAP food assistance for nearly 17,700 people
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Oppose the Propaganda Parade



Ultimately, **Trump's military parade is the epitome** of his administration's agenda – creating a government by and for violent billionaires, with zero regard for our lives, wellbeing, or safety.

We must **resist the parade in its entirety** and the **never-ending demand for spending on systems of oppression and war**, calling instead for federal funding for life-sustaining programs and direct human needs.

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