

# Legislators disagree with federal spending

Dear Editor:

It isn't right to take food from the mouths of babes. But that's how Congress is slicing the federal budget pie. The portions for children's programs grow smaller and smaller and the Pentagon keeps getting extra helpings, even though the Cold War has long been over.

The average Alaskan family will pay \$1,700 in federal income taxes this year to support the Pentagon, but little more than \$55 for elementary education and \$145 for AFDC, WIC, Head Start, child care, and summer youth employment programs *combined*.

As state legislators and members of the national Women Legislator's Lobby, we ask you and our Congressional delegation to take a hard look at the way our federal

government spends our tax dollars.

We don't believe that disproportionate investments in military spending will make us more secure; nor do we believe that spending less on children will balance the federal budget by the year 2002. What we do believe is that spending less on children will cost more on tax dollars and lives here in Alaska. One in nine Alaskan children grows up in poverty. One in six children had no prenatal care. Thirty-seven percent lack immunizations. Seventy percent of Head Start eligible children are turned away due to lack of funds.

Still, when Congress slices the federal budget pie, weapons get a bigger piece than hungry children. Despite the fact that

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only half the required tests on the B-2 "stealth" bomber have been done, reports indicate that it can't tell a rain cloud from a mountainside. Even the Secretaries of Defense and Air Force say it's too expensive. Yet Congress voted earlier this year to build 20 additional B-2's at a cost of \$44 *billion* dollars; Alaska's contribution to the B-2 program will be \$88 million in federal tax dollars. That's enough money to send 750 young children to Head Start, feed 5,400 babies and toddlers through the WIC program, and provide summer jobs for 1,900 teenagers - every year for the next 10 years!

If we want long-term security, economic stability, and a bright future we should be investing not in post-Cold War military expenditures but in our children. We urge you to join us in sending this message to our Congressional leaders.

*Signed*

*Senator Judy Salo*

*Rep. Kay Brown*

*Rep. Bettye Davis*

*Rep. Irene Nicholls*

*Rep. Caren Robinson*

*All are members of the national  
Women Legislator's Lobby*