

# Taxpayers Deserve to Know How Congress Spends Our Income Tax Dollars

Help pass the Taxpayers Information and Communication Act

HD.1446 (Rep. Doherty); SD.1775 (Sen. Comerford)

The largest tax burden on most Massachusetts households is their federal income tax. For 2017 the average Massachusetts Household's tax bill was more than \$19,600.

These taxes provide the core of the annual \$1.3 trillion Congressional discretionary Budget (for 2019). A great variety of Massachusetts housing, healthcare, transportation, education and environmental protection programs depend on the many billions of these dollars that are returned to the state. Almost 30% of the entire Commonwealth Budget comes from federal funds.

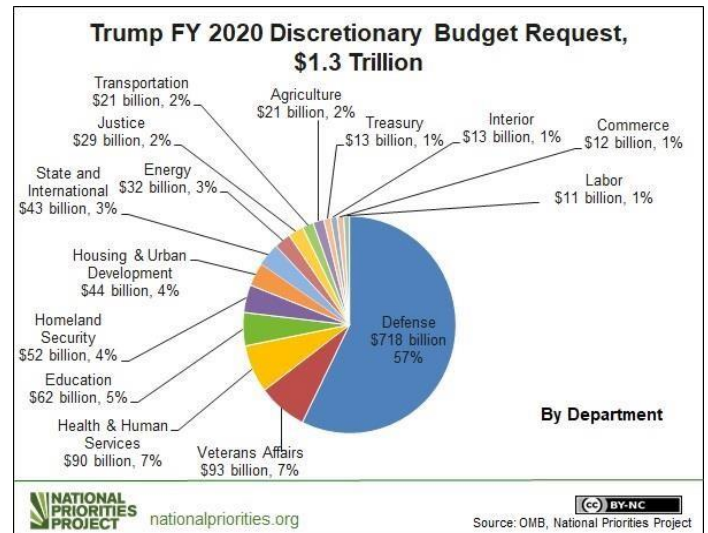
The IRS provides hundreds of guides and reports devoted to federal income taxes. Despite the enormous attention given to the **paying** of our income taxes, citizens are essentially left in the dark with respect to the **spending** of these tax dollars by Congress. No agency of the federal government reports directly back to taxpayers, in easy to understand fashion, how their tax dollars were spent in the prior year budget – not the IRS, not the Treasury Department, nor either branch of Congress.

Similarly, no branch of the state government provides this information, even though many branches, such as transportation, education, housing and human services, receive significant funds from the federal government.

We believe that if citizens knew how their tax dollars were being spent - for example that more than half goes to Pentagon accounts – their views on budget priorities would change.

Many Massachusetts municipalities send their residents annual reports on how their property taxes are spent. Taxpayers need similar information with respect to their federal income taxes. The Commonwealth can do this at very low cost, given the value of the information to Massachusetts residents. It is very difficult to mobilize residents in opposition to federal budget cuts affecting Massachusetts if they are not knowledgeable about the budget contributions.

To this end we are submitting a **Taxpayers Information and Communication Act** to the State Legislature. This simply instructs the State Treasurer to send a yearly, easy to understand report to Massachusetts taxpayers on how the Congress spent their federal tax dollars, and how the General Court spent their state tax dollars, in the prior budget year. Information would be provided in a simple and easy to understand format.



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