

# BAY AREA WOMEN IN BLACK

## It's April 15 – Do You Know Where Your Tax Dollars Are Going?

There is a lot of talk these days about morality – what's right, what's wrong, who decides. We think a country's budget is morality in action. It expresses American priorities and values.

### Is This What You Value?

Affordable housing, quality education for all our children, healthcare for everyone, jobs and opportunities for ourselves and our youth, services for the most vulnerable among us, peace and security in our neighborhoods and around the world.

### What Americans Got Instead

At \$2.4 trillion, President Bush proposed one of the tightest budgets on record calling for the substantial cutting or elimination of 150 federal programs including Medi-cal, Head Start, Child Care funding, Food Stamps, Violence Against Women Programs and low-income housing.

- HUD (low income housing) would be cut by about \$3.7 billion.
- Elementary schools will receive \$12 billion less than promised, leaving the federal program No Child Left Behind seriously underfunded.
- All federal spending on vocational education, \$1.2 billion, would be eliminated
- Most importantly, the cost of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are not in the budget. The Administration plans to seek an estimated \$82 billion as supplemental appropriations later in the year when the budget is already approved.  
This deception hides the escalating costs of this war.

### What Could Our California Tax Dollars Buy?

The War in Iraq has cost the State of California **\$20,164,000**

That money could have been spent on:

- **\$2,670,813** for one year of Head Start Pre-school programs
- **12,074,641** children given health insurance for one year
- **349,455** public school teachers hired for the California schools
- **977,538** College Scholarships for four years in a public University
- **181,564** units of public housing built

Source: <http://www.nationalpriorities.org/warcity/cost>

## What Can You Do?

Here are some suggestions borrowed from activist Medea Benjamin at [www.CommonDreams.org](http://www.CommonDreams.org)

1. Write letters, call and email local media demanding that they cover the victims of the war.
2. Support military families who speak out against the war, and soldiers who speak out and refuse to fight. Military Families Speak Out ([www.mfso.org](http://www.mfso.org)) is a group of over 1000 families with loved ones in the military.
3. Work against recruitment efforts which target our young people with lies about the great opportunities that await them in the military. Get more information at <http://www.objector.org>
4. Pressure Congress to stop further war funding. You can keep informed about initiatives to pressure Congress through websites such as: <http://www.moveon.org> <http://www.aclu.org> <http://www.PFAW.org> <http://www.truemajority.org> <http://www.unitedforpeace.org>
5. Wear a button that will generate conversation with colleagues and friends
6. Begin a neighborhood group, meet regularly and stay current on the local initiatives that affect your community and neighborhood.

As women embracing life and peace, we declare ourselves opposed to the U.S. foreign policy. We oppose all elected officials who support the continuation of this war. No past stand or history can be called upon to overshadow the imperative to stand today for peace. We, as women acting to shape public life, dedicate our energy, resources, and hopes to those who establish peace. Women are the life-givers, the first care-givers from breastfeeding and subsistence farming which feeds most of the world, to cleaning, nursing, teaching. As women, we are the victims of many kinds of violence and understand that warfare creates endless cycles of violence, destruction and death, impoverishing us spiritually and economically. We embrace peace because warfare destroys family life, throwing whole communities into exile and turning children into orphans. We embrace peace because we cannot build our lives on ground polluted by violence. We will either take our place in the family of nations as seekers of peace and justice or we will continue down this terrible road unleashing the fury of generations to come on our land. We call upon you to act with integrity, to show courage and remember that you are guardians of the public trust and of the world we leave to our children.

**BAY AREA WOMEN IN BLACK** wears black as a symbol of sorrow for all victims of war and as a way to join in spirit with the more than 200 other Women in Black groups around the world who protest against militarism, violence, oppression, anti-Semitism, and racism, wherever it occurs. We oppose militaristic and fundamentalist leadership in all countries around the globe, including our own. We are committed to nonviolent resistance against tyranny. We believe all people have the right to security, home, education and freedom.

As a group of Jewish feminists and our allies, we stand in solidarity with Israeli Women in Black who have held vigils weekly since 1988 to protest the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, and to mourn the Israeli and Palestinian lives that have been lost.

To find out more about us or to join our work, please contact us through our website or mailing address.

<http://www.bayareawomeninblack.org>

Bay Area Women in Black

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