

Voting: 2022 and 2024

We must turn out the vote in 2024 for a demilitarized, green, sustainable economy



In 2022, Americans voted against extremism, Trumpism, intolerance, culture wars, Christian nationalism, and election liars.

In 2022, American voters endorsed important values including democracy, freedom, progress, civility, governing, and reasonableness.

In 2024, will enough Americans turn out to vote for a demilitarized, green, sustainable economy?

Peace Action's PeaceVoter project will use digital media to encourage Americans to vote. This will require financial support to pay for the internet advertising.

Reducing the "defense" budget is necessary to build a new, green economy, which is the challenge of the 2020s. Americans need presidential and congressional candidates who will reduce Pentagon spending, take 400 land-based nuclear-armed missiles off hair-trigger alert, and cancel spending \$1.7 trillion to "modernize" the entire nuclear arsenal.

Peace Voter will work to Get Out The Vote (GOTV) in 2024. Watch for ways you can help in future editions of the FLASH!

Are you aware? Take this survey!

1. Have you read that there have been 392 U.S. military interventions since 1776?
___ Yes ___ No ___ Not sure
2. Have you read that the U.S. now has 750 military bases in at least 85 countries?
___ Yes ___ No ___ Not sure
3. Are you aware that both President Trump and President Biden have raised the "defense" budget by 20%?
___ Yes ___ No ___ Not sure
4. Are you aware that the number of nuclear warheads was over 70,000, but there are still over 13,000 in the 9 nuclear nations?
___ Yes ___ No ___ Not sure
5. Are you aware that Peace Action of Michigan advocates for the cancellation of the \$1.7 trillion plan to upgrade all U.S. nuclear warheads and missiles?
___ Yes ___ No ___ Not sure
6. Are you ready to make a generous year-end donation to Peace Action of Michigan?
___ Yes ___ Not yet but soon

Please use the enclosed response envelope or go to our website, www.peaceactionmich.org

Peace Action Celebrates 2023 PeaceBuilders



Photos by Dwight Cendrowski



Peace Action of Michigan honored three Musical PeaceBuilders on October 29, 2023 — Julie Beutel and Bill Meyer (with Peace Action's Keith Gunter, above), and Charlie King (left). The celebration was enjoyed by a full crowd at the Pleasant Ridge Community Center.

More photos on page 4

FLASH!

The Newsletter of
Peace Action of Michigan
peaceactionmich.org



The views and opinions in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the position of Peace Action of Michigan

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OUR MISSION

Peace Action of Michigan is a democratic, grassroots movement organizing locally to achieve a new foreign policy leading to a just World Without Violence

We seek:

- A demilitarized, sustainable economy
- The abolition of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction
- Diplomatic resolutions to global conflict

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INSIGHTS & BRIEFS

By Dan Butts

Dan Butts is a semi-retired psychologist, health educator, and massage therapist. He is a Peace Action of Michigan Board Member.

One year after Russian mobilization

Russians avoiding the draft are daring to speak out. We shouldn't forget that there have been hundreds of thousands of Russian draft resisters during the Ukraine war.

—Lawrence Wittner, September 21

Putin's war in Ukraine harms millions

More and more Ukrainians are sheltering in place among the rubble without electricity and access to food and medical supplies. The number of refugees from Ukraine is enormous. Plus, millions in Africa face higher food prices and shortages.

Evaluate charities at charitywatch.org. Consider donating to redcross.org or doctorswithoutborders.org.

60 Years Ago

On September 24, 1963, the U.S. Senate ratified the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty to outlaw nuclear explosions in outer space or underwater, but not in the air. The Soviet Union and the United Kingdom

also ratified the treaty that fall.

President John F. Kennedy, speaking at American University in June, 1963, had announced that the U.S. would immediately cease nuclear tests in the atmosphere as long as others did. We need more U.S. initiatives to curb the danger of nuclear annihilation.

Oppenheimer Redux

Los Alamos is preparing to overhaul the nuclear war making arsenal. Doves of new workers are gathering to produce plutonium cores — key components for nuclear weapons. The number of workers is now over 17,000.

Global Peace Index

Global peacefulness has fallen for nine consecutive years due to conflicts, the Covid pandemic, and political and cultural polarization. The four most peaceful countries are:

#4: New Zealand; #3: Ireland; #2: Denmark; #1: Iceland. In the militarization domain, the U.S. ranks #161 in the company of Israel, Russia, and North Korea.

—Visionofhumanity.org

A Pro-Peace, Pro-Justice Agenda for Ukraine

- 1 The United States and charities should maintain humanitarian and economic aid to Ukraine.
- 2 The U.S. should not attach neoliberal strings to loans to Ukraine because they will add to the cost of rebuilding. The U.S. should pair this with championing debt relief for Least Developed Countries to support the clean energy transition, deal with climate disasters, and mitigate increased food prices.
- 3 The U.S. should engage in multilateral diplomacy to seek off ramps to the war. This includes talks with China and other major countries like India, Brazil, and South Africa that have the leverage to pressure Russia to remove troops from areas that it holds.

“We hope that those who want a ceasefire immediately, and those who support Ukraine in fighting to regain the territories Russia has annexed, can join together in supporting these concrete pro-peace approaches. Please write to your members of Congress today and ask them to support 3 steps for peace and justice.”

—Jon Rainwater, Executive Director, Peace Action, October 3, 2023



Gaza: Ceasefire NOW



Photos by Barbara Barfield

Thousands of people took to the streets in downtown Detroit, Dearborn, and throughout the world to demand a ceasefire and an end to the Israeli blockade of Gaza that is preventing food, medicine, water, electricity and fuel from reaching millions of civilians.

Michigan's congressional representatives need to co-sponsor Ceasefire NOW, H. Res. 786, to get an immediate ceasefire and entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza.

We have an urgent and moral duty to save the lives of those harmed by the denial of food, water, and electricity. Too many

innocent Israeli and Palestinian people have been killed.

We urge all parties to fully respect international humanitarian law. Call 202-2224-3121 or use your representative's and senators' websites.

—Peace Action and Peace Action of Michigan

Arms Control and Gun Safety

Peace Action and labor activist Lawrence S. Wittner has long written that international arms control issues are remarkably similar to gun safety issues in the U.S.

Gun safety activists assert that the increase in the number of guns in the U.S. increases the use of guns for murderous purposes.

Arms controllers make much the same case, asserting that weapons buildups lead to threats of violence and war.

The more access people have to weapons, the more likely they are to use them. States and nations that have strict gun safety laws have less gun-related violence than those that don't. Likewise, heavily-armed countries are more often at war than are militarily weaker nations. Just look at Syria and the Congo.

Saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war is the reason the United Nations was created. A dramatic "Swords into Plowshares" statue adorns the garden of the



U. N. headquarters in New York City. The problem with the United Nations is that it is often too weak to resolve conflicts between nations.

End Gun Violence Michigan is the principal gun safety advocacy organization in the state. Its lobbying is one vital reason Michigan adopted a trio of gun safety laws in 2023: universal background checks, new gun storage requirements, and "red flag" laws meant to keep firearms out of the hands of people who pose an immediate threat to others or themselves.

—Check out the website: migunsafety.org

The Pentagon is the Elephant In the Climate Activist Room

As long as climate and peacemaking activists ignore the Pentagon's contribution to a warming planet, the twin campaigns to protect planet earth and its peoples from overheating and war will fall short.

The U.S. military is the world's largest institutional oil consumer. It creates more greenhouse gas emissions than 140 nations combined and accounts for about one-third of America's total fossil fuel consumption. It will be hard to meet the Paris climate goals without reducing the activities of the Pentagon.

Americans' access to resources to mitigate climate change such as buying solar panels will be hurt if the U.S. does not reduce the nearly trillion-dollar annual military budget. Ever-increasing Pentagon spending blocks Americans from getting their fair share of the economic pie and perpetuates income and wealth inequality.

Ordinary Americans, especially Black, Brown and poor communities, are forced to pay taxes for endless war and environmental degradation. To defend earth, sky and sea, peace and green activists must put forth more time and energy to end the war on terror and abolish nuclear weapons.

When political leaders stress that they want consumers to curtail their personal carbon footprint such as switching to an electric vehicle, are they not avoiding responsibility for the huge carbon "bootprint" the military is leaving around the world? Hundreds of military installations are likely contaminated by "forever chemicals" known as PFAS.

Who remembers Vice President Kamala Harris saying, "For years there were wars fought over oil; in a short time there will be wars fought over water?" Safety and security require preventing "man-made" drought and flooding.

Peace and climate justice are linked and require cooperative rather than adversarial relationships with other nations. The U.S.



must work with India and China to reduce the negative consequences of a changing climate.

When it comes to voting for a federal budget that addresses the serious threat of climate change, the Pentagon is the elephant in the living room. A peaceful planet is necessary to make it a sustainable planet.

Peace and environmental activists must make sure that our tax dollars are being spent on the projects that matter the most. So, more citizens need to lobby Congress to redirect our taxes from Pentagon spending to domestic priorities like health care, education, and infrastructure.

— Based on *"The Pentagon is the Elephant In the Climate Activist Room"* by Melissa Garriga and Tim Biondo in *Common Dreams*, Sept. 8, 2023.

Pentagon Prioritizes Nuclear Modernization

A top Pentagon official said her top priority is ensuring the Department of Defense is proactive as it executes its nuclear modernization efforts. Modernization is a "no-fail mission" grounded in the Biden administration's 2022 Nuclear Posture Review. The modernization mission, which is being carried out over the next two decades, will upgrade all three legs of the nuclear triad — missiles, bombers, and submarines.

The Sentinel intercontinental ballistic missiles will replace the 400 Minuteman III missiles loaded with nuclear bombs, which are on "hair-trigger" alert. The senators in the western states housing the ICBMs lobby heavily for modernization.

The Columbia class ballistic submarines will replace the twelve Ohio class submarines carrying ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads. Each sub will carry 16 missiles and will remain in service until 2085. The Navy and American taxpayers will be burdened by the costs for seven decades.

The B-21 Raider bombers will replace the B-2A bombers. The nuclear bomb armed stealth long-range bombers are projected to cost \$203 billion over 30 years for a fleet of 100 B-21s.

—Based on *"Pentagon Tackling Nuclear Modernization With Positive, Integrated Approach"* by Joseph Clark, *Department of Defense News*, Aug. 25, 2023

Celebrating with our 2023 Musical PeaceBuilders



Photos by Dwight Cendrowski



Editorial Notes:

- Threatening nuclear war is much more of a U.S. priority than nuclear disarmament.
- U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says that the mixture of nuclear modernization and rising global mistrust is a “recipe for annihilation.” —Aug. 30, 2023
- The ultimate answer to avoiding nuclear nightmares is the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It went into force on Jan. 22, 2021, and 68 nations have ratified it. Watch for details on a Jan. 22, 2024 commemoration in suburban Detroit at peaceactionmich.org.

Peace Action of MICHIGAN

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An Open Letter: Please send your version!



**Senators Gary Peters and Debbie Stabenow:
Sign the Pledge at pledge.icanw.org to advocate for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Pledge is a project of the Nobel Peace Prize winning International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.**

Dear Senators Gary Peters and Debbie Stabenow,

I am one of your many constituents who worries that we are closer to a nuclear war than at any time since the Cuban Missile Crisis.

You can ease my fears a little by signing the Pledge at pledge.icanw.org to advocate for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The Pledge is a project of the Nobel Peace Prize winning International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

When you sign the Pledge, you will join thousands of legislators world-wide who are advocating to eliminate every nuclear weapon in every nation through the adoption of the TPNW.

The TPNW makes it illegal under international law to develop, test, produce, possess, stockpile, transfer, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. 68 nations have ratified the treaty since it went into effect on January 22, 2021.

The U.S. is already committed to nuclear disarmament since it signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) over 40 years ago along with Britain, France, Russia, and China. The U.S. must follow through, and the TPNW is the best path forward.

If the U.S. doesn't lead by ratifying the TPNW, it will be very difficult to get the other eight nuclear-armed powers to get rid of their nuclear arsenals. And unless we get rid of all nuclear weapons, sooner or later, they are going to be used, whether on purpose or by accident.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Member of Peace Action of Michigan

Editorial Note: Send your version of the letter to Senators Peters and Stabenow at peters.senate.gov and stabenow.senate.gov. You can also send a short phone message by calling 202-224-3121.