

## Alternative service for drafted dollars: The Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill

**How the Bill Would Work:** The Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill in the U.S. Congress would amend the Internal Revenue Code to recognize the legal status of conscientious objection to military taxes. The bill would allow taxpayers conscientiously opposed to participation in war to pay their federal income, estate, and gift taxes toward nonmilitary purposes only. A Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund trust fund would be established in the federal treasury to receive the taxes of these persons. Congressional appropriations committees would be required to report each year on the level of usage of the Peace Tax Fund. Funds in the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund would be allocated annually to any nonmilitary appropriation.

**Where the Money Would Go:** Funds in the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund would be allocated annually to any federal appropriation that is not for a military purpose.

**Where the Money Would Not Go:** The Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund defines “military purpose” as: “... any activity or program which any agency of the Government conducts, administers, or sponsors and which effects an augmentation of military forces or of defensive and offensive intelligence activities, or enhances the capability of any person or nation to wage war...”

### Talking Points in Favor of the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill

- Free exercise of religion is an inalienable right. The bill affirms the religious freedom of taxpayers who are conscientiously opposed to participation in war.
- Taxpayers who have deep ethical, moral and/or religious objections to participation in war see themselves as being “drafted” into military service through their tax dollars. They are being asked to do what their consciences find unacceptable.
- Conscientious objection to participation in military service based upon moral, ethical, or religious beliefs is recognized in federal law. Similarly, people with deeply held religious, moral, or ethical beliefs against participation in war must have legal alternatives to paying for it. The “alternative service” done by our Peace Tax Fund dollars would be parallel to the provision for alternative service for conscientious objectors to bodily military service.
- Increasingly, the ability of a government to wage war relies less on conscripted soldiers and more on “drafted dollars” to pay for advanced technology. These advanced weapons perpetrate violence due to their incredible destructive powers.
- These weapons also cause devastation in our communities by draining essential resources needed for education, food, and health.
- Taxpayers who are conscientious objectors recognize and affirm their civic and legal responsibilities to pay taxes, and seek to do so without violation of their moral, ethical, or religious beliefs.
- A significant increase in support for the concept of a Peace Tax Fund has been realized in recent years, with over 75 diverse national and regional organizations, including historic peace churches, mainline Protestant denominations; Catholic, Jewish and Unitarian organizations; and civil liberties and peace groups formally endorsing the legislation.



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FOR THE SAKE OF CONSCIENCE

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