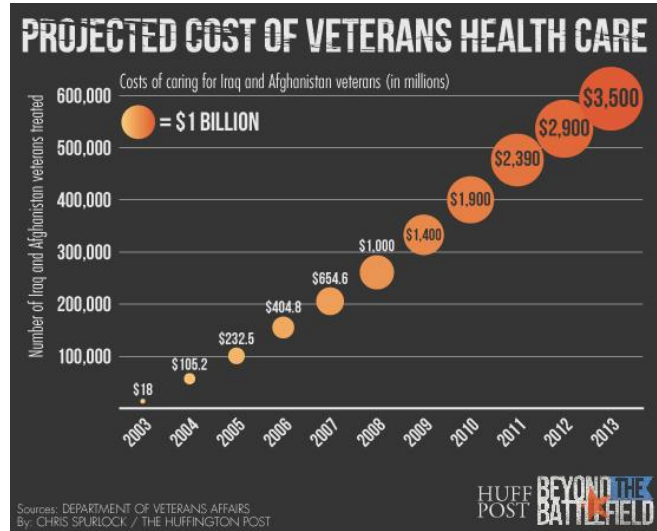


## Costs of Veterans Health Care

In a report that the Congressional Budget Office issued last summer, economist Heidi L. W. Golding said future costs for the Department of Veterans Affairs to treat veterans "will be substantially higher (in inflation-adjusted dollars) than recent appropriations for that purpose, partly because more veterans are likely to seek care in the VA system but mostly because health care costs per enrolled veteran are projected to increase faster than the overall price level."



Responsibility for caring for veterans could add at least another half-trillion dollars to the U.S. debt, according to Harvard economist Linda Bilmes. Yet there is at present no long-term strategy on how to pay for it. Money for veterans' care emerges from the annual budget squabbles in Congress. Unlike a pension fund or even Social Security, Congress doesn't actually set aside funds for future obligations to veterans.

Sources:

- <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/beyond-the-battlefield/>
- [http://big.assets.huffingtonpost.com/healthcosts\\_update.jpg](http://big.assets.huffingtonpost.com/healthcosts_update.jpg)
- <http://www.cbo.gov/publication/21773>

## Spending priorities

Instead of:	Prevent proposed spending cuts:
\$25 million for <i>just one</i> Trident II nuclear missile	\$23.3 million for veterans training and employment services
\$468 million for six V-22 Osprey helicopters	\$410 million for energy assistance for low-income households, one in five which has at least one vet
\$7 million for 54 active-duty personnel in Europe and Asia	\$6.8 million on proposed cuts to housing for homeless veterans
\$35 billion on half the cost of Defense Department overruns	\$38.6 billion on proposed cuts to veterans' services

## Veterans falling through the chasm

### Veterans are disproportionately homeless

- Nearly one in seven homeless adults are veterans, as of December 2011.
- More than 67,000 homeless veterans were counted on a given January night in America last year. More than 4 in 10 homeless veterans were found unsheltered.
- Almost half of homeless veterans were African American in 2008 despite the fact that only 11 percent of veterans overall are African American.
- 1.5 million veterans are at risk of homelessness due to poverty, lack of support networks, and dismal living conditions in overcrowded or substandard housing.

### Many veterans have trouble finding good jobs

- 30.2 percent of veterans ages 18 to 24 were unemployed according to unpublished 2011 Bureau of Labor Statistics data.
- Nearly 1 in 10 veterans with disabilities were not employed in 2010.
- According to Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, a 2007 survey showed that more than one-third of employers were unaware of protections they must provide to service members, and more than half spent less than 2 percent of their recruitment budget on military advertising and/or did not understand the qualifications of military service.
- In that same survey more than half of all veterans were unsure of how to professionally network, and nearly three in four felt unprepared to negotiate salary and benefits and/or unable to effectively translate military skills.
- More than 968,000 of veterans ages 18 to 64 had been in poverty in the past year in 2010.

### The safety net provides veterans with critical food, heat, and health assistance

- More than 33,000 veterans were housed since 2009 by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Veterans Affairs in permanent, supportive housing with case managers and access to VA health care.
- Through its Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program, the Veterans Administration provided a wide range of career services, including counseling and training, to more than 116,000 veterans with service-connected disabilities in fiscal year 2011.
- \$31 million of SNAP/food stamps funding in 2008 was spent at military commissaries to help feed military members and their families who struggle against hunger.
- A veteran lives in one in five households benefiting from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which provides heating and cooling assistance.
- 1.2 million veterans used mental health services in 2010.

Source:

<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/military/news/2012/03/06/11201/veteran-poverty-by-the-numbers>

## Suggested Reading

### Books

Kill Anything That Moves - The Real American War in Vietnam - Nick Turse , Metropolitan Books, 2013

<http://billmoyers.com/2013/02/08/excerpt-kill-anything-that-moves/>

The Invisible Wounds of War – Coming Home from Iraq and Afghanistan  
Marguerite Guzman Bouvard, Prometheus Books, 2012

[www.randomhouse.com/.../invisible-wounds-of-war-by-marguerite-guzman-bouvard](http://www.randomhouse.com/.../invisible-wounds-of-war-by-marguerite-guzman-bouvard)

### Articles

“Beyond the Battlefield – Rebuilding Wounded Warriors”, David Wood, Huffington Post. 10 / 2011. The 10-part series is an exploration of the physical and emotional challenges that catastrophically wounded soldiers, their families, and caretakers, face after the wounded warrior returns home.

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/beyond-the-battlefield>

“The Things They Carry: Veterans’ Top Challenges”, Jim MacMillan, Dart Center, Columbia University. 8/20/11. An overview of challenges and issues, within the home, and outside the home, faced by returning service members.

<http://dartcenter.org/content/issues-faced-by-veterans>

“North Carolina Women Pay the Price for the Sequester”, Samantha Everett, Women Advance NC. 4/3/2013. Sequestration cuts particularly harm women in North Carolina, home to more than 120,000 military families.

<http://womenadvancenc.org/north-carolina-women-pay-the-price-for-the-sequester>

“Tax Plans Would Harm 64,000 Military Families in North Carolina”. NC Justice Center’s Budget and Tax Center. 7/2/13. Allowing the Earned Income Tax Credit to expire will increase the tax burden on 800,000 North Carolinians, including low-income military families.

<http://ncjustice.org>

“Sad, Sobering Statistics on Veteran Suicide”, Jeff Smith, Gapers Block blog. 2/01/13. The Veterans Administration estimates that 22 veterans commit suicide each day, resulting in some 6500 deaths per year.

<http://gapersblock.com/mechanics/2013/02/01/sad-sobering-statistics>

“Is there an Army Cover Up of Rape and Murder of Women Soldiers?” Ann Wright, Common Dreams, 4/28/2008.

Col. Wright (Ret.) on the prevalence of military sexual assault on female troops.

<http://www.commondreams.org/view/2008/04/28>

**Proclamation calling on Congress to Fund Urgently Needed Services and Infrastructure Repair in Raleigh and Throughout the United States by Bringing Our War Dollars Home and Reducing Military Spending.**

**WHEREAS** the members of the Raleigh City Council and the constituents we represent want to ensure the safety, as well as the physical and mental well-being of U.S. soldiers, veterans, and their families, and

**WHEREAS** more than 100,000 American soldiers have been officially injured in Iraq and Afghanistan, and 520,000 veterans or our Middle Eastern wars have filed disability claims with costs of their care expected to total between \$600 billion and \$1 trillion by 2040 <sup>(1)</sup>, and **WHEREAS**, the US government has spent well over 1 trillion dollars nationally on the wars and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001, with North Carolina taxpayers' share of that total at \$34 billion, and Raleigh taxpayer's share of that total is \$1.7 billion <sup>(3)</sup>, and

**WHEREAS** the core defense budget has gone up for an unprecedented 13 straight years and reduction in defense spending will help reduce the federal deficit <sup>(2)</sup>, and

**WHEREAS** the \$50 billion reduction in defense spending required by sequestration under the Budget Control Act (adjusted in real dollars) is equivalent to what was spent in FY2007 and will keep defense spending above the Cold War average <sup>(2)</sup>, and

**WHEREAS** even with a reduction of \$50 billion, the United States will spend more on defense than the next 17 nations combined, most of whom are our allies, and 3 times more than the Chinese <sup>(2)</sup>, and

**WHEREAS** the severity of the ongoing economic crisis has created budget shortfalls at all levels of government and requires us to reexamine our national spending priorities; and in Wake County budget cuts causing layoffs, cutbacks, and continual damage to our public education system <sup>(4)</sup>, and

**WHEREAS** 1.6 million residents of NC live in poverty with nearly 50% of those having incomes less than half of the federal poverty level; in Wake County 1 in 6 children live in poverty <sup>(5, 6, 7)</sup>, and

**WHEREAS**, cuts to federal programs such as Community Block Development Grants (CDBGs) and the Home Investment Partnership program (HOME) have forced Raleigh and local agencies and non-profits to lay off staff, reduce or eliminate services, delay infrastructure projects and reduce program benefits to low and moderate income families; and

**WHEREAS**, funding for a constructive economy that sustains high level educational services for the K through college, job growth, equal access to medical care, low cost housing, infrastructure repair, environmental protections, and family financing throughout North Carolina, especially in cities such as Raleigh, has been diverted to wars and occupations, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Raleigh City Council call upon the U.S. Congress and President Obama to end our military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan, bring our war dollars home, and use those and other savings in military spending to meet vital human needs, promote job creation, rebuild our infrastructure, aid municipal and state governments, and develop a new economy based upon renewable, sustainable energy.

1. Gusterson, Hugh, "The Costs of War", 2011 *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, September 6, 2011

2. Korb, Lawrence J., "6 Reasons to Keep the Defense Budget Sequestration Cuts", Center for American Progress, April 3, 2012.

3. National Priorities Project, <http://costofwar.com>, Nov. 1, 2012.

4. Warren, Louisa B. "A Better Future Begins in Pre-K," *Policy & Progress*, North Carolina Justice Center, Spring 2012, p. 13.

5. Hawes, Julia, "Poverty Tour Exposes Lack of Economic Opportunity," *Policy & Progress*, North Carolina Justice Center, Spring 2012, p. 1.

6. Sirota, Alexandra Forter and Burch, Brenna Elford, "Dismantling Pathways to Economic Mobility in NC," *Policy & Progress*, North Carolina Justice Center, Spring 2012, p. 1, 10-11.

7. <http://pulse.ncpolicywatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/NC-County-Data-Poverty-and-Deep-Poverty-Rates.pdf>