



SPEAK OUT NOW

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Marriage – Gay or Straight, A Civil Right Everyone Deserves

Last Wednesday, President Obama announced that he is personally in favor of gay marriage. His announcement has opened up a constant discussion in the media. Obama and the Democrats are trying to make themselves seem like champions for the civil rights of gay Americans, while the Republicans are trying to tap into the prejudice against gay people. Both sides hope to mobilize people to vote for them in the elections in November.

The issue of gay marriage is without question an issue of civil rights. Gay people deserve every right that every other person has. No matter what opponents of gay marriage believe, how dare they call for a vote on the rights of others? Do people get to vote on where you live? Do people get to vote on where you are allowed to travel? Do people get to vote on whether you are allowed to practice your cultural or religious beliefs?

In fact there was a time when people did vote on such things. After the Civil War, the elite in the South mobilized white voters based on fear and racism, to oppress the newly-freed black people. The Jim Crow laws denied the civil rights that black people were entitled to as citizens. Black people were limited by law to live, work, and travel only in places that the white majority determined were acceptable. Laws were put in place that made it illegal for people of different races to marry. And laws were put in place that took away the rights of black people to even vote.

No one today would argue that these sort of limitations on the rights of black people were okay just because a prejudiced majority of white southerners voted on it. So how can we stand to watch the same thing done to gay people? The methods are the same. Politicians play on people's prejudices and insecurities, saying that gay marriage would be an attack on the institution of marriage. They make people afraid of allowing gay people to have the rights that straight people enjoy.

Marriage is not just a title. It carries with it legal rights. How many health care plans have provisions for spouses?

Without the right to marry, gay partners aren't always covered. What about hospital visitation rights? Without the right to marry, gay partners can be denied hospital visits. What about the right to adopt children? Married couples are given preference in adoption. Without the right to marry, gay people can be denied the right to have families.

Of course it's not the same everywhere. In some states like Massachusetts, gay people have every sort of protection. They have the right to marry and the right to adopt children. They have the right to rent or own homes, to work, and go to school without discrimination. They have the right to receive the benefits offered by their partners' employers. But in other states like Alabama, discrimination in housing, work, or school is not illegal. What's worse, there are the laws banning marriage and adoption by gay couples. How can two sets of rights exist in the same country?

In fact the practice of state governments deciding which rights people are entitled to has always been the way for the federal government to avoid dealing with prejudice and injustice. When the civil rights movement was tearing down racist laws in the 1960's, the politicians pretended to support the civil rights movement while hiding behind the right of states to define local laws and customs. Is it different today?

President Obama has no intention of using the power of the federal government to defend the rights of gay people. He has made it clear that his statement is a personal opinion. He says that he supports the right of states to decide.

Gay marriage is a civil right, and just like every civil right that has been won in this country, it will only happen if people force the law to change. Until then the politicians will use people's rights as a tool to position themselves. Regardless of what they say, we should not accept that people's rights are put up for a vote in the elections. We should demand full civil rights for everyone in this country, including gay people, without compromise.

WHERE YOUR INCOME TAX MONEY REALLY GOES

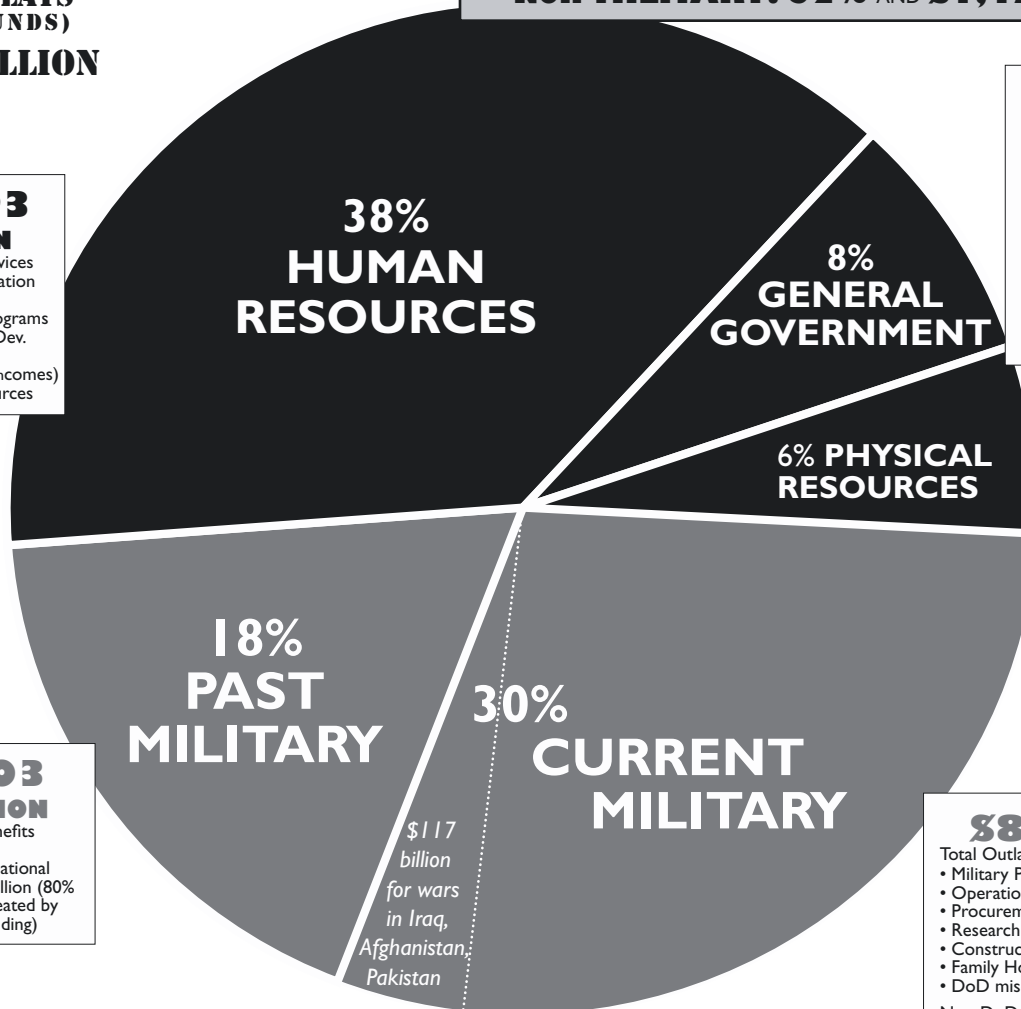
U.S. FEDERAL BUDGET 2012 FISCAL YEAR

**TOTAL OUTLAYS
(FEDERAL FUNDS)
\$2,847 BILLION**

Non-MILITARY: 52% AND \$1,475 BILLION

**\$1,093
BILLION**

- Health/Human Services
- Soc. Sec. Administration
- Education Dept.
- Food/Nutrition programs
- Housing & Urban Dev.
- Labor Dept.
- Tax Credits (lower incomes)
- other human resources



**\$218
BILLION**

- Treasury, incl. 20% Interest on debt (\$95B)
- Government personnel
- Justice Dept.
- State Dept. (partial)
- International Affairs
- NASA (50%)
- Judicial
- Legislative
- Allowances (proposals)
- other general govt.

**\$164
BILLION**

- Agriculture
- Interior
- Transportation
- Homeland Security (\$10B)
- HUD
- Commerce
- Energy (non-military)
- Environmental Protection
- Nat. Science Fdn.
- Army Corps Engineers
- Fed. Comm. Commission
- other physical resources

**\$503
BILLION**

- Veterans' Benefits \$123 billion
- Interest on national debt \$380 billion (80% est. to be created by military spending)

**\$869
BILLION**

Total Outlays DoD \$707 billion:

- Military Personnel \$159 billion
- Operation & Maint. \$302 billion
- Procurement \$134 billion
- Research & Dev. \$78 billion
- Construction \$19 billion
- Family Housing \$3 billion
- DoD misc. \$12 billion

Non-DoD military spending includes:¹

- Retiree Pay/Healthcare \$67 billion
- DoE nuke weapons/clean up \$20 billion
- NASA (50%) \$9 billion
- Internl. Security Asst. \$16 billion
- Homeland Secur. (military) \$36 billion
- State Dept. (partial) \$4 billion
- FBI military \$7 billion
- other \$3 billion

¹ analysis includes non-DoD activity based on coding and on the military nature of the activity, such as armed agents on flights, border control, DoD space flights, etc.

MILITARY: 48% AND \$1,372 BILLION

HOW THESE FIGURES WERE DETERMINED

“Current military” includes Dept. of Defense (\$707 billion) and the military portion from other departments as noted in current military box above (\$162 billion). “Past military” represents veterans’ benefits plus 80% of the interest on the debt.* For further explanation, please go to www.warresisters.org.

These figures are from an analysis of detailed tables in the *Analytical Perspectives* book of the *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2012*. The figures are federal funds, which do not include trust funds — such as Social Security — that are raised and spent separately from income taxes. What you pay (or don’t pay) by April 18, 2011, goes to the federal funds portion of the budget. The government practice of combining Trust and Federal funds began during the Vietnam War, thus making the human needs portion of the

budget seem larger and the military portion smaller.

*Analysts differ on how much of the debt stems from the military; other groups estimate 50% to 60%. We use 80% because we believe if there had been no military spending most (if not all) of the national debt would have been eliminated.

The Government’s Deception

The pie chart (right) is the government view of the budget. This is a distortion of how our income tax dollars are spent because it includes Trust Funds (e.g., Social Security), and the expenses of past military spending are not distinguished from nonmilitary spending. For a more accurate representation of how your Federal income tax dollar is really spent, see the large graph.

Source: 1040 Forms and Instructions 2010, Federal Outlays for FY 2009

