

Congress Must Stop the Iran War

The Human and Economic Toll Is Staggering — and Growing

On February 28, 2026, the United States and Israel launched a coordinated military assault on Iran without Congressional nor United Nations authorization. In over two months since, this war of choice has exacted a devastating human and economic toll.

- The toll of senseless death, destruction, and displacement in Iran, Lebanon and other countries in the region may not be fully known for a long time, but there are thousands dead, millions displaced, and tens of billions of dollars in destroyed infrastructure.
- On the war's first day, a U.S. missile struck a girls' school in Minab, killing more than 170 children and teachers — a horror that should weigh on the conscience of every member of Congress.

For American families, the costs are no less real: U.S. taxpayers have spent an estimated \$29 billion to date, and Pentagon officials can't even give an estimate of the cost to repair U.S. military facilities in the region, certainly billions more, unless the host countries decide to kick U.S. bases out. The Administration is still being coy on a supplemental appropriations request for the war. Could it be \$80 to \$100 billion, or even twice that? Even Members of Congress are left scratching their heads. Every dollar poured into this war is a dollar diverted from health care, housing, and the economic relief Americans desperately need. A vote for war funding — in any legislative vehicle — is a vote to continue and deepen an illegal war the public does not want, on top of the outrageous request to increase the annual Pentagon budget from \$1 trillion to \$1.5 trillion. Linda Bilmes of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government projects the total cost of the war on Iran to U.S. taxpayers could be \$1 trillion.

This War Is An Unprecedented Assault on Congressional War Powers

This war represents what the International Crisis Group's Brian Finucane, a former State Department war powers adviser, has called a “[dramatic usurpation of Congress's war powers](#)” without precedent in recent decades. In conflicts of this scale, such as with Iraq and Afghanistan, many presidents in recent history have come to Congress for a war authorization. Yet, even when presidents have gone to war without Congress, and they have done so far too often, they have never done so with less congressional oversight.

- The White House [never presented a public legal justification](#) for the strikes.
- Secretary of State Marco Rubio [did not provide a full legal accounting](#) even to top Congressional leaders.
- The administration's rationale [shifted repeatedly](#) in the war's first days, and is still unclear, other than Trump's repeated assertion that Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon, which it never has had. Its nuclear program had been effectively, verifiably capped well short of the Bomb by the multilateral Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action he tore up in his first term in office.
- Classified briefings left senior Democrats [angrier and more alarmed](#) than informed.

Congress has brought War Powers Resolutions to the floor repeatedly, and Republican majorities have blocked every one, though their margin is narrowing, especially in the House of Representatives. But failed votes do not constitute authorization. This war remains illegal under the Constitution and the War Powers Act of 1973. Congress must continue to spotlight the illegality through further votes.

To Stop the War, Block the Bombs: Support Joint Resolutions of Disapproval (JRDs)

Last month, a record 40 senators, all Democrats, voted to stop the transfer of Caterpillar bulldozers to Israel. Thirty-six also voted to stop the transfer of 12,000 half-ton bombs used in Gaza, Iran, Lebanon and Syria.

Pressure is mounting, as last July saw twenty-seven senate votes to stop weapons to Israel, itself a record at that time. The Trump administration has repeatedly invoked emergency authority to rush these weapons transfers. JRDs are the **only formal mechanism** Congress has to block a notified arms sale.

This War Is Overwhelmingly Unpopular Among the American Public

Since the war's start, polls show consistent majorities opposing military action in Iran. A recent compilation of ten polls by Silver Bulletin show the war's disapproval rating hovering around 60%.

What Congress Should Do

- **Continue to force votes on War Powers Resolutions** to reassert Congress's constitutional authority over the decision to go to war. Cosponsor and vote for resolutions directing the removal of U.S. Armed Forces from unauthorized hostilities against Iran. **Oppose all funding for this illegal war**, whether in a supplemental appropriations bill or through budget reconciliation. Announce opposition publicly and use every procedural tool available to block war funding. Do not allow a spending vote to serve as backdoor authorization for this war.
- **Continue to force Joint Resolutions of Disapproval to stop weapons transfers to Israel, and in the House, support H.R. 3565, the Block the Bombs Act**, introduced by U.S. Rep. Delia Ramirez (D-IL).