

Department of Peacebuilding 2025 Report

Making Real Aspirations for Peace Through A United States Department of Peacebuilding

*By Anne Creter, Nancy Merritt, Kendra Mon
And the Department of Peacebuilding Committee*

Throughout the history of peoples inhabiting lands in North America, the ideas of peace, equity and respect for all of life have challenged us to be our best selves. While there is a long way to travel on this path, **we are not giving up the journey.**

Since 2001, there has been a bill in the United States Congress calling for a cabinet-level Department of Peacebuilding (DoP). That bill, and subsequent incarnations, recognized that international and domestic peacebuilding are inextricably intertwined. That it is past time to examine the root causes of violence and to advocate for the root conditions of peace in order to embody a culture of peace.

The **Department of Peacebuilding Campaign** of dedicated peacebuilders from throughout the U.S. works to make peace a reality. The DoP Campaign is part of the U.S. Peace Alliance. The purpose of the DoP Committee is to co-create the **Beloved Community** while advocating for cultural transformation leading to and through a cabinet-level Department of Peacebuilding.

The Department of Peacebuilding bill (H.R. 1111/ DoP) “**addresses the interconnection of all life** and the intersectionality of peace and justice, equality, health, healing, national security, education, the economy, rule of law, democracy, planetary survival, and other aspects of civil rights, civil liberties, and human rights.” (DoP Sec. 101). As stated in the Earth Charter, part of the DoP bill, “**We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace.**” (DoP Sec. 2)

For the Congress beginning in January 2025, we worked with the bill’s new sponsor to update DoP 2023. DoP 2025 was introduced by Congresswoman Ilhan Omar (MN) on February 7, 2025 with the message that “Violence is not only destroying lives, but it is draining our resources. Every dollar we invest in peacebuilding saves countless more by reducing crime, conflict, and instability. **My hope is that future generations inherit a world that values peace more than we have valued war.**”

- Listen to our Zoom with **Congresswoman Omar** at <https://peacealliance.podbean.com/e/71625-dept-of-peacebuilding-third-wednesday-campaign-call-meet-rep-omar-dept-of-peacebuilding-sponsor/>.
- Watch this video of long-time DoP Cosponsor, **Congressman Jim McGovern**, at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KaVIQS_4cLE

We thank **Congressman Dennis Kucinich (OH)** for sponsoring DoP legislation from 2001 – 2011 and **Congresswoman Barbara Lee (CA)** for sponsoring from 2013 – 2023.

The bill provides for the following offices within the Department: 1) Peace Education & Training; 2) Domestic Peacebuilding Activities; 3) International Peacebuilding Activities; 4) Technology for Peace; 5) Arms Control & Disarmament; 6) Peacebuilding Information & Research; and 7) Human Rights & Economic

Rights. It calls for an Intergovernmental Advisory Council on Peace and a Federal Interagency Committee on Peace. For an overview of the bill, see <https://peacealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Department-of-Peacebuilding-2022-Report.pdf>. To read the entire bill, see <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/1111/text?s=1&r=1&q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22H.R.1111%22%7D>



47 cities, counties, tribes (representing over 17.7 million people),

735+ organizations & noted individuals

& a growing list of Members of Congress endorse creation of a cabinet-level DoP.

CONGRESSIONAL ADVOCACY



Rep. Jamie Raskin (MD)
& NJ DoP Advocates

Congressional Advocacy. Since 2004, the DoP Campaign has made **thousands of Congressional contacts**. During 2025, we phoned, emailed, petitioned and attended Congressional Townhall meetings hundreds of times. There are 435 members of the House of Representatives. We have been **in touch with approximately 300 House offices** and have **met with 65**, often receiving appreciation for our ongoing advocacy. We have gone to Capitol Hill offices in Washington, DC to provide DoP information. By the end of 2025, **39 members of Congress cosponsored the bill**. To see the current DoP Congressional Cosponsor list, click <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/1111/cosponsors?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22H.R.1111%22%7D&s=5&r=1&overview=closed#tabs>

For more photos of DoP Congressional Zoom with Congressional offices, see the end of this report.

<p>CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES</p> <p>FUN FACTS & IMPRESSIONS</p>	<p>H.R. 1111 is double peace signs. 🕊️🕊️ Coincidence? Perhaps not.</p> <p>Sample positions of staffers we met with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief of Staff, Deputy Chief of Staff, Legislative Director, Legislative Counsel, Foreign Affairs staffer, National Security Advisor, Policy Advisor, Senior Advisor • Senior Legislative Assistant, Legislative Assistant, Military Legislative Assistant, Military Aide, Financial Services Legislative Assistant, Legislative Correspondent • Hill Vets Fellow, Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellow, Defense Fellow, Department of Defense Fellow <p>Legislators & Staffers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rep. Cohen (TN) is a Warren Zevon fan • Rep. Omar (MN) has a fondness for ketchup-tuna sandwiches • One office accurately and easily guessed the love of one of us for the Grateful Dead • Many offices thanked us for our continuing positive advocacy for peacebuilding and recognized us from prior meetings with other member of Congress for whom they had worked
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<p>2025 CONGRESSIONAL ADVOCACY</p> <p>STATE BRAGGING RIGHTS</p>	<p>39 DoP Cosponsors by the end of 2025 in order of states with the most cosponsors: CA (8), IL (7), NY (5), MA (2), NJ (2) & 1 each from AZ, DC, GA, IN, LA, ME, MI, MS, NM, OR, PA, TN, TX, WA, WI</p> <p>65 Zoom Meeting with Congressional offices, including meetings with 61 Democrats & 4 Republicans (64 Representatives, 1 Senator)</p> <p>Meetings with offices from these states, in order of most meetings: CA (14), NY (5), TX (5), OR (4), FL (3), MD (3), VA (3), AL (2), HI (2), IL (2), KY (2), MN (2), NJ (2), NM (2), NV (2), & 1 each for AZ, LA, MA, ME, MI, NC, OH, PA, TN, UT, VT, WA</p> <p>45 Individuals Participated in Congressional Zooms, many attended multiple meetings</p> <p>Highest number of state residents participating in Zooms - NJ (9), CA (7), NM (7), OR (5), TN (3), DC (2), FL (2), KY (2), ME (2) - CO (1), HI (1), IL (1), MN (1), NC (1), NV (1), NY (1), PA (1), TX (1), WA (1)</p>
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<p>ADVOCACY GEEK STATS</p>	<p>13 MoC Zoom Leads/ Co-leads & Schedulers: Laura Brown (PA), Lynnea Bylund (NV), Anne Creter (NJ), Charlie Dennis (NY), Patty Duncan (NM), Karen Johnson (IL), Laurie Marshall (TX), Bren Martin (KY), Nancy Merritt (CA), Kendra Mon (CA/FL/WA), Laurie Russo (DC), Amena Sediqi-Aini (CA), Karen Simms-Tolson (KY/ NC)</p> <p>Meeting leads who recruited of the most attendees: Anne Creter - 14 attend <u>Rep. Conaway (NJ)</u> Zoom; Nancy Merritt – 8 attend <u>Rep. Cohen (TN)</u> Zoom; Anne Creter – 7 attend <u>Sen. Kim (NJ)</u> Zoom; Nancy Merritt – 7 attend <u>Rep. Pingree (ME)</u> Zoom; Amena Sediqi-Aini – 7 attend <u>Rep. Rivas (CA)</u> Zoom; Nancy Merritt – 7 attend <u>Rep. Salinas (OR)</u> Zoom; Laura Brown – 7 attend <u>Rep. Smucker (PA)</u> Zoom; Patty Duncan – 7 attend <u>Rep. Vasquez (NM)</u> Zoom.</p> <p>Person from most states during 2025 advocacy: Kendra Mon (CA, FL, WA)</p>
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DoP ENDORSEMENTS & OUTREACH

Organization Advocacy and Endorsements. Our advocacy also includes connection with organizations. Over 735 organizations and individuals endorse the DoP. The list includes **spiritual, educational, health organizations, veteran groups, political groups.** Examples include American Muslim Voice, American Psychiatric Nurses Association, Amnesty International, Black Lives Matter (Memphis, TN), Buddhist Peace Fellowship, Global Alliance for Ministries & Infrastructures of Peace (GAMIP), Global Exchange, NAACP (Branch #7028), National Association of School Psychologists, NOW, Pace e Bene, Pathways to Peace, Pax Christi USA, Peace Action, Peace is Every Step, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Restorative Solutions, September Eleventh Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, Social Welfare Action Alliance, Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, Veterans for Peace + more. For the complete list of organization endorsers, see www.dopcampaign.org.

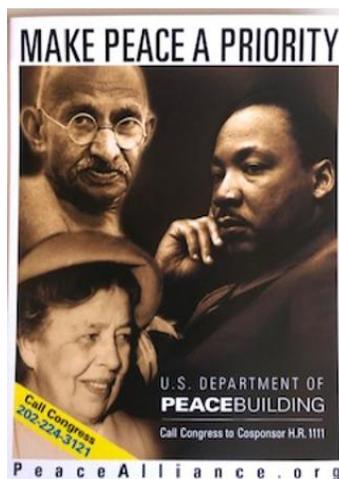
Honor by Pathways to Peace. In 2025 Pathways to Peace honored long-time **DoP advocate Nancy Merritt** with a Women of Distinction award. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9xojmte1ZI>

Cities, Counties and Tribal Endorsements. Forty-seven cities, counties, tribes -- representing over 17.7 million people -- endorse the DoP. Examples include: Albuquerque, NM; Atlanta, GA; Chicago, IL; Detroit,

MI; Gainesville, FL; Los Angeles, CA; Minneapolis, MN; Moab, UT; Oakland, CA; Portland, OR; Waltham, MA; Manistee, MI; City & County of San Francisco, CA; San Diego, CA City and County; and Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, MI. To see the complete city, county and tribal endorser list, go to www.dopcampaing.org

Outreach. Recognizing the importance of being part of the global community, the Peace Alliance/ U.S. DoP Campaign was a founding member of the **Global Alliance for Ministries for Peace (GAMIP)**, has participated in **outreach to the United Nations** and advocates for building a culture of peace by establishing governmental “infrastructures for peace” as recommended by the **2023 UN New Agenda for Peace**. Additionally, we conduct monthly DoP Campaign Zooms. For a list of 2025 Zooms and actions, see the end of this report.

HISTORY OF DoP & PEACEBUILDING



The concept of a governmental “infrastructure for peace” is deeply rooted throughout American history going back pre-republic to the **Native American Great League of Peace Confederacy**. Later in writing the U.S. Constitution, Declaration of Independence signer Dr. Benjamin Rush proposed a Peace Office to balance the War Office (one the four original U.S. departments). His colleague, African-American Almanac author Benjamin Banneker promoted Dr. Rush’s Secretary of Peace concept extensively in his publications, describing the Secretary’s powers and advocating federal support for it. His Almanacs were distributed widely throughout the 13 colonies.

Perhaps the most stunning little-known historical fact is that the U.S. briefly actually HAD a “Secretary of Peace” from 1955 to 1957 appointed by President Dwight Eisenhower after WW II whose focus was Disarmament! His name was Harold Stassen. (*Harold E. Stassen*, 1990, pp. 275-291).

From 1955 to 1968, at least 85 DoP bills were introduced in the House and Senate. And in 1984, during the presidency of Ronald Reagan, as a concession to the many peace legislators who had been calling for a national peace academy on par with the military academies, the **U.S. Institute for Peace (USIP)** was created as a training and research think tank to promote international peace.

TURNING BEGINNINGS INTO REALITY

The DoP bill begins:

- On July 4, 1776, the Second Continental Congress unanimously declared the independence of the 13 colonies, and the **achievement of peace was recognized as one of the highest duties of the new organization of free and independent States.**
- The Constitution of the United States, in its preamble, further sets forth the insurance of the cause of peace in stating, **“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.”**

We continue working to make this vision a reality. We do this for the generations, the ancestors, the earth.

*Together with all nations, we protect both life and land
And hold the earth in balance. – Hopi Adage*



2025 DoP CAMPAIGN ZOOMS & RELATED MESSAGES

During 2025, the **DoP Campaign hosted the following Zooms:**

- “Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King’s Message & Life of Nonviolence” discussion (1/2025)
- “The Many Faces of a Culture of Peace and Badass Peacebuilding” with guest speaker David Wick, Pathways to Peace (2/2025)
- “Choose Love & Nonviolence Today” discussion during the Season for Nonviolence (3/2025)
- “To Survive, We Must Transform Our Values” discussion of a message by Native American right leader Oren Lyons (4/2025)
- “Direct Actions: Actions Speak Louder Than Words” discussion (5/2025)
- “Power of the People & U.S. Institute of Peace Is Back” discussion (6/2025)
- “Meet Rep. Ilhan Omar (MN-5), Sponsor of DoP 2025: Learn Her Very American Story” (7/2025)
- “Joy Is an Act of Resistance” (8/2025)
- “Celebrating the U.N. International Day of Peace: The Origin Story” with guest speakers Tez Gabriel and David Wick of Pathways to Peace (9/2025)
- “Nonviolent Resistance: Cutting Without Wounding” discussion (10/2025)
- “Living in Gratitude: Words That Come Before All Else” video and discussion about the Onondaga Thanksgiving Address (11/2025)
- “To Volunteer Is to Give of Yourself” (12/2025)

Recordings of these Zooms are available in reverse chronological order at <https://peacealliance.podbean.com/>. **To join a DoP Campaign Zoom** on the third Wednesday of each month at 5 pm PT/ 8 pm ET, click <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/464735321>. **All are welcome.**

Additional advocacy. The DoP Campaign and/or the Peace Alliance advocated during 2025 for the U.S. Institute of Peace, “Hands Off Our Democracy,” saving USAID (US Agency for International Development), challenging authoritarianism, working for democracy. “Earth Day, May Day, Mother’s Day: What Will You Say?” “War Dust and Collateral Inhalation: Israel Breathes in Gaza’s Dust” by former DoP Sponsor Dennis Kucinich. “\$1 Trillion for Weapons, Negative Zero for Peace. Action: Tell Congress NO.” “Steadfast Hope: A Father’s Letter & Prayer That His Son Will Live in a World Shaped By Kindness.” “No Place for Cruelty, No Time for Tyranny.” “Act Now for a Peaceful World, Celebrate International Day of Peace.” “No Kings: Power Belongs to the People.” “Tell It: The World You Want to See.” “Terrorizing Millions of Immigrants Is Not ‘Peace on Earth’ Action Alert.”

“We Rise As One.” As members of the San Francisco Bay Area Culture of Peace Collaborative, the Department of Peacebuilding Campaign and the Peace Alliance participated in the Collaborative’s first initiative, **“We Rise As One”** in-person and virtual concert, workshop and networking with the Global Wisdom Foundation, Pathways to Peace, Department of Peacebuilding Campaign/ Peace Alliance and others from the San Francisco/ Bay Area Culture of Peace. To view the incredible musical gathering to unite, heal and inspire, see <https://hubcastnetwork.com/event/we-rise-as-one/2926>

See next pages for more photos.

CONGRESSIONAL ZOOM ADVOCACY IN PICTURES

👏👏 A sample of 2025 DoP Meetings with Congressional offices 🙌🙌

Usually including some joy and smiles ...



SEN. ANDY KIM (NJ) (1/10/25)



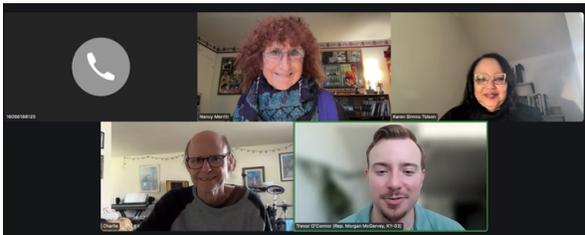
REP. CHELLIE PINGREE (ME) (4/2/25)



REP. STEVE COHEN (TN) (4/4/25)



REP. HERB CONAWAY (NJ) (5/12/25)



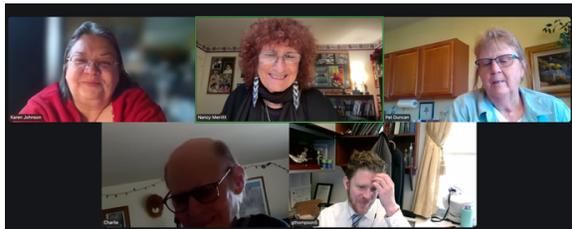
REP. MORGAN MCGARVEY (KY) (9/5/15)



REP. VERONICA ESCOBAR (TX) (10-22-25)



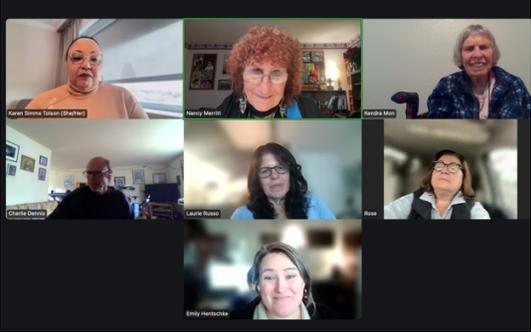
REP. RAUL RUIZ (CA) (10/28/25)



REP. BRAD SCHNEIDER (IL) (10/28/25)



REP. TERRI SEWELL (AL) (9/8/25)



REP. MAXINE DEXTER (OR) (5/28/25)



REP. JASMINE CROCKETT (TX) (6/26/25)



REP. LLOYD SMUCKER (PA) (5/28/25)

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