

I had a LTE published in the Gazette on Feb 21st.

## **Federal Debt Ceiling**

Some Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives are threatening to vote against an increase to the Federal Debt ceiling unless there are substantial spending cuts. My modest suggestion for a spending cut is to reduce U.S. military spending for Fiscal Year 2023 to the level requested by the Pentagon and the Biden Administration, hopefully further. President Biden's and the Pentagon's request for military spending was \$813 Billion. The House and the Senate increased the request by \$45 billion, and then approved \$858 in military spending. The vote in the House was 350-80.

Why spend billions of dollars on things that are not needed? ( And, just a reminder, there has never been a successful audit of the Department of Defense.) If we use societal need as the justification for federal programs, it may be worthwhile to compare that \$45 billion of unnecessary federal spending to the 2023 budget for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Its entire 2023 budget is \$6.9 billion, just 15% of the unrequested increase to the military budget. And what does the NOAA do? It is on the front lines of monitoring and researching climate change, housing within it the taken-for-granted National Weather Service.

Reducing the military budget from \$858 billion to \$813 billion should be a no-brainer. And next year a deeper comparative analysis of the efficacy of the Pentagon and the NOAA in defending the national security of the U.S. should be on the agenda.

**EDWARD FLAHERTY**