

Department of Peace

H.R. 808, Department of Peace and Nonviolence Act

The United States was founded on hope, optimism, and a commitment to freedom. We can once again become a beacon of hope for the world. To do that, we must reject the current administration's policies of fear, suspicion, and preemptive war. It is time to jettison our illusions and fears and to transform age-old challenges with new thinking. This is the idea behind my proposal to establish a Department of Peace. This is the idea to make nonviolence an organizing principle at home and abroad and dedicate ourselves to peaceful coexistence, consensus building, disarmament, and respect for international treaties. Violence and war are not inevitable. Nonviolence and peace are inevitable. We can conceive of peace as not simply the absence of violence but the presence of the capacity for a higher evolution of human awareness, of respect, trust, and integrity. We can conceive of peace as a tool to tap the infinite capabilities of humanity to transform consciousness and conditions that impel or compel violence at a personal, group, or national level toward creating understanding, compassion, and love. We can bring forth new understandings where peace, not war, becomes inevitable. We can move from wars to end all wars to peace to end all wars.

Citizens across the United States are now uniting in a great cause to establish a Department of Peace, seeking nothing less than the transformation of our society, to make nonviolence an organizing principle, to make war archaic through creating a paradigm shift in our culture for human development for economic and political justice and for violence control. Its work in violence control will be to support disarmament, treaties, peaceful coexistence and peaceful consensus building. Its focus on economic and political justice will examine and enhance resource distribution, human and economic rights and strengthen democratic values.

We must change the metaphor of our society from one of war to one of peace. The Department of Defense now requires in excess of \$400 billion for its activities. A Department of Peace can be an effective counterbalance, redirecting our national energies towards nonviolent intervention, mediation, and conflict resolution on all matters of human security.

A Department of Peace can look at the domestic issues that our society faces and often ignores as we focus on matters internationally. We have a problem with violence in our own society, and we need to look at it and address it in a structured way. Domestically, the Department of Peace would address violence in the home, spousal abuse, child abuse, gangs, and police-community relations conflicts, and would work with individuals and groups to achieve changes in attitudes that examine the mythologies of cherished world views, such as "violence is inevitable" or "war is inevitable." Thus, it will help with the discovery of new selves and new paths toward peaceful consensus.

The Department of Peace will also address human development and the unique concerns of women and children. It will envision and seek to implement plans for peace education, not simply as a course of study, but as a template for all pursuits of knowledge within formal educational settings.

Americans have proven over and over again we're a nation that can rise to the challenges of our times, because our people have that capacity. And so, the concept of a Department of Peace is the vehicle by which we express our belief that we have the capacity to evolve as a people, that someday we could look back at this moment and understand that we took the steps along the way to make war archaic.

Violence is not inevitable. War is not inevitable. Nonviolence and peace are inevitable. We can make of this world a gift of peace which will confirm the presence of universal spirit in our lives. We can send into the future the gift which will protect our children from fear, from harm, from destruction.

Congressman Kucinich is the 2003 recipient of the Gandhi Peace Award. Former recipients include Eleanor Roosevelt, Cesar Chavez, A.J. Muste, Dr. Linus Pauling, Dorothy Day, Sen. Wayne Morse and Marian Wright Edelman.

For more information about efforts to establish a Department of Peace, see [The Peace Alliance](#).

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