A Closer Look at Discretionary Spending

Spending that lawmakers control through annual appropriation acts

**Discretionary Spending at a Glance**

- **9.0 Percent**
  - Discretionary spending as a share of GDP in 1991

- **9.0 Percent**
  - Discretionary spending as a share of GDP in 2011
    - Excluding outlays stemming from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, discretionary spending would have been 8.5% of GDP in 2011.

- **$1.3 Trillion**
  - Discretionary spending by the federal government in 2011

- **$699 Billion**
  - Spending in 2011 on defense, the largest component of discretionary spending

**TRENDS in Discretionary Spending**

Percentage of gross domestic product

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Defense</th>
<th>Nondefense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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BREAKDOWN of Discretionary Spending in 2011

Billions of dollars

**Defense**
- $699B
  - Operation and Maintenance $290
  - Military Personnel $157
  - Procurement $128
  - Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation $75
  - Other $50

**Nondefense**
- $647B
  - Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services $116
  - Transportation $91
  - Income Security $71
  - Health $63
  - Veterans' Benefits and Services $57
  - Administration of Justice $54
  - International Affairs $48
  - Other $147

Includes spending on military construction, family housing, and some defense-related activities by government entities other than the Department of Defense, such as the atomic energy activities of the Department of Energy.

Includes funding for natural resources and environment; general science, space, and technology; general government; community and regional development; agriculture; Medicare and Social Security (for administrative activities); energy; and commerce and housing credit.

All data are for federal fiscal years, which run from October 1 to September 30. Numbers may not add up to totals because of rounding. Net Interest not included.