

PRESIDENT'S BUDGET ON EDUCATION: MORE OF THE SAME MISPLACED PRIORITIES

Key Points:

- **The Bush budget underfunds No Child Left Behind programs – denying 3.2 million children promised help with reading and math.**
- **The Bush budget puts college further out of reach for millions of Americans, by failing to provide funding for its proposed increase in the maximum Pell Grant and instead partially paying for the increase by cutting funding for other critical higher education programs.**
- **The Bush budget eliminates 44 education programs, including Supplemental Opportunity Education Grants, education technology, Even Start, Ready to Teach, School Counseling, Mentoring, and School Drop-Out Prevention.**

Democrats believe that on every issue our nation faces, we must pursue policies that take our country in a new direction. The Bush Administration's FY 2008 budget fails on that score; it continues with more of the same wrong priorities of the past six years that have failed the American people. It is fiscally reckless, adding trillions to the deficit over the next 10 years, and morally irresponsible, slashing funding for key priorities such as health care and education, critical to America's middle class. Democrats are fighting for a budget that reflects the values of America's middle class.

Despite growing needs, cuts education funding below the levels provided in each of the last four years.

The Bush budget provides only \$56.0 billion in discretionary education funding – which is a cut of \$1.5 billion or 2.6 percent below FY 2007 and is also a cut below the funding provided in FY 2006, FY 2005, and FY 2004. The budget is cutting education funding despite record school enrollments, the challenging academic requirements under No Child Left Behind, and rising college costs.

Denies critical extra math and reading help to 3.2 million children. The Bush budget underfunds No Child Left Behind (NCLB) programs, including the Title I program that provides help with reading and math – providing funding below the amounts authorized in the 2001 NCLB Act. Because Title I is underfunded, 3.2 million children will not get the help with reading and math that was called for under the NCLB Act.

Shuts 2 million children out of after-school programs. President Bush provides \$1.5 billion less for after-school programs than was promised in the No Child Left Behind Act – meaning that 2 million children will be left without a safe place to play and learn after school.

Pays for an increase in the maximum Pell Grant by cutting other higher education programs. The Bush budget increases the maximum Pell Grant to \$4,600, but fails to provide any funding for the increase. (Democrats were pleased to see the Bush budget, after four years of freezing the maximum Pell Grant, to belatedly propose an increase. The FY 2007 Full-Year CR just enacted by the Democratic-led Congress had taken the first step in increasing the maximum Pell Grant – increasing it from \$4,050 to \$4,310 in FY 2007). However, Democrats are concerned that the budget includes no additional funding to pay for the increase. Instead, the Pell Grant increase is partially paid for by reducing and eliminating other higher education assistance programs, which also help lower-income students afford college.

Reduces availability of low-cost loans and eliminates certain other higher education programs. The Bush budget reduces the availability of low-cost loans for financially needy students by proposing to recall

\$419 million from Perkins Loan revolving funds held by 1,315 colleges and universities. This would be the first step toward recalling \$3.2 billion over five years from these revolving funds, which are used to provide low-interest loans, averaging \$2,000, to financially needy students. The budget also eliminates the \$771 million Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant program and the \$65 million Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnerships program, both of which help lower-income students afford a higher education. Overall, approximately 1.5 million students would lose financial aid awards as a result of these Bush higher education cuts.

Decreases federal commitment to special education for 6.9 million children. The Bush budget continues to retreat on its commitment to students with disabilities -- proposing that, for the fourth year in a row, the federal government provide a smaller share of the costs for special education. The budget provides only \$10.5 billion for IDEA Part B state grants – which is \$291 million or 2.7 percent below the FY 2007 enacted level and \$91 million below the FY 2006 enacted level. Under the President’s budget, the federal share of the costs of special education would fall from a high of 18.6 percent in 2005, 17.7 percent in 2006, 17.2 percent in 2007, to 16.5 percent in 2008.

Slashes vocational education by 49 percent. The Bush budget slashes funding for vocational education by \$582 million or 49 percent below the FY 2007 enacted level – drastically cutting back on innovative career and technical education programs for students attending high school and community college. Slashing vocational education funding in half will cut off a pipeline to job opportunities in emerging fields such as telecommunications and health care for millions of students.

Slashes Safe and Drug-Free Schools by 71 percent. The Bush budget slashes funding for Safe and Drug-Free Schools by \$247 million or 71 percent. These grants help 15,000 school districts implement anti-drug, violence prevention, and school safety measures.

Eliminates education technology. The Bush budget completely eliminates funding for the \$272 million Educational Technology State Grant program, despite the fact that studies have shown that technology can substantially raise student achievement.

Freezes two critical programs that boost college opportunities and access – GEAR-UP and TRIO. The Bush budget freezes the TRIO programs at the FY 2007 level of \$828 million. The TRIO programs – including Upward Bound, Talent Search and Student Services – expand access, persistence and college completion for low-income and first generation students. The budget also freezes GEAR-UP, which targets entire grades of middle school students and provides tutoring, mentoring, college preparation and college scholarships, at the FY 2007 level of \$303 million. Both programs have been frozen or cut since FY 2005.

Cuts funding for Head Start. The Bush budget cuts funding for Head Start by \$100 million or 1.5 percent below the FY 2007 enacted level. If enacted, the 1.5 percent cut in the President’s budget means that up to 13,500 children will be cut from the program next year or critical components of the program will have to be cut – despite the fact that Head Start is currently serving only 50 percent of eligible preschoolers.

Eliminates a total of 44 education programs. In addition to education technology, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, and Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnerships, the Bush budget eliminates an additional 41 education programs, including Even Start, Ready to Teach, School Counseling, Mentoring, and School Drop-Out Prevention, for a total cut of \$2.6 billion. Attached is a complete list of the 44 education programs eliminated in the Bush budget.

