

## PRESIDENT'S BUDGET ON HOMELAND SECURITY: MORE OF THE SAME MISPLACED PRIORITIES

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### Key Points:

- **While calling for nearly \$2 trillion in tax cuts for the wealthy over the next 10 years, the President once again submits an inadequate budget for homeland security – providing an increase of only 1 percent, despite numerous unmet homeland security needs.**
- **The President's budget slashes grants for first responders within the Department of Homeland Security by 45 percent, including cutting firefighter grants by 55 percent and state homeland security grants by 52 percent. It also slashes aid to state and local law enforcement at the Justice Department by 56 percent.**
- **The President's budget underfunds numerous other key priorities, including port security and rail and transit security.**

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 enormous needs, only increases the Homeland Security budget by 1 percent.** Despite the many unmet needs we face in the area of homeland security, the Bush budget requests only \$35.4 billion in discretionary funding for Department of Homeland Security (DHS) programs in FY 2008 – which represents an increase of only \$447 million or 1.3 percent over this year's level.

### **Slashes DHS First Responder Grants**

**Provides a net cut in DHS first responder grants of 45 percent.** The Bush budget includes a net cut in first responder grants at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) of 45 percent. As described below, this net cut of 45 percent cut reflects eliminating the Local Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention and SAFER programs and cutting State Homeland Security Grants and Firefighter Assistance Grants – partially offset by a small increase in the Urban Area Security Initiative.

**Eliminates the \$375 million Local Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention program.** The Bush budget, as it did last year, neglects the needs of local law enforcement by once again eliminating the Local Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention (LLETP) program, which plays a key role in assisting local law enforcement agencies in information sharing, target hardening, threat recognition and mapping, and counter-terrorism and security planning.

**Slashes the State Homeland Security Grant Program by 52 percent.** The Bush budget drastically cuts the State Homeland Security Grant Program by 52 percent – from \$525 million in FY 2007 to \$250 million in FY 2008. This program provides grants to first responders in all 50 states and U.S. territories to help them prevent, prepare for and respond to an act of terrorism or other emergency.

**Slashes Firefighter Assistance Grants by 55 percent.** The budget drastically cuts Firefighter Assistance Grants by 55 percent – from \$662 million in FY 2007 to \$300 million in FY 2008. This program has proven to be effective in providing local fire departments with tools to enhance their ability to respond to large disasters.

**Eliminates the \$115 million SAFER program.** The budget eliminates the \$115 million SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) program, despite the clear evidence that additional firefighters are needed to adequately staff fire departments.

**Provides small increase for the Urban Area Security Initiative.** As a small offset to all of these large cuts in first responder programs, the budget does include a small increase for the Urban Area Security Initiative – increasing funding from \$770 million in FY 2007 to \$800 million in FY 2008.

## **Slashes Aid to State & Local Law Enforcement**

**Slashes aid to state and local law enforcement.** In addition to the large cuts in first responder funding at DHS, the Bush budget also cuts aid to state and local law enforcement in the Justice Department, slashing this aid by \$1.4 billion or 56 percent and proposing to consolidate several state and local law enforcement programs. This cut includes slashing the COPS program by 94 percent – cutting funding from \$542 million in FY 2007 to \$32 million in FY 2008. The COPS program provides grants and other assistance to help communities hire, train, and retain police officers and to improve law enforcement technologies.

## **Other Programs**

**Belatedly beefs up funding for border security, including requesting funding for 3,000 additional Border Patrol agents.** The Bush Administration has been slow to respond to the need to beef up border security resources, including Border Patrol agents. For example, although the Intelligence Reform Act of 2004 called for 2,000 additional Border Patrol agents per year for FY 2006 through FY 2010, the FY 2006 Bush budget requested only 210 new agents. Due to strong pressure from Democrats, more funding has been provided for agents over the past two years. In his FY 2008 budget, the President now agrees with Democrats that more Border Patrol agents are a priority – and has requested funding for 3,000 new agents.

**Eliminates funding for Metropolitan Medical Response System.** The budget eliminates funding for the \$30 million Metropolitan Medical Response System. This DHS program provides funding for hospitals and EMS services in major metropolitan areas to enhance their preparedness.

**Eliminates funding for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP).** The budget also eliminates funding for the \$661 million State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP), which assists state and local governments with the costs of jailing undocumented immigrants who have committed crimes not related to their immigration status.

**Freezes port security grants.** The budget freezes funding for port security grants at the FY 2007 level of \$210 million. This is the first year that the President has requested dedicated funding for port security.

**Freezes rail & transit security grants.** The budget freezes funding for rail and transit security grants at the FY 2007 level of \$175 million. This is also the first year that the President has requested dedicated funding for rail and transit security grants.

