

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET & WOMEN: More of the Same Misplaced Priorities

Key Points:

- **The Bush Administration's FY 2008 budget continues with more of the same wrong priorities of the past six years -- putting special interests first and the American people last.**
- **The President's budget is morally irresponsible, cutting health care, denying educational opportunity for our children, and doing too little to bring down energy prices.**

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 new direction – a budget that reflects the values of America's working families. We are working to restore fiscal responsibility and to deliver results to the American people, along with economic prosperity, a strong national defense, affordable health care and energy prices, and strong public schools.

Cuts Vital Health Care Programs. There are 17 million women without health insurance. Since 2000, American workers are paying \$1,359 more to insure their families – an 84% increase. [KFF, 9/06; MEPS, 8/06] And yet the President's budget slashes critical health programs, including cutting Medicare by \$252 billion and Medicaid by \$61 billion over 10 years. In addition, the President's budget significantly underfunds the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) program, potentially causing more than one million children to lose health care coverage by 2012. Underfunding SCHIP does nothing to help the 8.3 million uninsured children across the country. [Census, 2006]

Undermines Women's Health. In addition to the proposed budget cuts, it has been reported that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is planning to withhold \$1.2 million of the \$4 million operating budget for the Office of Women's Health, effectively halting operations for the rest of this year. The Office of Women's Health funds research on male-female biological differences to ensure that women receive the most appropriate drug doses and treatments, and produces essential information about menopause, pregnancy, birth control, osteoporosis and other topics. Some are concerned this raid appears to be a payback for a scientifically-based decision by the Office of Women's Health on Plan B that contradicted the Administration's political agenda.

Betrays America's Children. The President's budget cuts education funding by 2.6 percent below FY 2007 – denying extra reading and math help to 3.2 million children. The President's budget shortchanges education after-school programs than was promised in NCLB – meaning that 2 million children fewer children than promised will be left without a safe place to play and learn after school. Finally, Head Start is a vital program for America's children – with more than 900,000 kids enrolled – and yet the President's budget cuts funding by \$100 million below the FY 2007 enacted level. [HHS, 2/07] It also eliminates funding for the Women's Educational Equity Act, which provides materials to help school comply with Title IX and promote gender equity.

Does Not Do Enough to Protect America Here At Home. The President's budget slashes grants for first responders by 45 percent, also eliminates the Law Enforcement Terrorist Prevention Program. The budget also slashes funding for the COPS program by 94 percent.

Fails to Honor Promises to America's Women Veterans and Troops. There are 1.7 million women veterans and nearly 164,000 brave American women have served or are currently serving their country in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2001. [DOD, 12/31/06] Even with badly wounded troops returning from Iraq that could overwhelm

the VA health system, the President's budget shortchanges veterans' health care --providing an increase in FY 2008, but cutting funds in FY 2009 and 2010 (below proposed FY 2008 level) and freezing funding thereafter.

Cuts Job Training and Employment Assistance. Paychecks (real median earnings) for women have dropped three years in row by \$928 (3 percent) to \$31,858. And yet the President's budget cuts critical job training and employment services by \$639 million. The President's budget also slashes funding for vocational education by 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.

Creates Trillions Of Dollars In Deficits. The national debt has climbed to \$8.7 trillion, increasing our borrowing from foreign countries. The President's budget squanders trillions of dollars on tax cuts for the wealthy – giving the wealthiest one percent \$62,000 in tax breaks in 2010. [Tax Policy Center, 11/06]

Cuts Small Business Administration. Small businesses employ nearly half of all workers and create three out of four new jobs, but the President cuts the Small Business Administration by 25 percent from last year's request and 45 percent from 2001. The budget cuts Small Business Development Centers, Women's Business Centers, the Program for Investment in Microentrepreneurs and technical assistance. These cuts take us in the wrong direction as we work to expand and add to the 6.5 million women-owned businesses in America. [Census, 1/26/2006]

Leaves America's families out in the cold. Average costs for American families to heat their homes this winter are up 57% from 2001. [EIA, 2/07] Yet, the Bush Administration cuts low-income home energy assistance (LIHEAP) for families by \$480 million, slashing help to working Americans to pay their energy bills. [FFIS, 2/07] Further, the President is cutting by 40 percent the Weatherization Assistance Program, denying help to an estimated 40,000 low-income Americans who are on waiting lists to reduce their energy bills by purchasing storm windows and insulation to improve their home's energy efficiency.

Gives No Relief to Working Families Struggling with Still High Gas Prices. Nationwide, gas prices have increased by ninety cents since January 2001, [EIA, 2/07] Ending our addiction to foreign oil is a key step in ensuring that energy will be more affordable for America's families in the future and that America's families are not at the whim of overseas oil cartels. But the President's total budget request for renewable energy and energy efficiency is the same as it was in 2001, and stagnant funding will not lead us to energy independence

Cuts Child Care. Because the President has proposed to freeze discretionary child care funding for the sixth year, the Administration's own estimates indicate that about 450,000 fewer children would receive child care assistance in 2010 than in 2000. Many states are seeing an increased need for child care with higher welfare to work participation rates are required due to last year's Deficit Reduction Act and Administration regulations.

Revives Attack on Social Security, Risky the Retirement Security of the 24 million Women Receiving Social Security. Social Security provides millions of Americans a secure retirement after a lifetime of hard work, but the President once again proposes to privatize Social Security. This would cut Social Security benefits for the middle class and add trillions to the national debt.

Cuts Funding for Environmental Programs, Including the Clean Water Program. For the seventh year in a row, the Bush budget proposes significantly cutting funding for programs that protect public health and the environment. It slashes funding for the states' Clean Water revolving loan funds, which help improve wastewater treatment, by than \$396 million. [FFIS, 2/07]

Cuts Funding For Vital Community Revitalization. The budget eliminates \$631 million from the Community Services Block Grant program, which works to lessen poverty in communities, and cuts \$500 million from the Social Services Block Grant, which provides people with social services directed toward achieving economic self-sufficiency. [FFIS, 2/07] The budget also slashes \$741 million in Community Development Block Grant funding, which provides critically-important funding for affordable housing, employment counseling, and transitional assistance. [FFIS, 2/07]