



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
Re: President's Budget Proposal
Da: Monday, Feb. 7, 2005

Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, today made the following comment on the President's budget proposal.

"The President's budget always sets off a good debate on Capitol Hill on priorities. I appreciate President Bush's effort to cut the deficit. We had annual increases in some government programs of as much as 15 percent during the Clinton years. The country can't sustain that kind of spending, and we need to continue ramping down annual increases in congressional appropriations.

"I agree with making the tax relief of 2001 and 2003 permanent. Permanence is important for continued economic growth. By encouraging small business investment, and giving consumers more of their money to spend, we've helped the economy. Sunsetting the bipartisan tax relief would raise taxes on hard-working taxpayers. Permanence is also key to giving taxpayers reliability. They should know that we won't pull the rug out from under them.

"I also appreciate the President's proposals to strengthen pension funding. I look forward to addressing the retirement security of all Americans, both by shoring up traditional pension plans and giving more Americans access to 401(k) and other workplace retirement plans. I intend for the Finance Committee to pass legislation this year in these areas. Our goal should be to ensure that pension promises made to workers are kept, and that the companies making those promises are the ones keeping them.

"I look forward to reviewing the President's proposals to assist uninsured Americans in obtaining their own health insurance, and to build more integrity into Medicaid program spending. With millions of uninsured Americans, and increasing Medicaid costs, we have to have a thoughtful debate on how to offer more access to good, affordable health care."