

A TALE OF TWO ECONOMIES

The Economy According to Do-Nothing Washington Republicans

"I'd say 'Look at what the economy has done. It's strong. We've created a lot of jobs.'" [President Bush, [AP](#), 9/18/06]

"The American economy is strong...it continues to provide more economic opportunity and higher wage jobs to working families across the country." [House Majority Leader John Boehner, Statement, 9/1/06]

"Today's [job] announcement follows other good news that GDP growth in the second quarter outpaced previous estimates and median household income received a boost as well." [Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, Statement, 9/5/06]

The Economy According to America's Working Families

"[W]aitress Jeanine Gordon, 32, who makes the minimum wage, mused about her latest trouble -- her van has been in the shop for a week because she and her husband can't afford to fix it. 'This is the least I've ever made in my entire life,' the Republican and mother of three said. 'The gas prices went up and the tips went down.'" [[AP](#), 9/18/06]

"Debbie Brewer, 50 and a deli owner, rattled off her biggest complaints about the economy as she counted change while closing her register for the night. 'We'll never see 99 cents again,' the Republican said of gas prices. 'Everything's jumping -- your gas, your food and everything -- but your wages don't go up.'" [[AP](#), 9/18/06]

Americans Aren't Fooled By Republicans' Rosy Rhetoric

NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll: 52% of those polled disapproved of Bush's handling of the economy. [[Wall Street Journal](#), 9/15/06]

Bloomberg/LA Times Poll: 60% of "self-described independents said the economy was doing badly." [[Washington Post](#), 9/5/06]

Americans Face a Different Reality than Republicans' Statistical Spin

\$\$ The minimum wage is now at its lowest level in 50 years, adjusted for inflation.

\$\$ Real household income has declined nearly \$1,300 under the Bush Administration.

\$\$ The cost of family health insurance has skyrocketed 71% since Bush took office.

\$\$ The cost of tuition and fees at four-year public universities has exploded by 57%.

Money Pressures

An economic squeeze could affect the ballot box in November.



*Median wage, in inflation-adjusted dollars

SOURCES: Labor Department, Conference Board, AAA, Mortgage Bankers Association
The Washington Post