



Congressman José E. Serrano

Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government

For Immediate Release: February 4, 2008

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Chairman Serrano Responds to Bush Budget Request

Washington, DC – February 4, 2008 – Chairman José E. Serrano of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government issued the following statement today, after examining the President's FY 2009 budget request. Chairman Serrano focused on the portion of the budget for which his Subcommittee is responsible.

“In this budget request, President Bush and his team have ignored the priorities of the American people and the Democratic majorities in Congress. In the Financial Services appropriations section of the proposal, this budget would eliminate vital programs, and cut back others to an unacceptable level. We made important investments in services to the American people in the FY 2008 appropriations bill, and I plan on continuing to fund these critical programs.”

In his initial review of the President's numbers, Serrano found the following proposed funding cuts to be among the most egregious and objectionable in the Financial Services and General Government jurisdiction:

- **Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund:** The FY 2009 request proposes \$28.6 million, a cut of \$65.4 million, or 70 percent, below FY 2008. This is a particularly important program as it provides sorely-needed grants, loans, and technical assistance on a competitive basis to financial institutions and loan funds serving distressed urban and rural communities.
- **Election Assistance Commission:** The budget proposal does not include funding for election assistance grants to states. The FY 2008 bill included \$115 million for grants under the Help America Vote Act to improve election administration and \$10 million for grants under a pilot program to improve election data collection.
- **IRS Taxpayer Services:** Despite the request for large increases in the IRS enforcement budget, taxpayer services are short-changed. Under the President's budget, the taxpayer services account would be frozen at the FY 2008 level and would not include funding for last year's initiatives relating to taxpayer outreach and education or tax return preparation at IRS Taxpayer Assistance Centers.

- **Small Business Administration Microloan program:** The President's request proposes the termination of the microloan technical assistance program, which was funded at \$15 million in FY 2008. The program provides grants to very small businesses to assist them in small businesses' fundamental operations.
- **District of Columbia:** The Administration includes restrictions on the ability of the leaders of the District of Columbia to use its own funds for such purposes as needle exchange programs and lobbying for voting rights. Congress removed these restrictions last year recognizing that the city's leadership is best suited to set local policy priorities.

"The suggested cuts and policy proposals outlined above are unacceptable to me," Serrano said. "People depend on these programs for fair elections, taxpayer assistance, safe consumer products, small business support and much more. Cutting them to the bone now will not be beneficial to the nation in the long run."

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Congressman José E. Serrano has represented the Bronx in Congress since 1990.