

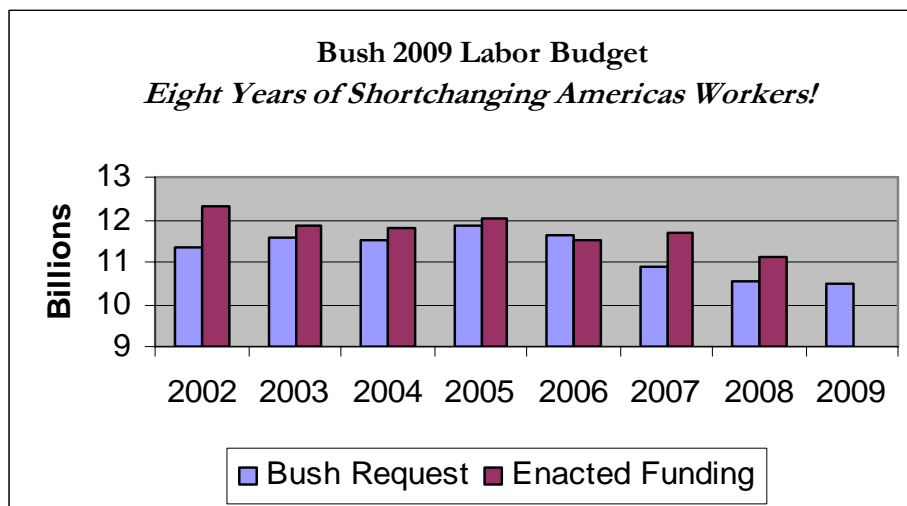


FY 2009 Bush Budget: Leaving America's Workers Behind

Major Failures of the President's 2009 Labor Budget

At a time when the U.S. economy is lagging and job growth is at an all time low, President Bush once again fails to propose a budget for the Department of Labor that meets the training and employment needs of the 21st century workforce. Instead the Bush budget reduces critical job training resources which translates into less job training and less workforce protection.

The Department of Labor is the federal agency in charge of administering and enforcing wage and hour laws, health and safety regulations, pension plan oversight, unemployment benefits, and job training, along with many other programs. Continuing past practice, the FY 2009 Bush budget proposes another year of program terminations and funding reductions.



The Bush budget proposes a 7.7 percent cut for the Department of Labor – the federal agency charged with enforcing the laws and programs that protect the American worker. The President's 2009 budget provides \$10.512 billion for the Department of Labor, an \$888 million reduction below the 2008 Omnibus. Reduced resources mean less job protection for American workers.

The Bush budget fails to provide critical resources for job training programs. The budget includes a total of \$3.061 billion for training and employment services, a decrease of \$234 million (7 percent) below the 2008 Omnibus. With employment growth at an all time low, this funding level would significantly reduce essential training opportunities for thousands of Americans. The budget once again includes a legislative proposal to consolidate a number of job training programs into a block grant to states. States would use these funds for a voucher program called the Career Advancement Accounts, a proposal that was not included in last year's House and Senate passed

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appropriation bills. The Bush administration goes even further this year by proposing to terminate funding for Employment Service State Grants, and further reduces resources for existing employment and training programs, including one-stop career centers.

The Bush budget jeopardizes job training programs for older Americans. The Bush budget provides \$350 million for the Community Service Employment for Older Americans (CSEOA) program, drastically reducing funding by \$172 million (33%) below the 2008 Omnibus.

Wage and hour enforcement takes a backseat to politics. When adjusted for inflation, the Bush administration proposes to increase the budget for the Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS), which principally handles reporting and disclosure requirements imposed upon labor unions, by more than 25%, while giving wage and hour enforcement, which ensures employers pay employees properly and do not utilize unlawful child labor, a mere 6% increase. OLMS's latest regulatory activity is a new reporting requirement designed to discourage union members from becoming active in their labor unions, in such rank-and-file capacities as shop stewards or safety committee members, by imposing absurd amounts of useless financial disclosure requirements on such workers and their families.

Worker safety and health programs jeopardized. Despite four major coal mine disasters over the past two years and legislation requiring the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) to issue new standards, the Bush budget provides a \$2 million cut to MSHA, jeopardizing the agency's standards development efforts.

Meanwhile, the Bush budget once again seeks to eliminate OSHA's worker training grant program in favor of voluntary programs. The President also slashes 10% of the budget for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), the only federal agency that does research on worker safety and health. In addition, the Bush budget also slashes by 77% – from \$108 million to \$25 million – 9/11 World Trade Center worker health funding, which is administered by NIOSH.

The Bush budget halts efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor and improve international core labor standards. The Bush budget provides only \$15 million for the Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), a \$66 million (81%) reduction compared to the 2008 Omnibus. This funding level dramatically scales back the efforts of ILAB – the main federal entity charged with building worker rights into trade and investment agreements.

The Bush budget slashes funding to support employment-related services for individuals with disabilities. The Bush budget provides \$12 million for the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), a \$15 million (55%) reduction below the 2008 Omnibus. ODEP is charged with breaking down barriers to employment that people with disabilities face so that they may live free and independent lives. This cut shows a serious disregard for creating a level playing field for people with disabilities, who are the most unemployed and underemployed people in our society.

The Bush budget once again proposes to terminate services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers. The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers training program provides services to some of the most disadvantaged workers in our society. Terminating this program would further enhance the barriers to full-time employment that this population already faces.