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MISPLACED PRIORITIES: THE BUSH BUDGET TOP TEN LIST

The Bush budget makes health care for our troops more expensive, runs one of the largest deficits in history and cuts support for critical programs that aid families across the country. A list of the ten most egregious provisions in the Bush budget is included below.

1) BUSH BUDGET INCREASES COST OF TROOPS' HEALTH CARE. The budget would raise fees for troops and their families enrolled in Tricare. The plan would raise co-payments for all beneficiaries on prescriptions filled at retail pharmacies; charge an enrollment fee for Medicare-eligible older retirees covered by the Tricare for Life benefit; and charge higher enrollment fees, deductibles and co-payments for Tricare Standard and Tricare Prime to “working age” retirees under 65 and their families. [Air Force Times, 2/4/08]

2) BUSH BUDGET BACKS TAX HIKE FOR MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES. The President's budget is balanced on the backs of the 21 million Americans who will be forced to pay higher taxes through the Alternative Minimum Tax under his proposal. The President's budget would allow the AMT to entrap tens of millions of new families after 2009. If Congress continues to enact yearly fixes for the AMT in order to prevent it from taxing middle class families the will cost will be \$313 billion over the next five years [Associated Press, 2/4/08]

3) BUSH BUDGET HAS HUGE DEFICITS. After adding \$3.5 trillion to the national debt the Bush Budget offers more of the same, running a deficit of \$817 billion through the end of this year to the end of next year, which would be the largest two year deficit in the nation's history. [President's Budget, Fiscal Year 2009]

4) BUSH BUDGET LOWBALLS IRAQ WAR COST. Despite the fact that the Iraq War now costs over \$10 billion a month, the President's budget requests only \$70 billion for the Iraq War for Fiscal Year 2009. White House press secretary Dana Perino told reporters that the war effort in 2009 would “certainly” cost more than the \$70 billion included in the budget. [Baltimore Sun, 2/4/08; Associated Press, 2/4/08]

5) BUSH BUDGET CUTS HEALTH CARE AND DISEASE PREVENTION; FREEZES FUNDING FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH. The President's Budget seeks to cut Medicare and Medicaid by \$196 billion. The Centers for Disease Control's budget would face a 7 percent cut of \$433 million. For the National Institutes of Health, the president is requesting \$29.5 billion in 2009, the same amount it received this year. [Associated Press, 2/4/08; Associated Press, 2/2/08; New York Times, 2/2/08]

6) BUSH BUDGET LEAVES FAMILIES OUT IN THE COLD, CUTS HOME HEATING ASSISTANCE. Under the proposed Bush budget, funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) would be cut \$570 million or 22 percent. According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities this would require cutting more than 1 million low-income families and elderly people off the program entirely, shrinking the average amount of assistance provided to poor families by 22 percent, or some combination of the two. The funding level the President proposes for LIHEAP in 2009 — \$2.0 billion — is identical to the program's funding level in 2001, even though home energy prices are now 65 percent higher than in 2001. [Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, 2/4/08]

7) BUSH BUDGET SLASHES HOUSING ASSISTANCE DURING A HOUSING CRISIS. At a time when home foreclosures are skyrocketing, which could turn home owners into renters, the Bush budget cuts the Section 8 housing voucher program, the nation's largest low-income rental assistance program, thereby denying voucher assistance to at least 100,000 fewer low-income households. And while the subprime crisis continues, the Bush Budget plans to end the Hope VI housing program, which upgrades severely dilapidated public housing. [Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, 2/4/08; New York Times, 2/2/08]

8) BUSH BUDGET SLASHES PROGRAMS THAT HELP LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT FIGHT CRIME AND TERRORISM. President Bush's budget eliminates critical anti-crime and anti-terrorism funding for local law enforcement. The Bush budget cuts \$137 million from aid to states and localities for bioterrorism preparedness. Additionally, Bush did not ask for any funding for the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant program, nor for the Clinton-era Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, among others. The Byrne program received \$175 million in fiscal 2008; COPS received \$251 million. [Congressional Quarterly, 2/4/08; President's Budget, Fiscal Year 2009]

9) BUSH BUDGET WILL ELIMINATE KEY EDUCATION PROGRAMS. President Bush's budget proposes eliminating spending on more than a dozen education programs, including Even Start, which promotes family literacy, grants to the states for classroom technology, and the Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants for needy undergraduates. [New York Times, 2/2/08]

10) BUSH BUDGET CUTS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. The Bush budget would cut funding for the Environmental Protection Agency by \$330 million, bringing the 2009 funding for the EPA more than \$1 billion below the 2004 level. [Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, 2/4/08]