

On February 4th, President Bush announced his Budget for the 2009 Fiscal Year. Once again, his budget priorities are badly misaligned with the country's needs. His budget continues to safeguard tax-cuts for the rich while pumping billions of dollars into the war and neglecting priorities here at home. It is the duty of Congress to ensure the nation's priorities and needs are reflected in the final budget.

The proposed budget would cut billions from programs that benefit families and communities while giving unprecedented amounts to the Pentagon. More than half of the requested non-emergency discretionary funding—\$515.4 billion—would go to the Pentagon, a seven percent increase from 2008 levels. This amount does not include spending on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, hard-working Americans are suffering from a slowing economy, increased job-loss, and a declining housing market. The President's \$3.1 trillion budget would pay for the continuing tax cuts for the rich by cutting funding to domestic programs including Medicare, Medicaid, environmental protection, the Centers for Disease Control, and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Under the President's proposal non-security domestic spending levels would increase less than 1% and remain frozen for the next four years.

Not only is this a harmful budget, it is also a highly deceptive budget. Although the Administration claims its budget eventually reaches balance, under realistic assumptions it remains in deficit every year. The budget does not account for the true cost of the war in Iraq and includes funds that would come by allowing the AMT to ensnare millions of middle-class taxpayers. When he took office, the president was handed a surplus on a silver platter. Seven years later, his fiscal policies have turned record surpluses into record deficits.

This year, Congress is in the position to say no to the harmful budgetary policies of the Bush administration. We know that the American people will not stand for the continued dismissal of important domestic programs that assist hard working citizens in achieving their American Dream. I will work tirelessly as the budget and appropriations processes progress this year to ensure that the true priorities of the American people are safeguarded.

Sincerely,

John W. Olver
Member of Congress