

Feb 2, 2005 - Rep. Slaughter: Republican Budget for 2006 is Irresponsible, Incomplete

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Washington, DC - Today, Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Committee on Rules, rejected the Bush Administration's 2006 budget as irresponsible, incomplete and immoral.

"We have a moral obligation to leave our children a world that is safer, more prosperous, and more secure," said Rep. Slaughter. "This budget fails that test. It is fiscally irresponsible. It is morally irresponsible. And it demonstrates a failure to lead."

She added, "It is also an incomplete document, intentionally submitted to Congress without including the staggering costs of the war in Iraq and Bush's Social Security privatization scheme. And even without those costs included, Bush is still breaking the bank on defense spending and tax cuts for the rich, at the expense of fiscal responsibility, education, healthcare and a host of other important issues."

The Bush Administration's 2006 budget adds more than \$4 trillion to the deficit over next 10 years and it isn't even a complete budget. It increases the cost of health care for veterans, and cuts funding for critical programs that keep cops on the street and ensure our firefighters have the equipment they need. It squanders trillions of dollars on tax breaks for the wealthy and cuts billions of dollars from education, health care, housing, and environmental programs. And, perhaps most importantly, it fails to include any additional details on the Bush Administration's radical plan to cut Social Security benefits by almost 50 percent for millions of retirees.

"On every issue our nation faces, it is our responsibility to ensure that the policies we pursue are consistent with the values we cherish," said Rep. Slaughter. "This disappointing budget clearly shows that Republicans are out of touch with America's values and the needs of real people in New York's 28th District."

"Over the coming months, Democrats will fight for a budget that reflects the values of America's working families: national security, prosperity, opportunity, fairness, community, and accountability," continued Rep. Slaughter. "A responsible budget is the first step towards building a future worthy of the trust of the American people, the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform, and the aspirations of all of America's children."

Backgrounder: New York and The Bush Budget

General:

- \$2.5 trillion budget; the military budget would rise 4.8 percent to \$419.3 billion in 2006. This prodigious amount exceeds the Cold War average and will grow larger still when the \$80 billion fiscal 2006 supplemental spending for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is added several months from now.

First Responders:

- The budget would gut the COPS program that funds local police agencies by reducing it from \$600 million to \$60 million. Since 1994, COPS has added 147 cops in Monroe, 14 Orleans, 133 in Niagara, and 293 in Erie.

- The FIRE grant program, which provides support to local firefighters, would fall from \$715 million to \$500 million. For 2004 alone, 346 grants, totaling over \$25.5 million, were awarded to fire departments throughout New York state.

- The budget would also eliminate the \$300 million SCAAP (state criminal alien assistance program) which reimburses the states for incarcerating illegal aliens who commit crimes. Between 1997 and 2003, New York received \$634,083,786 in reimbursement under the SCAAP program.

- Also gone would be assistance for police departments to improve technology and their ability to communicate with other agencies.

Healthcare:

- The budget cuts to several health programs under the Health and Human Services Department with an HHS program aimed at obesity and other chronic diseases to be cut by 6.5% to \$841 million. Additionally, many critical health training programs will be slashed with one program that develops nurses, dentists and other health professionals reduced by 64%, and another to train doctors for children's hospitals cut by a third.

Other Key Domestic Priorities:

- Cuts to Army Corps of Engineers by 7%.
- Environmental programs with deep cuts include the Clean Water State Revolving Fund -- only \$730 million, down from \$1.091 billion in fiscal year 2005, and Targeted Water Infrastructure Funding -- only \$69 million, down from the FY05 \$408 million. Both programs help municipalities treat wastewater, programs that are critical to New York.
- The \$2.2 billion LIHEAP program that provides low-income people - in large part the elderly - with home-heating aid would be cut by 8% to \$2 billion;
- No funding for Amtrak until it undertakes reforms. Last year, Amtrak received \$1.5 billion in funding, despite White House opposition.
- Eighteen housing and community program will be eliminated or reduced by almost \$3 billion, a 40% reduction.
- The budget also assumes that the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) will be opened to oil drilling. It anticipates an initial \$2.4 billion in leasing revenues, half of which would be shared with the state of Alaska.
- The 2006 Budget proposes to fund the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program at \$47 million, a 50% reduction from the 2005 grant level. This program works well and deserves more funding, not less.
- NTID is flat funded.