



# The Blue Dog Coalition



For Immediate Release  
Monday, February 7, 2005

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## Blue Dogs Bark at Bush Budget *Fiscal Dishonesty Threatens Our Future*

Washington, D.C. – The Blue Dog Coalition responded with disappointment and concern today regarding President Bush’s FY2006 budget. The Blue Dogs – 35 moderate and conservative Democrats that have a reputation in Washington as fiscal hawks – were most concerned by continued deficit spending, disregard for fiscally responsible policies, the shortchanging of rural America, and a lack of honesty in the budget process.

The actual deficit outlook over the next several years could come in considerably higher than the administration’s 2006 budget estimate. If Congress enacts the president’s priorities outlined last week in the State of the Union such as Social Security reform and extension of the tax cuts, plus additional supplemental spending requests for Iraq and Afghanistan, the actual deficit picture in the coming years will grow considerably.

Despite his stated meager attempt at deficit reduction, the president’s budget still shows the debt surpassing the \$10 trillion threshold before the end of the decade – a threshold we should not be proud of achieving as interest payments on the national debt remain the fastest growing item in the federal budget.

**“Americans deserve a responsible government that lives within its allotted resources,” stated Rep. Jim Matheson (UT), Blue Dog Co-Chair for Administration. “As a businessman, I understand how crucial it is to balance the books and make sure you are financially stable. Elected officials should learn from this and do the same.”**

The Blue Dog Coalition has been a long-time proponent of budget enforcement legislation – the idea that Congress and the President should first do no harm by not making the deficit worse. If Congress and the administration are going to restore much needed fiscal discipline to Washington, we must apply budget rules to all legislation that would increase the deficit.

**“The president has offered Congress a budget that shortchanges rural America, allows the national debt to grow year after year, and is intellectually dishonest by hiding the costs of the president’s major initiatives,” explained Rep. Dennis Cardoza (CA), Blue Dog Co-Chair for Communications. “If we continue to ignore the long term consequences of our budgetary actions, we will be forcing our children and grandchildren to pay a steep price for the deficits we create today.”**

**“How could the President forget to budget for his top priority – the War in Iraq,” asked Rep. Jim Cooper (TN), Blue Dog Co-Chair for Policy? “There is no money in the budget for our troops after September of this year. Last year, the White House also failed to budget for our troops, requiring the Pentagon to raid other accounts in order to fund our men and women in uniform, and to rely on supplemental spending. Our troops deserve better than that.”**

The Congressional budget office estimates that the cost for our troops in Iraq alone to be \$429 billion over the next ten years, assuming a force reduction to only 55,000 troops beginning next year, a reduction of almost 60% from current levels.

Other major programs were also omitted from the president’s budget aside from Social Security reform, like the Alternative Minimum Tax, which affects thousands of middle class Americans. **“These are trillion dollar omissions,” Cooper noted.**

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