

President Bush: It is My-Way-or-the-Highway

A Stubborn Administration Blocks Bills to Invest in America's Future

"I set clear spending limits, told the Congress I was going to veto them if they -- veto bills if they exceeded those spending limits... And if Congress sends me appropriations bills that exceed the reasonable limits I have set, I will veto the bills."
[President George W. Bush 2/8/08]

"I want to reiterate that appropriations bills that exceed the President's reasonable and responsible spending levels will be met with a veto because every dime Congress spends beyond these limits will push the budget deficit higher." [Jim Nussle, 3/5/08]

My-Way-or-the-Highway

Before Congress had even released its budget figures for Fiscal Year 2009, President Bush threatened to veto appropriations bills that strayed from his own inadequate budget totals. President Bush and his budget negotiators refused to compromise and refused to negotiate on their budget requests. It is this stubborn, my-way-or-the-highway attitude that has resulted in a continuing resolution carrying over this year's funding levels for the federal government into a new fiscal year.

Cut Investment in Education, Healthcare, Roads, Cops, Energy – Or Else

In submitting his FY09 Budget Request in February, the President proposed cutting and eliminating 151 programs totaling \$18 billion, including:

- Eliminating 50 education programs, including student financial aid
- Eliminating 20 programs to improve healthcare access
- Deep cuts to highway infrastructure
- Slashing support for law enforcement
- Cutting renewable energy and energy conservation programs
- Taking away energy assistance for low-income families

At the same time deficits and debt are setting records, the level of government services and responsiveness has deteriorated significantly over the past several years. Persistent underfunding by this Administration and previous Republican Congresses has resulted in:

- Social Security Administration backlog topping 17 months
- Veterans Claims backlog increasing 50 percent since 2003
- Unmet maintenance needs for our transportation systems
- Underfunded homeland security and emergency response
- Food and Drug Administration unable to keep pace
- Consumer Product Safety Commission plagued by insufficient budget

Congress agrees we must carefully invest the taxpayer's money, but we also know that we must invest in America's future. If we have to wait for a new Administration to work together to make progress, we will do just that.