

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval the “Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008”

November 13, 2007

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 3043, the “Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008.”

This bill spends too much. It exceeds the reasonable and responsible levels for discretionary spending that I proposed to balance the budget by 2012. The Congress is on a path to spend \$205 billion more over the next 5 years than I requested. This puts a balanced budget in jeopardy and risks future tax increases. This year, the Congress plans to overspend my budget by \$22 billion, of which \$10 billion is for increases in this bill. Health care, education, job training, and other goals can be achieved without this excessive spending if the Congress sets priorities.

This bill continues to fund programs that are duplicative or ineffective. The Congress continues to fund 56 programs totaling more than \$3.2 billion that I proposed to terminate because they are duplicative, narrowly focused, or not producing results.

This bill does not sufficiently fund programs that are delivering positive outcomes. For example, Reading First, a critical initiative that is demonstrating results, receives

a 61 percent cut, even though low-income students enrolled in Reading First schools posted a more than 10-point improvement in reading proficiency from 2004 to 2006.

This bill has too many earmarks. I set out clear goals for the Congress to reform the earmarking process. The Congress chose not to put earmarks in bill text, instead including nearly all in report language, and they did not reach the goal of cutting the cost and number of earmarks by at least half. This bill contains more than 2,200 earmarks totaling nearly \$1 billion. Congressional earmarks divert Federal taxpayer funds to localities without the benefit of a merit-based process, resulting in fewer resources for national priorities or unnecessary spending above the requested level.

I urge the Congress to send me a fiscally responsible bill that sets priorities. Americans sent us to Washington to achieve results and be good stewards of their hard-earned tax dollars. Because the legislation violates that commitment, I must veto this bill.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
November 13, 2007.

Remarks at a Dinner Honoring America’s Promise Alliance

November 13, 2007

Good evening. Laura and I welcome you all to the White House; sure glad you’re here. Ten years ago, a group of spirited citizens came together in the hope that they could make a difference in the lives of our Nation’s children. In the decade that

followed, that hope became a dream, the dream became a mission, and that mission helped change the lives of countless children across our country.

Through your mentoring programs and your work with at-risk youth, America’s

Promise has given opportunity to young Americans who never had it. You have put hope in the eyes of children who have never known it, and you have helped make real the promise of our Creator, that there is value and purpose in every single human life.

The success of America's Promise is a tribute to the giving hearts of every person in this room, particularly those we honor with awards tonight. Yet I think all of us would agree that two people here deserve special mention, and they are Colin and Alma Powell.

Throughout their lives, the Powells have answered our country's call. They've served our Nation in times of peace and war, and they have led, taught, and inspired Americans along the way. Not a bad record for

two people who met 46 years ago only because their friends talked them into going into a—going on a blind date. [*Laughter*] Mr. Secretary and Alma, our country is fortunate that you both had such persuasive friends. [*Laughter*]

I'd like to propose a toast to America's Promise, in gratitude for your first decade of public service, and a toast to America's children and a future that brings them love and peace and possibility.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:43 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and his wife Alma, founding chair and current chair, board of directors, America's Promise Alliance.

Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for Michael B. Mukasey as Attorney General

November 14, 2007

Thank you all very much. Good morning. I'm pleased to be back here at the Department of Justice and to join you for the swearing-in of Judge Michael Mukasey as the 81st Attorney General of the United States. We welcome Michael's wife Susan and their children Marc and Jessica, their son-in-law Corey, their grandchildren William and Benjamin, and other members of the Mukasey family. We share their pride in Michael on this important day. And I appreciate you all coming to witness it.

I particularly want to thank the Chief Justice of the United States, John Roberts, who is here to swear-in the General. I want to thank members of my Cabinet who have taken time off to come and welcome a new Cabinet member. I appreciate very much that Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, the ranking member on the Senate Judici-

ary Committee, has joined us, along with Sam Brownback and Senator Lindsey Graham. Thank you all for coming. And thank you for making sure this good man not only made it to the floor of the Senate, but was confirmed.

I want to thank former Attorney General John Ashcroft, and welcome John as well as former Attorney General Dick Thornburgh. Thank you all for coming.

The job of the Attorney General is one of the most important in our Nation's Government. The Attorney General must run the world's largest law firm and the central Agency for enforcement of our Federal laws. He must aggressively prosecute gun criminals and drug dealers, hold corporate wrongdoers to account, protect victims of child abuse and domestic violence, and uphold the civil rights of every American.