

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