

SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE
DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS
KENT CONRAD, RANKING MEMBER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Stu Nagurka (202) 224-7436
Steve Posner (202) 224-7925

**STATEMENT BY SENATOR KENT CONRAD (D-ND)
ON OFFICIAL DEFICIT TOTAL FOR 2004**

The Bush administration officially announced today that the deficit this year totaled \$413 billion – the largest in our nation’s history, surpassing last year’s record by \$35 billion. That means that every minute over the last year President Bush was spending \$783,000 more than the federal government took in. When viewed on an operating basis – that is, when Social Security is excluded – the deficit in 2004 is actually \$564 billion, or about 5 percent of GDP. If that is not a disastrous fiscal policy, I don’t know what is.

The President’s claim that the deficit is coming down is simply not credible. The reality is that the deficit has worsened every year since he took office. And looking forward, under any realistic scenario that includes the President’s request to make his tax cuts permanent, AMT reform, and ongoing war costs, we can expect large deficits as far as the eye can see.

Ultimately, the deficits and debt piling up under this administration’s policies will threaten the fundamental economic security of the nation. That will be the sad legacy of this President unless we change course.

The American people deserve better. They deserve a President who doesn’t try to mislead them about the true fiscal condition of the country; and they deserve a President who will put this country back on a course of fiscal responsibility.

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