

Mr. Speaker, when President Bush submitted his budget to Congress last week, he said it represented his values and his priorities. If that is indeed the case we really should question both.

One really has to wonder if this budget document represents his priorities. You will remember 2 weeks ago during his State of the Union address, President Bush spent the majority of that speech talking about his Social Security privatization plan and the continued war in Iraq. Supposedly these were his priorities for the upcoming year.

And yet the President did not include the additional \$80 billion needed to fund the Iraq war or the trillions that will be needed over the next decade to fund his costly Social Security privatization proposal in his budget.

Mr. Speaker, it is impossible for the President to reverse our Nation's fiscal collapse if he continues to send incomplete budgets to Capitol Hill. The President can say that he is going to cut the Federal deficit in half in several years; but the fact is, that cannot happen if the President does not send us an honest budget.

If Social Security and the war in Iraq are the President's priorities, then he should have no problem placing them in his budget and explaining to the American people why these billions of dollars must be used in Iraq and on his Social Security privatization plan.

Mr. Speaker, President Bush also said this budget represents a vision of his values. Now, if that is the case, one really has to question the President's dedication to one of government's main rules, helping those less fortunate. Once again, the President's budget helps provide the blueprint for Republicans to help the wealthiest in our Nation become even wealthier. That is to the detriment of middle-class and lower-income Americans who greatly benefit from many of the programs the President now wants to cut or eliminate, and for what, more tax breaks that primarily benefit our Nation's wealthiest 1 percent?

The President's budget shows his lack of compassion for programs that benefit my State of New Jersey, our middle- and lower-income families in particular. By drastically cutting housing, education, community policing environmental protection and Medicaid programs, the President is turning his back on middle- and lower-income families in my State of New Jersey.

President Bush's budget makes substantial cuts in important education proposals that are important to my State. The budget provides only half of the funding promised for after-school programs.

In New Jersey, these cuts will mean nearly 33,000 New Jersey children will no longer have access to critical after-school programs. The President's budget also cuts 440 million in Safe and Drug Free School grants, 500 million in education technology State grants,

325 million for the Even Start Literacy program, and 280 million for the Upward Bound program for inner-city youth.

Now, this may sound like a lot of bureaucracy, but these are real education cuts that are going to hurt children. And yet the President has no problem cutting those programs while at the same time continuing his policy of providing large tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans.

Now, these are certainly not my values; I would hope that they were not the President's values. But certainly the budget says the opposite. The President also proposes huge cuts in the Medicaid program. Now, this program serves nearly 930,000 children, seniors and people with disabilities in my State of New Jersey.

It is estimated that the \$60 billion in cuts that the President is proposing will cut one-fourth of the Medicaid money sent to my State over the next decade. And, Mr. Speaker, New Jersey and other States simply cannot pick up this slack. We have a budget shortfall in New Jersey; we cannot pick up the Medicaid slack.

At a time when 45 million Americans are without health care, the President shows absolutely no compassion for the uninsured by proposing these devastating health care cuts.

The President also refused to follow through with his promise during last week's State of the Union address, or I should say a couple of weeks ago, when he said he would do everything possible to help our soldiers and veterans recover.

Well, if you look at the budget, there is a pitiful half a percent, that is half a percent increase in veterans affairs funding. Now, that is a slap in the face to the millions of men and women who have fought for our country. Congress should not neglect these brave Americans and should instead reject the President's budget proposal when it comes to veterans.

Mr. Speaker, finally I just want to say, the President's budget values and priorities are, in my opinion, not in the best interests of America. It is time that congressional Republicans stand up to this President and let him know that his priorities are not the priorities of their constituents, and I know they are not.

I hope Congress will reject the President's budget proposal in the upcoming months in favor of one that truly takes the needs of working families into consideration. I think this is a very important issue; and I cannot stress enough, and I speak on behalf of my fellow Democrats, in saying that the Bush budget simply cannot be allowed to stand.