

The President's Budget Makes the Wrong Choices for The District of Columbia's Middle Class Families

50,000 District Residents Could See Retirement Benefit Cuts Under President's Privatization Proposal. President Bush has again snuck a big Social Security privatization plan in his budget that, if enacted, would result in millions of middle-income workers receiving little or no Social Security benefits in retirement. In the District of Columbia, 50,000 beneficiaries could be subject to an annual benefit cut of \$6,013 under the President's private account plan, according to an analysis by the House Ways and Means Committee. [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, [5/2/05](#); Committee on Ways and Means, *The Bush Benefit Cuts: State-by-State Impact*, 9/14/06]

President's Health Care Proposal Will Squeeze The District of Columbia's Middle Class With More Costs and Less Coverage. The President's health insurance proposal will not help the vast majority of the District of Columbia's 71,000 uninsured, will not address rising health care premiums that have increased 87 percent since 2000, and would eventually impose a new health insurance tax on many the District of Columbia middle class families. The President's proposal would also weaken traditional employer-sponsored health insurance, which covers 270,000 D.C. workers and their families, by extending the current tax incentive for such group coverage to coverage in the more costly individual market. [Kaiser State Health Facts, (Uninsured [2005](#)), (Employer Coverage [2005](#)); Joint Economic Committee, *The President's Health Care Proposal: All Risk, No Reward*, [January 2007](#); Kaiser Family Foundation, *Employer Health Benefits 2006 Annual Survey: Summary of Findings*, [2006](#)]

Huge Cuts Would Endanger the District of Columbia's 56,000 Medicare and 113,000 Medicaid Beneficiaries' Access to Quality Care. The administration's budget includes \$102 billion in cuts over five years to Medicare and Medicaid that threaten to endanger District of Columbia's 56,000 Medicare and 113,000 Medicaid patients' access to the care they need to lead healthy, independent lives. Under the President's plan, more than \$75 billion would be cut from Medicare and \$26 billion from Medicaid over five years. These cuts would be achieved by reducing reimbursements to health care providers and charging higher premiums based on income for Medicare beneficiaries for coverage of prescription drugs and doctors' services. [President Bush FY2008 Budget; Preliminary Analysis of Department of Health and Human Services FY2008 Budget; Kaiser State Health Facts, [2005](#); *New York Times*, [2/4/07](#)]

Shortfalls in State Grants for Children's Health Care Could Add to the Ranks of The District of Columbia's 9,000 Uninsured Kids. While the President's budget would slightly increase the federal contribution to the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), it is \$10 billion less than is needed to merely continue covering the children already enrolled in SCHIP and would give the District of Columbia less money to cover its neediest children. Further cuts will undermine a program critical to raising healthy and economically secure children and risk adding to the ranks of the District of Columbia's nearly 9,000 uninsured kids. [President Bush FY2008 Budget; Federal Funds Information for States Database; Kaiser State Health Facts, [2005](#); Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, [11/26/06](#)]

The District of Columbia's 32,000 Veterans Could Be Hurt By VA Funding Shortfalls. Nearly half of the military servicemen and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan will require health care services for the physical and psychological traumas of war, yet the President's budget again underfunds the Department of Veterans Affairs. The budget requests approximately \$34.2 billion for veterans health care, a 6-percent increase over the 2007 funding level of \$32.3 billion in the continuing budget resolution. The VA has testified in the past that the Veterans Health Administration requires a minimum annual increase of 13-14 percent to meet the rising costs from medical inflation and increasing demand. Without adequate funding, the VA health care system will find it more difficult to provide quality care for the District of Columbia's 32,000 veterans and troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. [The Independent

Budget, Critical Issues Report, [On FY2008](#); [Newsweek](#), 1/19/06; U.S. Census Bureau, [2005](#) American Community Survey; FY2007 Continuing Budget Resolution]

Aid for The District of Columbia's College Students Whacked Again; University of The District of Columbia Tuition Up 27 Percent in Four Years. Over the course of their lifetime, college graduates will earn \$1 million more than high school graduates, and college graduates are more likely to have jobs that offer employer-sponsored health care and retirement benefits. Yet the President's budget again freezes funds for key college programs like work study and zeroes out Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG). In 2006, the District of Columbia received \$13.1 million in federal college work study funds and \$5.7 million in SEOG grants. As tuition and fees at schools like University of the District of Columbia increase 27 percent in just four years, the administration's cuts in student aid will put college further out of reach for many District students. [State PIRG Higher Education Project, April 2006; Federal Funds Information for States Database; Chronicle for Higher Education, Tuition and Fees, 2002-2007]

Funding for The District of Columbia Terrorism Prevention and Disaster Response Slashed by Millions. The President's budget guts programs that help the District of Columbia's local governments prevent and respond to acts of terrorism and other major disasters. The State Homeland Security Grant Program, which awarded \$40.8 million to the District of Columbia from 2003 through 2006, was cut to \$187 million nationally. The Bush administration also attempts to eliminate out the Law Enforcement Terrorist Prevention Program (LETPP) by reducing the national funding level from \$384 million in 2006 to just \$263 million. the District of Columbia received \$10.6 million from 2004 through 2006 in LETPP funding for prevention of terrorist attacks, intelligence gathering and interoperable communications. [President Bush FY2008 Budget; Federal Funds Information for States Database; Department of Justice]

Programs to Keep The District of Columbia's Neighborhoods Safe Lose Millions in Federal Funding. The President's budget again attempts to eliminate two of the District of Columbia's local crime fighting tools—the Community Oriented Policing Service (COPS) program and Justice Assistance Grants (JAG). COPS helps the District of Columbia's law enforcement agencies hire police officers, enhance crime fighting technology, and support crime prevention initiatives, while JAG supports state and local drug task forces, community crime prevention programs and prosecution initiatives. In 2006, the District of Columbia received \$2 million in JAG funding and \$1 million in COPS funding that it used to keep neighborhoods safer for D.C. families. [President Bush FY2008 Budget; Federal Funds Information for States Database; Department of Justice, COPS *End of Year Report*, [FY 2006](#)]

Another Round of Cuts to Community Investments Could Slow Economic Development in The District of Columbia. After being saved by Democrats in Congress two years in a row, the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) is once again on the President's chopping block. The CDBG program is a signature program for the District of Columbia's cities, counties and local communities to create jobs, spur economic development and small business opportunities and expand homeownership. The District of Columbia's CDBG funding is being reduced by \$5.7 million from its 2006 funding level of \$19.3 million. By cutting CDBG, the President's budget would undermine the economic well-being of the District of Columbia's communities and the future generations that live there. [President Bush's Budget, FY2008; Federal Funds Information for States Database; National League of Cities]