

INFORMED BUDGETEER

VIEWS AND ESTIMATES

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

In his letter to the Budget Committee, Chairman Gregg emphasizes the majority's commitment to review and strengthen major programs in order to eliminate redundancy and simplify programs.

The Chairman commends the President's priority to fund education programs, noting that funding has increased 36 percent since 2001. The Chairman supports the 8.1-percent increase in Title 1 funding of the No Child Left Behind program. The Chairman also expresses his support for full funding of IDEA Title B and urges the FY05 Budget Resolution to incorporate a provision for a glide path to full funding.

Chairman Gregg supports the President's 32-percent increase in postsecondary education programs. The Chairman feels that the FY05 Budget Resolution should operate as a tool to address the ongoing discrepancy surrounding amount appropriated to Pell Grants and the actual cost of the program. The Chairman requests that the FY05 Budget Resolution include the President's proposed scoring convention to ensure all future initiatives affecting the Pell Grant program be scored to reflect actual changes in budget authority needed to implement policy change.

The Chairman supports the President's aim to preserve patient access to the legal system while speaking damage awards to patients and control the cost of medical liability insurance, saving the federal government \$15 billion over ten years.

Two items referenced in the letter but not within the Committee's jurisdiction are summarized as follows:

Chairman Gregg supports the President's AIDS Plan and believes the Congress should ensure that the statutory priorities are maintained. Specifically, the Chairman believes that funds should be channeled through bilateral assistance rather than multilateral organizations and expresses his belief that HHS should play a critical role in technical implementation of the President's global AIDS Plan.

The Chairman requests that the FY05 Budget Resolution include increased funds necessary to reauthorize the Child Care Block Grant in order to provide states with funding to subsidize childcare for low-income families.

In a separate letter, Ranking Member Kennedy states that the President's proposed extension of the tax cuts in the budget to be "irresponsible" and will "severely damage" the HELP Committee's key initiatives. Senator Kennedy voices his support for a \$14 billion increase in education as well as significant changes to recent Medicare legislation. Senator Kennedy requests several initiatives to be funded in the FY05 Budget Resolution as follows:

SCHIP	\$11 billion
Child Care	\$7 billion/5 years
SSBG	\$1.3 billion/2 years
HIV/AIDS	\$600 million
Head Start	\$500 million
CDC	\$364 million

Select Committee on Intelligence

Due to the classified nature of the content within its jurisdiction, the Committee respectfully declines to submit a Views & Estimates letter on intelligence spending for FY05 in order not to "lead to the compromise of national security information." The Committee has

programs within the Departments of Defense, State, Treasury, Energy, Justice, Transportation, and Homeland Security.

Committee on Rules and Administration

In a joint letter from the Committee on Rules and Administration, Chairman Lott and Ranking Member Dodd report that they have no plans for changes that will have a significant budgetary impact and are satisfied with the President's budget requests for programs within its jurisdiction. They claim that the President's request of \$10 million for Help America Vote Act (HAVA) programs under the new Election Assistance Program which ensure that States will be able to meet federal voting requirements is appropriate, but mention specific insufficient funding of section 251 under HAVA (\$40 million proposed of the \$600 million authorized by the Act for FY05). They also express concern that the President's recommended level of \$15 million rather than the authorized level of \$25 million for disability access payments (also under HAVA) is insufficient.

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

The Small Business Committee essentially has no mandatory programs within its jurisdiction. As a result, separate letters submitted by the Chair and Ranking Member focus on their recommendations regarding the levels of discretionary funding to be provided by the appropriations committees.

In her letter to the Budget Committee, Chair Snowe requests sufficient appropriations to allow at least \$12.5 billion in loans (at the current subsidy rate, this would require approx \$129 million in appropriations) to fund the 7(a) loan program for certain small businesses.

The Chair does not agree with the Small Business Administration's request for zero appropriations for the Microloan program for small business entrepreneurs and requests program funding of \$1.91 million and \$15 million for the Microloan Technical Assistance program. The letter also calls for an increase in funding from the President's requested \$88 million to \$93 million for the Small Business Development Center program. The Chair recommends eliminating the US Export Assistance Centers' line item (terminating the SBA's involvement in the program), but recommends continued funding of \$5 million.

In a separate letter, Ranking Member Kerry requests \$204 million for the SBA, which would bring total available funds for that agency to \$882.4 million. In addition, as opposed to Chair Snowe's request of \$12.5 billion, Ranking Member Kerry has called for \$13.5 billion in loan guarantees for the 7(a) loan program, as well as eliminating the \$10 billion loan guarantee program cap and rejects the imposition of a separate subsidy rate. The Ranking Member requests \$35 million for the Microloan program and \$35 million for the Microloan Technical Assistance program.

In addition, Ranking Member Kerry requests an increase in the 504 loan guarantee program from \$4.5 billion to \$5 billion for FY05, as well as requesting a full authorized account for the Program for Investment in Micro-entrepreneurs (PRIME) of \$15 million. Kerry proposes additional spending requests of \$125 million for the Small Business Development Center program (compared to Chair Snowe's request of \$93 million), \$14.5 million for Women's Business Centers, \$7 million for the SCORE program, and \$2 million each for the Native American Outreach program and the 7(j) technical assistance program.