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## Bush wields veto pen — again



AP Photo: President Bush makes remarks on the budget, Tuesday, Nov. 13, 2007, in New Albany, Ind....

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By JENNIFER LOVEN, Associated Press Writer  
3 minutes ago

NEW ALBANY, Ind. - [President Bush](#), escalating his budget battle with Congress, on Tuesday vetoed a spending measure for health and education programs prized by congressional Democrats.

He also signed a big increase in the Pentagon's non-war budget although the [White House](#) complained it contained "some unnecessary spending."

The president's action was announced on Air Force One as Bush flew to New Albany, Ind., on the Ohio River across from [Louisville, Ky.](#), for a speech criticizing the Democratic-led Congress on its budget priorities.

The White House said the \$606 billion education and health was loaded with 2,000 earmarks — lawmaker-sponsored projects that critics call pork-barrel spending — which Bush wants stripped from the bill.

"Some of its wasteful projects include a prison museum, a sailing school taught aboard a catamaran and a Portugese-as-a-second-language program," the president said. "Congress owes the taxpayers much better than this effort."

It was sixth bill vetoed by Bush. Congress has overridden his veto only once, on a politically popular water projects measure.

Bush hammered Democrats for what he called a tax-and-spend philosophy:

"The Congress now sitting in Washington holds this philosophy," Bush told an audience of business and community leaders. "The majority was elected on a pledge of fiscal responsibility, but so far it's acting like a teenager with a new credit card."

"This year alone, the leadership in Congress has proposed to spend \$22 billion more than my budget provides," the president said. "Now, some of them claim that's not really much of a difference. The scary part is, they seem to mean it."

More than any other spending bill, the education and health measure defines the differences between Bush and majority Democrats. The House fell three votes short of winning a veto-proof margin as it sent the measure to Bush.

[Rep. David Obey](#), the Democratic chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, pounced immediately on Bush's veto.

"This is a bipartisan bill supported by over 50 Republicans," Obey said. "There has been

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virtually no criticism of its contents. It is clear the only reason the president vetoed this bill is pure politics."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Bush "again vetoed a bipartisan and fiscally responsible bill that addresses the priorities of the American people: education for our children, assistance in paying skyrocketing energy costs, veterans' health care, and other urgent health research on cancer and other serious medical problems. At the same time, President Bush and his congressional allies demand hundreds of billions of dollars for the war in Iraq — none of it paid for."

Since winning re-election, Bush has sought to cut the labor, health and education measure below the prior year level. But lawmakers have rejected the cuts. The budget that Bush presented in February sought almost \$4 billion in cuts to this year's bill.

Democrats responded by adding \$10 billion to Bush's request for the 2008 bill. Democrats say spending increases for domestic programs are small compared with Bush's pending war request totaling almost \$200 billion.

The measure provides:

\_a 20 percent increase over Bush's request for job training programs.

\_\$1.4 billion more than Bush's request for health research at the National Institutes of Health, a 5 percent increase.

\_\$2.4 billion for heating subsidies for the poor, \$480 million more than Bush requested.

\_\$665 million for grants to community action agencies; Bush sought to kill the program outright.

\_\$63.6 billion for the Education Department, a 5 percent increase over 2007 spending and 8 percent more than Bush sought.

\_a \$225 million increase for community health centers.

The \$471 billion defense budget gives the Pentagon a 9 percent, \$40 billion budget increase. The measure only funds core department operations, omitting Bush's \$196 billion request for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, except for an almost \$12 billion infusion for new troop vehicles that are resistant to roadside bombs.

Much of the increase in the defense bill is devoted to procuring new and expensive weapons systems, including \$6.3 billion for the next-generation F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, \$2.8 billion for the Navy's DD(X) destroyer and \$3.1 billion for the new Virginia-class attack submarine.

Huge procurement costs are driving the Pentagon budget ever upward. Once war costs are added in, the total defense budget will be significantly higher than during the typical Cold War year, even after adjusting for inflation.

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