

President Bush Releases Proposed Fiscal Year 2008 Budget

On Monday, February 5, President Bush released the Administration's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2008. This action marks the first step in the annual appropriations process. The Administration's budget challenges Congress by proposing to restrain growth in entitlement programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid, and nearly freezing domestic discretionary spending. Under the President's plan, funding for the Department of Defense would increase by 11 percent, and tax cuts set to expire in 2010 would be made permanent—a proposal that would cost \$373.9 billion over five years.

The President's plan faces an uphill battle in the Democratic-controlled Congress. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi characterized the budget "as just more of the same fiscal irresponsibility and misplaced priorities." Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid described the President's submission as "disappointing" and called on him to work with Congress "to develop better budget priorities."

The FY 2008 budget roll out is complicated by the fact that Congress has not completed action on all of the Fiscal Year 2007 appropriations bills. Last week, the House of Representatives passed a Joint Funding Resolution that would fund the federal government for the rest of FY 2007. The Senate is scheduled to debate the bill the week of February 12. The current continuing resolution will expire on February 15.

The following is a summary of the levels the President has proposed for agencies of interest to the Population Association of America/Association of Population Centers.

- The President has proposed \$28.6 billion for **National Institutes of Health**, which it claims is an increase of \$232 million over its FY 2007 proposal. However, the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research has criticized the submission, stating that it is \$310 million less than the funding level in the final FY 2007 Joint Funding resolution passed by the House last week. In addition, the Administration proposes to increase the Global AIDS Transfer out of NIH by \$201 million, effectively cutting the agency's budget by \$511 million in FY 2008 and reducing it to its FY 2005 funding level.
- The **National Science Foundation** is requesting \$6.43 billion in FY 2008—a 6.8 percent increase over the President's FY 2007 request. NSF Director Arden Bement said the agency would use the funds to build on recent advances and to support promising initiatives to strengthen the nation's capacity for discovery and innovation. The budget emphasizes the agency's commitment to funding polar research, ocean research, nanotechnology, education and international collaborations and research under the auspices of the ongoing American Competitiveness Initiative.
- The Administration has proposed \$1.23 billion for the **Census Bureau**—an increase of approximately \$352 million over the Administration's FY 2007 request. The Bureau's submission also includes funds to replace the Survey of Income and Program Participation, process millions of forms from the 2007 Economic Census, and continue preparations for a reengineered 2010 Census.
- For the **Agency for International Development**, proposed family planning/reproductive health (FP/FH) funding within the Child Survival and Health (CSH) account is \$301.7 million — a \$70 million or 19 percent reduction from the amount likely to be appropriated by Congress for FY 2007. Total FP/RH funding from all bilateral accounts, including funds designated for nations and countries in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, is slashed to \$324.8 million -- \$111 million or 25 percent cut from the amount expected to be included in the final FY 2007 CR.
- The President's FY 2008 budget requests \$109.9 million in program funds for **National Center for Health Statistics**. This represents an increase of \$900,000 over the FY 2007 request.