

## BUSH BUDGET – IMPACT ON STATES

From cradle to grave, from education to Medicare, the President's budget denies millions of average Americans of the investments they deserve to lead full and decent lives.

The Administration's budget guarantees more and more tax breaks for the wealthy, and ends basic guarantees for everyone else – for Social Security, Medicare, Education, Medicaid, Head Start and other vital programs.

But Mr President, the nation does not get stronger just because the rich get richer. We will fight for America's values and America's priorities. Ask Americans whether they support helping the young and the old, the poor and the disabled, or supporting even more tax breaks for the wealthy, and I think you know what their answer will be.

With the economy in crisis, and states forced to cut billions of dollars from their budgets, it's unconscionable that this President would fail to do his fair share to meet America's greatest needs.

It's a budget that no Congress in its right mind should pass. The danger is that this Republican Congress in its right-wing mind might well pass it.

When it comes to Medicare, the Administration wants to force senior citizens to give up their family doctors and join HMOs before they can get their prescription drugs.

Medicare has tried to enlist HMOs into the program already. But since 1999, 407 HMOs have withdrawn from Medicare or reduced their service areas, leaving hundreds of thousands of senior citizens high and dry. And in many states and rural areas, HMO coverage is unavailable at any price.

President Bush must be the last person in America who fails to realize that HMOs are the problem – not the solution.

State budget cuts have just forced Massachusetts to suspend enrollment in its prescription drug program, and cuts to current enrollees are likely. So

our senior citizens need Medicare prescription drug coverage now – no ifs, ands, or HMOs.

And in education, the Administration's budget receives a failing grade. It provides no additional help for our nation's schools, even as states and communities are forced to make drastic cuts in our schools.

In fact, our school children are getting less education today than a year ago.

–Children are spending less time in school, as schools cut back to save money.

–Classrooms are more crowded, not less, as schools can't afford more teachers.

–We have fewer trained teachers, as the President's budget eliminates training for 15,000 teachers.

–110,000 young people can't afford college next year, because the Administration's budget fails to increase Pell Grants.

–And on top of it all, the Administration's budget diverts \$300 million from public schools to give to private schools.

This Administration may no longer care about education, but Democrats do. And we're going to fight to give our children and parents and teachers the support they deserve.

We're here today to say to all the 50 states that President Bush may not hear you, but Democrats do. And we speak for the vast majority of Americans in saying to this White House, "Keep your hands off our schools, our Medicare, our Medicaid, and our Head Start programs." We should be building up America, not tearing it down.