



PRESS RELEASE

COMMITTEE FOR A RESPONSIBLE FEDERAL BUDGET

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The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget Criticizes Abuse of Emergency Spending Designation

WASHINGTON – The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget urged the Senate to reduce the cost of the pending emergency supplemental appropriations bill by dropping unrelated and non-emergency spending items from the bill.

President Bush originally requested \$92.2 billion in emergency funding for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as further assistance in response to Hurricane Katrina. The bill currently before the Senate would appropriate \$106.5 billion and includes many items unrelated to the war or Katrina.

“Congress and the Administration have become overly reliant on war supplementals to support regular defense operations and maintenance spending. Now Congress is using this tactic to increase domestic spending as well,” said Leon Panetta, Co-Chairman of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

“Emergency supplementals should be used sparingly and should be limited to unanticipated and urgent needs—they should not be seen as a money machine. There is little hope for an orderly consideration of the nation's priorities when the discipline that is supposed to be imposed by the budget process is evaded so flagrantly,” said William Frenzel, Co-Chair of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

The Committee recommended that Congress and the Administration achieve greater honesty and transparency in the budget process by including costs of ongoing military operations in the regular defense budget and budgeting for emergencies.

“The growing use of emergency supplemental appropriations bills is an invitation for abuse by exempting spending from the discipline and tradeoffs of the regular budget process,” said Maya MacGuineas, President of the Committee. “Recent events surrounding the supplemental underscore the need for improvements to the budget process, such as a rainy day fund for emergencies and strict criteria for using the emergency designation.”

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget is a bipartisan organization committed to educating policy makers and the public about issues related to fiscal policy. The Committee is located at the New America Foundation. www.crfb.org.