



“You can’t say one thing and do another.”
- Governor George W. Bush, 10/31/00

“The President’s promise to provide the resources needed by our public schools is just a façade. When the reality of the GOP record on education is revealed, the truth comes crashing down.”

- Congressman George Miller, 7/18/03

SPECIAL REPORT



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BROKEN PROMISES: THE GOP RECORD ON EDUCATION

Even before he entered the White House, George Bush promised that education would be a “top priority” of his Administration. He convened a bipartisan meeting prior to his inauguration to develop a comprehensive elementary and secondary education plan to improve student performance and teacher quality. It was a goal we all share: eliminate the achievement gap among poorer and disadvantaged children so that they have the same opportunity to participate fully in our society.

That plan was written by a bipartisan coalition and enacted by Congress as the **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)**. But since NCLB was passed, the Bush Administration and Republican Congressional leaders have largely abandoned the promise to provide state and local communities with the promised levels of support needed to implement the sweeping reforms. And that failure extends beyond NCLB: under the Bush-Republican budgets, students with disabilities, college aid, Head Start and pre-school programs have all been left behind.

This year, a record 53.7 million students will be enrolled in our nation’s elementary and secondary schools. Severe state budget cuts are undermining the ability of states and local school districts to provide a quality education to all Americans: overcrowded and dilapidated schools, overburdened teachers, increased class sizes, inadequate support services like special education, after-school care and preschool. States are being forced to reduce resources to local school districts, resulting in shorter school days and school years and massive layoffs of teachers. In short, schools across America are being forced to do more with less. Much more.

In a world of globalized competition, postsecondary education is more important than ever before in our nation’s history. But students and parents face double jeopardy as college costs rise and states dramatically reduce their support for higher education. The prolonged recession has reduced charitable and alumni giving (leading to massive increases in tuition at colleges, as high as 40 percent) and reduced scholarships, loans and grants. Students and their parents are being forced to shoulder an even greater share of the rising costs of attending college.

The federal government has historically stepped in when states have been unable to provide a quality education to their residents. However, President Bush and the Republican leadership in Congress are refusing to help states and schools in their desperate time of need. It’s time for the President and Congress to keep their promises and fulfill their responsibilities by making education a *true* national priority.

Education Spending - Smallest Percentage Increase in Eight Years

Republicans make promises about accountability, but they repeatedly fail to provide the necessary resources. In order to have world-class schools, we must pair high standards for all students with targeted investments: to improve teacher training, to operate after-school centers, to help the children of military personnel. Just this July, Congressional Republicans voted to send kids back to school with **the lowest new investment in education in almost a decade**.

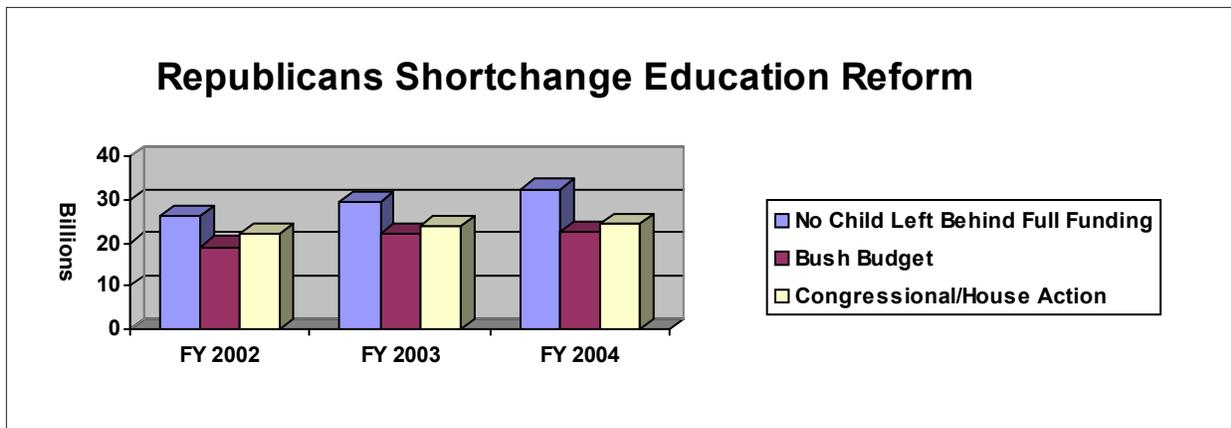
The House education bill provides only a 4.3 percent increase for education – the smallest dollar increase in five years and the smallest percentage increase in eight years: less money at a time when we have higher expectations. By contrast, the average increase in education during the last four years of the Clinton Administration was 11 percent.

The Smallest Increase for Education in Eight Years

<i>Republican House passed 2004 bill (July 2003)</i>	+ \$2.3 billion	+ 4.3 %
2003	+ \$3.2 billion	+ 6.4 %
2002	+ \$6.7 billion	+ 16 %
----- Enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act -----		
2001	+ \$6.6 billion	+ 19 %
2000	+ \$2.1 billion	+ 6 %
1999	+ \$3.6 billion	+ 12 %
1998	+ \$3.3 billion	+ 12 %
1997	+ \$3.6 billion	+ 16 %

No Child Left Behind?

The 2004 education spending bill underfunds the landmark, bipartisan No Child Left Behind Act by more than \$8 billion.



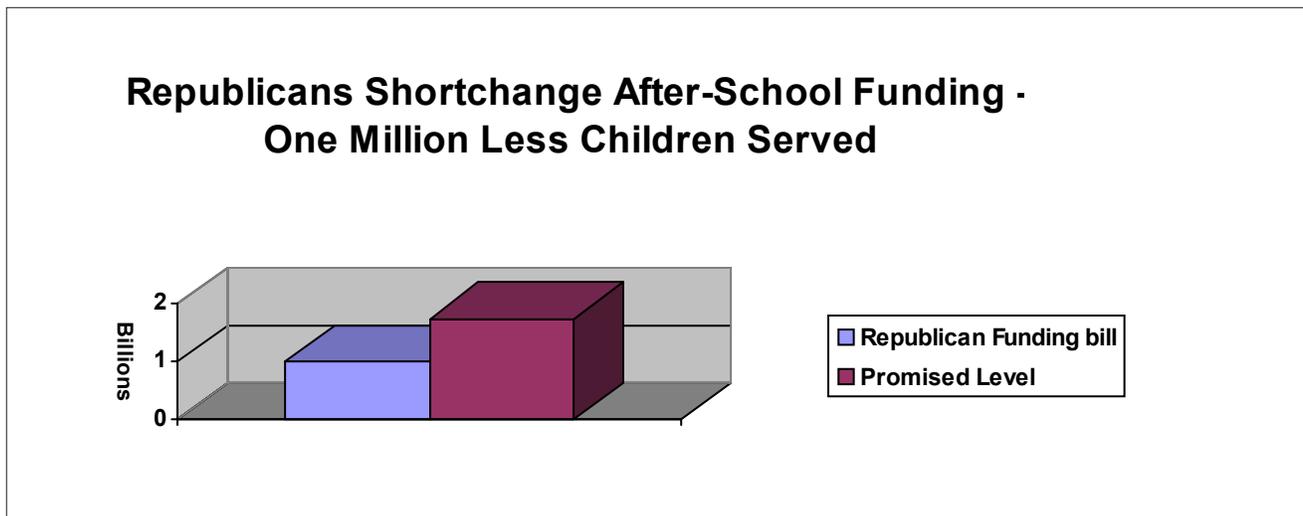
Democrats support the strong school reforms being carried out across our nation. In fact, NCLB is modeled after the reforms that Democrats spearheaded a decade ago. We also know that our public schools must have sufficient funds to implement those reforms. However, Republican-passed legislation abandons those promised resources, and the impact on students and teachers is devastating:

Title I. More than half of all poor children eligible for additional intensive instruction in key academic subjects under Title I will go completely unserved because the Republican education funding bill falls about \$6 billion short. Title I is the main federal program that provides and targets funds to economically disadvantaged and limited English proficient children.

Teachers. 54,000 teachers will not receive the high-quality professional development and training they were promised to better serve their students because the Republican bill cuts teacher training by nearly a quarter billion dollars, falling \$244 million short of the \$3.2 billion promised in 2002 to states for improving teacher quality.

After-School. Over one million children will find their schoolhouse doors locked to their pre-school, after-school and weekend programs because the Republican bill falls 43 percent short of the level promised in the No Child Left Behind Act. These programs help children improve their educational performance and drastically reduce exposure to high-risk behaviors that get kids into serious trouble.

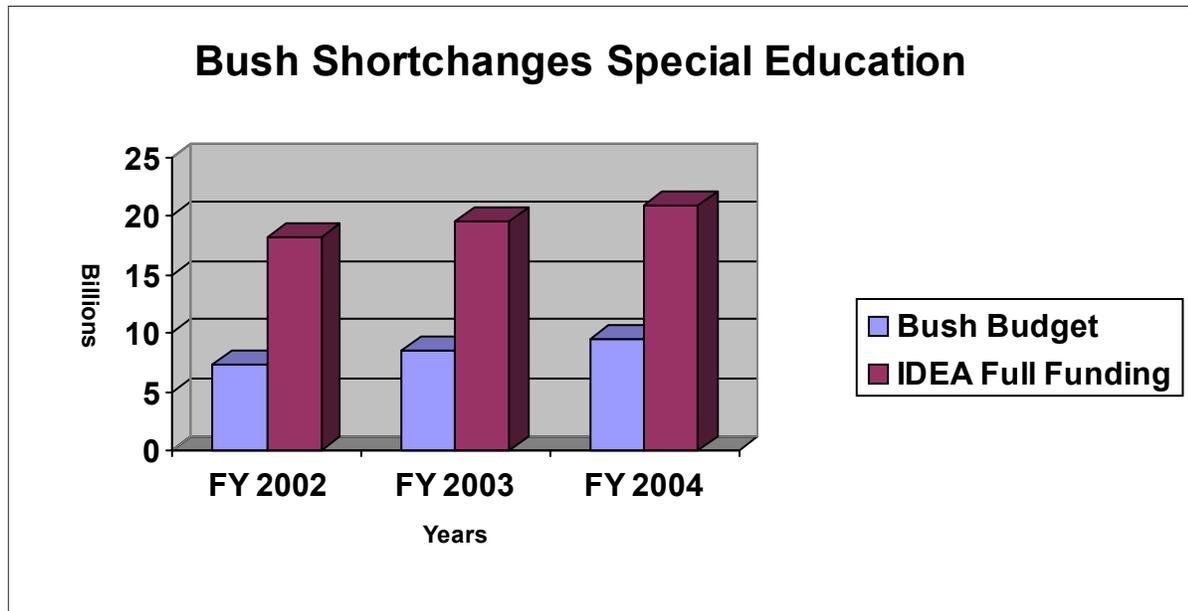
We know that money alone will not improve our schools. But money and reform need to proceed hand in hand, as was promised when NCLB was enacted. Without the necessary funds, the historic reforms contained in NCLB will be a lost opportunity — for students, teachers, communities, and taxpayers. We kept our promise on reforms. And we will continue to push hard to ensure that they occur.



Reneging on Promise to Help Students With Disabilities

The Republican budget severely shortchanges the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by \$1.2 billion, despite the promises of Republican leaders that IDEA “reforms” would be “fully funded.” For a quarter century, the Congress has failed to deliver the level of funding it promised when IDEA was originally enacted. As a result, states and local communities are burdened without billions of dollars in funding Congress had promised to provide. Unfortunately, Congress has never lived up to this promise.

Although dozens of Republicans sponsor bills, or vote for symbolic measures supporting full funding of IDEA, most of them follow their leadership and voted to block a Democratic IDEA full funding amendment on the House floor.



Promises Broken to Millions of College Students

As a candidate for President, George Bush promised on August 30, 2000, to raise the maximum federal college scholarship, or Pell Grant, to as much as \$5,100 for each college freshman. The current maximum Pell Grant is \$4,050.

But during the Bush Presidency, we have never gotten close to that figure for any college student. In fact, the Republicans' 2004 education funding bill *freezes* Pell Grants despite its declining buying power and rising costs of attending college. In fact, today, the maximum Pell Grant covers *only* 42 percent of the typical costs at a four-year public university, compared to 84 percent two decades ago.

As a result of additional changes to the student aid program made recently by the Bush Administration without Congressional approval or public input, 84,000 students will be denied Pell Grants and forced to pay more for college this year¹.

As a result, more and more students are taking on high debt burdens to pay for college. Over the past eight years, the typical student loan debt has nearly doubled to \$17,000, with 64 percent of all students borrowing to cover college costs.

At a time of critical need in public schools and in colleges and universities, House Republicans and President Bush are turning their backs on students and parents.

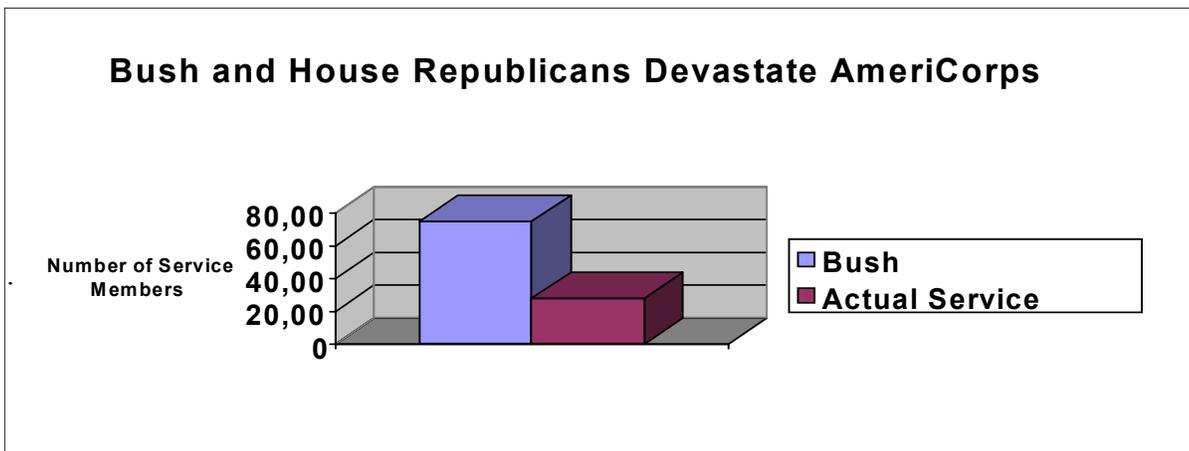
¹ Department of Education, Budget Service

President Bush Breaks His Pledge on National Service

In his 2002 State of the Union address, President Bush pledged to expand the number of AmeriCorps service members to 75,000 in 2003. But now, blaming mismanagement and accounting errors made by the executives in the Bush Administration who oversee AmeriCorps, the program will suffer a nearly 60 percent cut.

As a result, fewer than 30,000 Americans will be able to serve in the program helping states and local communities meet critical national needs in education, public safety, homeland security, public health and the environment. Service members, who help communities meet their urgent needs by running after-school programs, building affordable housing and responding to disasters, will be sharply reduced, causing a serious shortfall in many communities.

The crisis in AmeriCorps was caused by serious financial mismanagement by executives; but the penalty is being paid by thousands of AmeriCorps volunteers who will be denied the opportunity to serve, and the communities across America who desperately need their help.



Dismantling Head Start

For four decades, Head Start has been one of the most highly praised and carefully studied federal programs for children. President Ronald Reagan and Mrs. Nancy Reagan referred to Head Start as their personal “favorite” and protected Head Start from efforts in the 1980s to eliminate or de-fund federal social programs.

But despite promises of “compassionate conservatism,” President Bush and his Republican allies in Congress have embarked on an unprecedented effort to undermine Head Start. Their bill, which passed the House by a single vote in July, will divert funds from local Head Start programs, giving the funds instead to state governments. And states would be freed from the responsibility of meeting federal quality and performance standards that have made Head Start so successful. Dozens of editorial boards, over one hundred national organizations, and tens of thousands of parents are opposing this dangerous initiative.

Instead of dismantling Head Start, as Bush is trying to do, we should be working to build on its success and help the program reach more eligible children. Providing Head Start's high quality comprehensive early education to all children from low-income families is important if all our children are to have an equal chance to achieve the American dream. Currently, only 6 in 10 eligible preschoolers receive Head Start because of inadequate funding. Children of migrant and seasonal farm workers are locked out of this important program to an even greater degree - with only 2 in 10 eligible children served by Migrant and Seasonal Head Start.

Yet, the President's budget does nothing to rectify this problem. The Bush budget's paltry increase just barely covers the cost of inflation, leaving behind 130,000 migrant and seasonal children and hundreds of thousands of other eligible preschoolers across the nation. Worse yet, the recent House-passed Republican Head Start bill sets authorization levels that would - for the first time in the history of the program - cut the number of children served by Head Start. Budgetary analyses of this Republican bill show that between 5,000 and 10,000 fewer children will be served by Head Start as a result of Republican policies and priorities.

Conclusion

Growing enrollments, shrinking state budgets and the stagnant economy have placed tremendous burdens on our elementary and secondary and postsecondary institutions. Yet the Bush Administration and Congressional Republicans have failed to live up to their promises to fund education. In fact, they are cutting back in key areas of education, while insisting that our nation's schools do more with less. These broken Republican promises have jeopardized the education of our children and therefore their future.