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Dear Friend,

Of all the documents that express the moral values of our great country, after the Constitution, there is none as definitive as the Federal Budget. There, on page after page of numbers, are enumerated the priorities of how we spend our collective treasure. The budget is a moral document; but this year even more than most, the budget, in my view, is immoral.

As I write to you, a budget is moving through the House of Representatives that would make permanent changes in law to cut billions from programs that help millions and millions of Americans, including Medicaid, student loans, child support and food stamps.

While some claim that these savings will be used to reduce the deficit or offset the cost of hurricane relief efforts, the reality is that these spending cuts will help finance at least \$106 billion in tax cuts, most of which go to the wealthiest Americans.

Medicaid: Budget cuts would force the poorest Americans, even pregnant women and children, to pay more for health care services and make it harder for many seniors to access needed nursing home care.

Student Loans: The budget makes the largest cuts in the history of the student loan program primarily through increases in the interest rates and fees that students pay, at a time when college costs are rising faster than inflation.

Food Stamps: Even under current law, 44% of those eligible for food stamps do not participate in the program. The proposed \$844 million cut would mean nearly 300,000 fewer vulnerable children and working families would receive nutrition benefits.

Child Support: The proposed budget cuts in child support programs would reduce states' capacity to establish and enforce child support orders, providing custodial parents \$7.1 billion less in child support over five years.

A look through the budget demonstrates other controversial provisions including the potential for oil and gas drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, cuts to renewable energy systems and energy efficiency programs, cuts in foster care support and more.

We need to reduce the deficit, but we must be smart about it. Willie Sutton, when asked why he robbed banks, replied, "That's where the money is." Even after cutting initiatives that help students, seniors, small businesses, persons with disabilities and poor people, the federal deficit would increase by more than \$100 billion. Nothing is cut from the war in Iraq, from the defense budget or from tax cuts for millionaires. Over the past months, I have received many calls, e-mails, faxes and letters from constituents, expressing your views on government spending. Many of you focused on budget priorities, and I'd like to share just a couple of those comments.

- From Kim in Chicago: "I would like to think that we still live in a country that has not sunk so low that we would take food from hungry children to offset the tax cuts for the wealthy."
- From Elizabeth in Wilmette: "I was shocked to learn that Congress is considering cutting upwards of \$50 billion in vital human services, including the very programs Katrina survivors will rely on to rebuild their lives—like housing assistance, job training, Medicaid and student loans."

As of this writing, the budget has not yet been finally approved. I will be working as hard as I can to see that it isn't. Whether you agree or disagree, I'd like to know what you think about this and other issues facing our nation and the 9th Congressional District.

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Congressional Survey

	Respondent One		Respondent Two	
1. The U.S. Energy Information Administration projects a 69-77% increase in natural gas prices and a 30% increase in oil prices this winter. Which steps do you think Congress should take to address high energy prices:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. Impose a windfall profits tax on oil and gas companies	YES	NO	YES	NO
b. Give the Federal Trade Commission the ability to stop price gouging	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge	YES	NO	YES	NO
d. Suspend environmental regulations to encourage more drilling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Invest more in renewables and energy efficiency	YES	NO	YES	NO
f. Let the market work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	YES	NO	YES	NO
2. Do you support the establishment of long-term U.S. military bases in Iraq?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	YES	NO	YES	NO
3. H.Con.Res. 35 calls on the President to "develop and implement a plan to begin the immediate withdrawal of United States armed forces from Iraq." Do you support that resolution?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	YES	NO	YES	NO
4. Do you believe that Senators should be banned from using the filibuster to block judicial nominees, including U.S. Supreme Court nominees?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	YES	NO	YES	NO
5. Do you think that you could afford to buy your home today?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	YES	NO	YES	NO
6. Do you think we are safer today than we were before 9/11?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	YES	NO	YES	NO
7. How do you think we should pay for the costs of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. Stop new tax cuts	YES	NO	YES	NO
b. Roll back tax cuts for the top 1% of all households	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Cut domestic programs like health care and education	YES	NO	YES	NO
d. Cut funding for district projects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Borrow more money	YES	NO	YES	NO
f. Reduce spending in Iraq	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	YES	NO	YES	NO

YOUR ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Mail back survey or go to: www.house.gov/schakowsky

- To fill out survey online
- To sign up for Jan's E-Newsletter