

## Bush: Get to work, Congress

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Congress must pass bills that would fund the military, defend the country and protect middle-class taxpayers, President George Bush said Monday. With two weeks before the Christmas recess, Bush said, "There's not much time to squeeze in nearly a year's worth of business." Congress needs to focus on defense spending, renewal of intelligence authorization, modifications to the alternative minimum tax and appropriations, Bush said. Congress must pass a defense spending bill without a time line for troop withdrawal from Iraq "to fund our troops in combat," Bush said. Otherwise, pink slips will be distributed to civilian employees, and maintenance and operations money will run out early next year. "It's unconscionable to deny funds," he chided. Bush also asked Congress to renew the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act before it expires Feb. 1, because "the threat from terrorists does not expire." Additionally, Congress must address legislation to block the AMT from affecting the middle class. If action is delayed, Bush said, roughly 25 million taxpayers would have to send an additional \$2,000 to the IRS next April. Finally, lawmakers must pass appropriations "in a fiscally responsible way" to keep the federal government operating.

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