

DeFazio "pleased" with Obama's 10-year budget

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

U.S. Congressman Peter DeFazio, representing the 4th Congressional District of Oregon, issued the following statement on President Obama's fiscal year 2010 budget, which was released this morning.

"Overall, I was pleased with President Obama's 10-year budget outline. The budget is an honest assessment of the challenges facing our nation, no longer hiding costs like the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and fixing the Alternative Minimum Tax each year. Years of fiscal irresponsibility under the Bush Administration have created record deficits, and I am committed to working with the President to find solutions and eliminate the deficit as quickly as possible so we do not pass our debt on to our children.

I was particularly happy with the proposed tax reforms that will make the tax system more fair and progressive. The closure of tax loopholes will prod multinational corporations and billionaires to pay their fair share of taxes. After eight years of tax cuts for those who needed them the least, it is refreshing to have a budget that recognizes the middle class.

I was also glad that the budget included \$1.5 trillion in savings over 10 years by responsibly drawing down troops in Iraq. It is time for our troops to come home. And, it was good to see that \$520 billion for disabled veterans was included. It is time to deliver the benefits we promised those that honorably served our nation.

Finally, the budget included \$634 billion over 10 years to finance health care reform. I agree with President Obama that health care reform cannot wait. I look forward to the details on President Obama's proposal.

There were, however, sections of the budget that concerned me. For instance, the projected \$645 billion "cap and trade" windfall to the federal government is more likely to end up in the hands of hedge funds and speculative traders. I have strong concerns with market based cap and trade proposals to limit climate change emissions given the recent failure of the unregulated financial system and the Enron disaster following energy deregulation.

Furthermore, I am deeply concerned about the \$250 billion in additional Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) funds set aside in this budget. I strongly opposed the original TARP program and offered a low cost alternative. Throwing away further taxpayer dollars to bailout Wall Street is not a responsible use of taxpayer dollars.

Lastly, I was most disappointed by the infrastructure investments proposed in the budget. I have joined a bi-partisan bi-cameral group of Transportation Committee leaders to outright reject the Administration's

proposal to raid and destroy the sanctity of the Highway Trust Fund. It is a non-starter in Congress. Furthermore, underfunding the Highway Trust Fund will undo any progress made in job creation by the recent "stimulus" legislation because it will undermine the ability of state and local governments to plan and fund projects at a time when the economy desperately needs a shot in the arm. We need to increase infrastructure investment to create jobs, stimulate the economy and improve our long-term economic viability.

There are elements of this budget I agree with and elements I disagree with, but I am pleased that this is the first honest budget I have seen in eight years. It lays out many good strategies to reduce the massive deficits courtesy of the Bush Administration and get our nation back onto the path of fiscal responsibility."

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