

# The President's FY2006 Proposed Budget

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**T**he proposed budget the president delivered to the Congress on February 7 can be looked at in two ways: 1) the opening marker of a long, drawn-out negotiating process that will result in a final budget that most can agree on or 2) a vision of what the federal government should support, especially in programs from which the courts have long benefited. The president's budget calls for halving the deficit by 2009, mostly by taking a meat-ax to discretionary programs. It is important to note that this budget does not take into account the costs of the Iraq war or the revamping of Social Security.

First, this budget does inflict severe pain on programs that the courts have traditionally supported. For example, Byrne formula and discretionary programs are zero funded (no money asked for in the president's budget). The new Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program, which was established at the end of 2004 and was supposed to combine the Byrne formula and Local

Law Enforcement Block Grant programs, is similarly zero funded. The Juvenile Accountability Block Grant program, another new program in which the courts were ready to take a role, is not funded under the president's budget. Several programs that fall under the rubric of law enforcement are zero funded: COPS hiring, law enforcement information technology, interoperable communications technology, and the crime information technology act (CITA). Finally, the State Justice Institute is also zero funded; no surprise since this has been the case for this program the past few years.

Some court-favorable programs do fare well under this budget. The National Criminal History Program's (NCHIP) budget request is doubled from \$25 to \$58 million. The president's budget supports the increase for NCHIP because of its role in tracking down domestic terrorists. The Regional Information Sharing System budget gets a \$5 million boost as compared to last year. A

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