

Usually dollar figures in a budget clarify priorities. Unfortunately this budget proposal understates long term costs, ignores some things entirely and misses the opportunity to jump start the economy. Just days ago, the President called for privatizing Social Security and sending a man to Mars this decade, both of which could easily cost \$1 trillion. The budget ignores these priorities of the President and makes no mention of the long term costs associated with Iraq and Afghanistan that could easily cost another several hundred billion dollars.

“Most important, this budget proposal is a missed opportunity to jump start the economy. The funding request is significantly below what a bipartisan group of Representatives and Senators are proposing for reauthorization of the surface transportation act. Under the administration’s proposal, funding for highways and bridges would not keep up with inflation and transit support would actually be cut. Amtrak will be starved and dismembered. These cuts are unacceptable. I’ve fought them before and I believe Congress will reverse them again.

“One of the most interesting and most bizarre budget numbers is for the prescription drug benefit for Medicare. It is now one third more than the official cost of two months ago. Listening to the explanations of a jump of \$139 billion in two months would be amusing if the implications weren’t so serious.

“The budget underfunds many things that Oregonians care about, including education. Much of the reason for this can be directly traced to the administration’s proposal of yet another \$1.2 trillion in tax cuts over the next ten years for those who need help the least. If in fact we are going to cut taxes at all, we should put at the top of the list for relief, the 40 million middle class families who are going to be paying the Alternative Minimum Tax. This tax long ago stopped being a way to stop a few super rich from avoiding taxes altogether. Today it is a serious hardship and dramatically impacts Oregon families who are paying their taxes and saving for their future.”