

# Bush's 2006 budget: a disgrace to all conservatives

There is much room for criticism of the budget that President George W. Bush, DC '68, recently proposed for fiscal year 2006. Even Republicans such as Senators John Kyl (R-Ariz.) and Mike DeWine (R-Ohio), and Representatives John Spratt (D-S.C.) and John Peterson (R-Penn.), object to all or part of the list of 154 specific programs that will get reduced funding or be cut from the budget altogether. These cuts will reduce federal non-defense discretionary spending by one percent, and the deficit will remain enormous nonetheless. The debate over these programs, however, suggests that the federal government is not only fiscally irresponsible, but also overreaching in its authority.

What both the Bush administration and Congress have largely overlooked is the marginality—even the pettiness—of the program cuts being proposed. The cuts, put together, should save the federal government \$15.3 billion. But the total budget calls for \$2.6 trillion of spending, with a discretionary spending deficit of \$427 billion. Worse still, President Bush is the first president since James Garfield—who was in office for less than a year—not to veto a single bill. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the Office of Budget Management (OMB), the deficit is down from 3.6 percent of the GDP to 3.5 percent and is projected to decline to 1.3 percent in five years. It's a bad sign, though, that fiscal conservatives have to use this figure, rather than actual balanced budgets, when they choose to defend the Bush administration.

Aside from the practical argument that tax cuts help the economy and the philosophical argument that all individuals—yes, even the very rich—ought to keep as much of their income as possible, tax cuts are designed to force the federal government to decrease in size. But this shrinking only happens when the elected officials who make the budget exercise self-restraint. As it is, the policy of cutting taxes has led to a bad situation and failed to forestall another. First, the \$389 billion requested in this budget for discretionary spend-

ing on non-defense or homeland-security purposes—representing about 15 percent of the budget—is smaller than the total deficit. Furthermore, the CBO reports that, despite the tax cuts, the amount of government spending as a percentage of the GDP is near a 10-year high at almost 20 percent.

Tax revenue, in short, is currently insufficient to cover what the federal government thinks it needs to spend. Nevertheless, the government's ideas about "what it needs to spend" have remained expansive. Of the 99 programs slated for actual elimination, 59 have been on the president's chopping block before, have been funded by Congress, and have never even faced the threat of a veto. Since the federal government is, inevitably, better able to imagine ways to spend money than the economy is able to provide revenue, even raising taxes is not necessarily the best solution to this problem.

Rather, the solution is a paring back of federal activity at all levels. As conservatives often observe, much of what the federal government does now is without constitutional basis in the first place. One can find constitutional provision for departments of defense, justice, state, commerce, and the treasury without difficulty. But transportation? Education? Agriculture? Such departments, under the Tenth Amendment, oversee matters that often ought to receive government attention but are reserved for state authority.

State money for some such issues is better than federal money. The framers of the constitution believed, correctly, that regional differences matter and that central management of America's vastly different regions can lead to no good. Among exercising detailed authority, providing for local and individual freedom, and ruling a geographically large and diverse territory, no government can pick more than two. That is because differ-

ent locations breed different populations, with different needs and characteristics, and should therefore be governed differently. To put the matter simply, Massachusetts and Texas, or Alaska and Hawaii, should have different laws. This fact is true even in the case of programs that probably do need some sort of government involvement. Take the

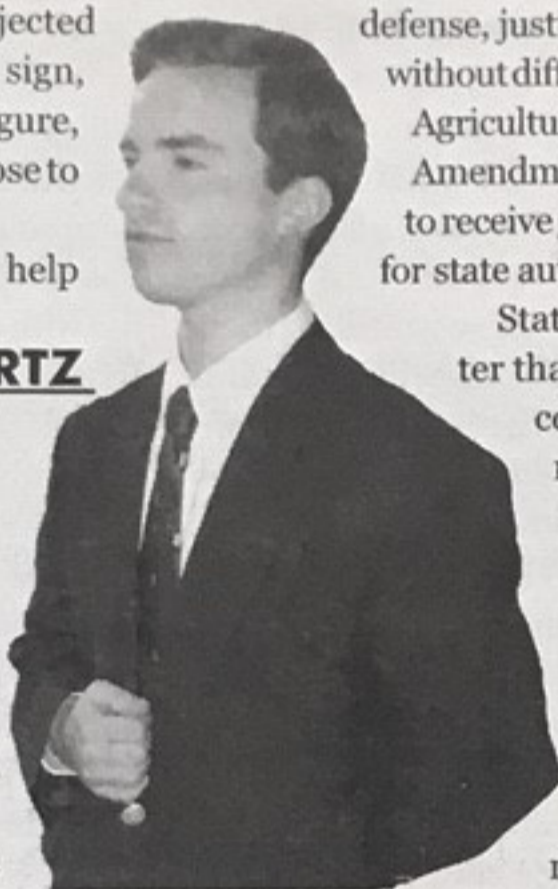
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Department of Education: It's not that there is no government interest in providing quality public education; rather, different states should be able to structure their education systems as they see fit, without the interference of a distant federal government that sets up large and expensive bureaucracies to oversee them and imposes standards and procedures that, by their very breadth, sacrifice their value.

The federal government should devolve many of its current responsibilities to the states, which are constitutionally empowered to fulfill them and may well do so better than Washington. But even if whole departments were abolished, there would still be a large deficit, and this difference will almost certainly be too large to be made up by economic growth, at least in the near future. The remaining deficit could only be met by reduced spending on defense and security, and by a determined reduction in our financial commitments to maintaining so much military power outside our borders. You will pardon me for thinking such belt-tightening unlikely.

One can't help but regret the poor discipline of elected representatives who insist on fighting for federal spending, not to mention the hypocrisy of those who do so after having supported the administration's policy of aggressively cutting taxes in its first term. The 2006 budget is discouraging to conservatives of all stripes, and better news is not forthcoming.

**STEPHEN SCHWARTZ**  
Always Right



# Universal keycard access will make Yale safer

By Katherine Knapp

There are certain things I remember about my first visit to Yale: the oppressive heat, my first glimpse of Commons, and my tour guide's assurances that the residential colleges were not exclusive. Now, two years later, I am not entirely convinced. Recent discussions have centered around the ever-controversial dining-hall restrictions. While I agree that such restrictions are divisive and foster residential college exclusivity, Yale is missing a much larger issue. Even the harshest dining-hall restrictions leave gaps for non-college members to eat. It is the University's policy on entryway access that truly threatens the residential-college system.

Colleges at Yale are random divisions, nothing more. There is nothing that should prevent me from having best friends in every college, and this fact is certainly something the administration would like to encourage. However, it is easier said than done. During my freshman year, the year of blossoming college friendships, I had keycard access to three entryways on Old Campus—three out of 31. Granted, this number does not include my laundry-room access, so technically I could have made close friends with any members of the Class of 2007 who happened to be washing their clothing at the same time I was.

The message was very clear: Make good friends with those who happen to be in your college, and if you stumble across a soulmate who was assigned elsewhere, be sure you know his or her cellphone number by heart.

Enter sophomore year, and the situation has hardly gotten better. I no longer even have keycard access to everyone in my college. While freshmen have access to

upperclass entryways, the opposite is not true, and a quarter of my college is now so inaccessible that my Berkeley little sib might as well be in Branford. Even members of my own class, annexed in Vanderbilt, are locked away. As I read of shortages in freshman-counselor applications, I can't help but wonder why people would ever volunteer to spend their last year at Yale in a room closed off from the rest of their long-time friends.

For these first two years at Yale, my complaints with keycard access have been ones of convenience; however, after the recent spattering of break-ins in Silliman and Morse, I have come to see the more dire side of such a restrictive policy. All minor quibbling with the status quo aside, Yale needs universal keycard access as a matter of campus security.

It had been my impression that major administrative objections to universal keycard access had been the security issues of 5,500 undergraduates' having access to an entryway instead of a mere 400 or 500. I was never sure why 500 randomly assigned students having access to my entryway was safer than everyone at Yale having access, but I was willing to let the issue slide. Recently, though, I've become convinced that such limited keycard access has actually made our campus more dangerous and vulnerable to theft.

The response of the Administration—specifically that of college masters to the recent intrusions in Morse and Silliman—has lost sight of the big picture. It is all very well to chastise students for leaving entryway doors propped, but no effort has been made to address the underlying cause. Students don't leave their doors open because they wish to be robbed. They leave their doors open so that

their friends outside of their particular residential college—read: all Yale undergraduates—can come hang out. Exclusionary entryway policies, beyond stifling friendships outside the college gates, cause students to resort to dangerous tactics—door-propping is one example—when arranging get-togethers.



DANNY MINDLIN/VH

**If Yalies had universal keycard access, they wouldn't have to use ruses to visit their friends.**

In my imaginary and ideal Yale world, every undergraduate has access to the entryways of every other undergraduate. Rooms, of course, still stay locked and accessible only to their occupants. Such a policy would let friends visit friends from other colleges without the possibility of propped doors. This policy would also make students more comfortable when confronting non-Yalies trying to gain access to the rooms.

That is already the case with the college gates. All undergraduates have access to every college's courtyard. With the exception of a student who has forgotten his or her keycard, it is rare that anyone would stand around outside a gate, waiting to be

let in. It is also an automatic trigger that the person doing the waiting is not from Yale, or at least not an undergraduate. However, most people will not stop and question someone trying to gain entryway access. The assumption is that the visitor is from a different residential college and wants to go see a friend.

In most cases, this assumption proves true, since over 5,000 undergraduates are walking around at any given time without access to their friends in any particular college. However, if universal keycard access were instated, anyone waiting in the courtyard to be let into an entryway would raise a red flag: If the person were indeed a Yale student, why couldn't the student use his or her own keycard?

One of the technical arguments I've heard against a universal access policy is that some colleges still use keys—not keycards—for entry. I recognize this problem, but also fail to see any action to address keycard access where it is possible, particularly on Old Campus. Yale does not have to make this change all at once. It can allow everyone access to those colleges with electronic entryway access and gradually add colleges to the network as they are renovated, or it can place the electronic readers in every college prior to renovation since the cost will have to be addressed sooner or later.

Universal keycard access is an issue that has raised some attention in the past, but always been eventually dismissed. However, recent security issues have revived the debate. If Yale still values the safety of its students, the administration should be seriously reconsidering its policy.

*Katherine Knapp, a photo editor for the Herald, is a sophomore in Berkeley College.*