

Washington, D.C. – Senators Ted Kennedy, Tom Harkin, Barbara Boxer, and Debbie Stabenow and Representatives Chris Van Hollen and Xavier Becerra today joined hundreds of students, seniors, and concerned citizens on the steps of the U.S. Capitol building in calling for a budget that makes middle-class life more affordable.

In an increasingly competitive world in which Americans need every educational advantage to succeed, President Bush has offered a budget that will make it harder for kids to afford college and harder for local schools to pay for the education our children need to compete. His budget hits America's health care as well, making Medicare harder for seniors to access at a time when they're already struggling with the disastrous prescription drug program, and cutting the rural health care programs that so many Americans depend on.

“Forty-six million uninsured Americans. And the President's solution? A tax shelter. Seventy-seven million baby-boomers poised to retire. And the President's solution? Thirty-five billion dollars in cuts to traditional Medicare,” Rep. Becerra (CA-31), the only member of Congress from Southern California who is on the House Committee on Ways and Means, said. “Diabetes, chronic kidney disease, childhood obesity, cancer, AIDS and other life-threatening diseases continue to impact the everyday lives of Americans all across the country. And the President's solution? Flat-line funding at the National Institutes of Health. The President's priorities are clearly not those of the folks for whom this budget should and could assist, and it is clear that this budget is as reckless as it is morally irresponsible.”

“The gap between the President's words and deeds has grown by leaps and bounds each year as he fails to live up to his promises, instead leaving ordinary Americans behind,” said Senator Kennedy. “Budgets are moral documents, and sadly this one shows an agenda that puts special interests above the interests of America's families. It shortchanges our opportunities, it

shortchanges our future, and it shortchanges our global competitiveness.”

Senator Boxer said, "How can this President say he wants to make sure everyone is educated, but then push for the largest cuts in history at the Department of Education? How can he say he wants to expand health care, but then create a prescription drug plan that is a big gift to pharmaceutical companies and a big nightmare for our seniors? It is time to change our priorities, and that means changing our Congress."

“The President’s budget illustrates this Administration’s misplaced priorities – it includes unacceptably deep cuts to education and health care,” said Senator Stabenow. “Democrats understand that education is the key to our future. We believe in affordable health care for every American. And we will fight these cuts every step of the way.”

“The Presidential budget is an outright assault on educational opportunity in America and on any chance we have to launch an effective strategy for maintaining American competitiveness, innovation and preeminence in the rapidly changing world of the 21st century,” said Congressman Van Hollen. “Democrats will beat back these misplaced priorities and ensure that every elementary school student has access to a contemporary, world-class education and that every high school student can attend college, regardless of family income. It’s the right thing to do for our kids. And in this increasingly competitive global marketplace, it’s the smart thing to do for our nation.”

Democrats are committed to making college affordable, to helping Americans learn the skills they need to compete in a rapidly changing world, and to helping everyone access the quality health care they deserve. America can do better.

[Becerra.house.gov](https://becerra.house.gov)