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Dems' '09 Budget Puts 'Nation's Fiscal House Back In Order:' Crowley

Congressman Joseph Crowley declared last week that the 2009 Democratic budget that was passed will balance the budget by 2012 and fund critical national priorities in energy, education and infrastructure, provide tax relief for the middle class and keep the country's promise to its veterans.

"For too long, Republicans in Congress have rubber stamped President [George W.] Bush's credit card economy and out of control spending and, unfortunately, American families are now paying the price for their irresponsible fiscal policies, which have contributed to the rise in food prices and a slowing national economy," Crowley said.

The Democratic-led Congress, he said, "has put together a 2009 budget that puts our national fiscal house back in order by returning the federal government budget to balance while maintaining or increasing our investments in programs that will help our nation prosper."

Crowley (D-Queens/The Bronx) says the spending plan

places priorities on tax relief for middle class families, expands renewable energy sources, increases access to education, improves infrastructure and cultivates new businesses.

The budget shows fiscal responsibility by reaching balance in 2012 and holding it there the next year; posts smaller deficits than the president in 2009 and the next five years; continues House emphasis on fiscal discipline by following the pay-as-you-go rule, and roots out wasteful spending.

Among the discretionary funding highlights in the document that Crowley pointed out, the budget increases funding for veterans for 2009 by \$3.7 billion, which is 8.2 percent above current levels. It also addresses the high cost of energy by investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives, and by rejecting the Bush Administration cuts to LIHEAP, instead providing the full authorized funding level of \$5.1 billion, which is \$3.1 billion over the present authorization. The program provides home heating assistance for



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seniors and low-income families.

Crowley noted that as in regard to mandatory programs, the budget expands children's health insurance; reforms Medicare for beneficiaries and protects access to care; creates an affordable housing fund, and changes the Higher Education Act to make college more affordable and accessible.

It also rejects administration cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, he noted.—John Toscano

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