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## Libertarians lambaste Bush for funding war with deficit spending

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WASHINGTON, DC -- By funding the war with deficit spending rather than program cuts, President Bush is piling one outrage on top of another, Libertarians say.

"If this war is as important as the president claims, why isn't he asking for a sacrifice from the government as well as from the people?" asked Geoffrey Neale, national chairman of the Libertarian Party. "If there's one thing worse than an unnecessary war, it's funding that war with borrowed money."

The deficit will increase dramatically if Congress approves the \$74.7 billion supplemental spending bill that Bush requested on Tuesday to fight the war in Iraq for the next several months. The supplemental spending would be added to the record \$2.23 trillion budget planned for fiscal 2003.

Bush's request has Libertarians asking: If U.S. troops can sacrifice their lives for the war effort, can't Democrats and Republicans sacrifice a few of their favorite government programs?

"Bush's request of \$75 billion represents just one-thirtieth of the overall federal budget," Neale said. "Since there are literally thousands of wasteful, unnecessary federal programs, cutting one out of every 30 should be easy."

One example is corporate welfare.

"A study by Time magazine in 1998 estimated that corporate welfare costs U.S. taxpayers \$125 billion annually -- nearly twice as much as Bush is requesting for the war," Neale said. "Does the president believe that funneling money to these corporate fat cats is more important than supporting U.S. troops in Iraq? If not, why doesn't he propose shutting off that spigot of special interest money?"

Dozens of other wasteful, unnecessary programs could be ended as well, he said.

"Last year farm subsidies ate up \$35 billion, or about half of what Bush is requesting for the war," Neale said. "This year Congress will spend \$10 billion for anti-AIDS programs in Africa. It will squander \$100 million on the National Endowment for the Arts, embark on a \$400 billion program to prop up Medicare, and fund countless pork barrel projects. Can't any of these programs be cut in a time of national crisis?"

Even a small, symbolic sacrifice, such as asking Congress to give back the \$5,000 pay raise that it accepted earlier this year, might indicate that politicians are trying to do their part, Neale suggested.

"In a time of national crisis, patriotism requires that politicians put the national interest above their own self-interest," Neale said. "One way they can do that is by resisting the temptation to go on yet another borrowing binge.

"Especially with U.S. troops being captured and killed in Iraq, it's time to expect a little sacrifice in Washington, DC."

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