

This week, as the American economy continued to suffer the effects of big government, the House attempted to pass two multibillion dollar "emergency" spending bills, one for continued spending on the war in Iraq, and one increasing spending on domestic and international welfare programs. The plan was to pass these two bills and then send them to the president as one package. Even though the House failed to pass the war spending bill, opponents of the war should not be fooled into believing this vote signals a long term change in policy. At the end of the day, those favoring continued military occupation of Iraq will receive every penny they are requesting and more as long as they agree to dramatically increase domestic and international welfare spending as well. The continued War in Iraq and the constant state of emergency has allowed Congress to use these so-called "emergency" bills as a vehicle to dramatically increase spending across the board--including spending that does not meet even the most generous definition of emergency. For example, the spending proposals currently being considered by Congress provide \$210 million to the Census Bureau and \$4 million for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. \$4.6 billion is requested for the closing of military bases, but not any of the more than 700 bases overseas – but bases here at home! Another \$387 million would go to various international organizations and \$850 million more just in international food aid - all this when food prices are skyrocketing here and American families are having a hard time making ends meet. Because this spending will be part of "emergency" measures, it will not count against debt ceilings, or any spending limits set by Congressional budget resolutions, and does not have to be offset in any way. Explosive growth of government is just another tragedy of this war. The "bipartisan" compromises made in Washington are at the expense of the taxpayer, not in the interest of fiscal responsibility, or peace. The taxpayer loses and government grows. The bottom line is that our dollar is falling, the economy is in rough shape, and government spending is wildly out of control. Congress argues over relatively minor details, instead of dramatically changing our flawed foreign policy. We need to bring our troops home, not only from Iraq and Afghanistan, but from South Korea, Germany, and the other 138 countries where we have troops stationed. Our foreign policy of interventionism is not only offensive to others, inviting further terrorist attacks, but it is ruining our economy as we tax, borrow and print the money to pay the bills of our empire. The economy and ultimately the American people suffer because Washington is refusing to adopt more sensible and constitutional policies. Squabbling between those who favor increased welfare and those who favor increased warfare has giving the American people a temporary reprieve from having to bear the burden of yet another dramatic increase in government this week. However, as early as next week a compromise could be reached that expands both government warfare and welfare. As congressional approval ratings drop to 18% according to a recent Gallup poll, the American people are telegraphing that Congress is taking the country in the wrong direction. Our government must stop bankrupting the country so that we can get back on track to a peaceful, prosperous future.