

Emergency Campaign for America's Priorities

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Hastert Points Finger at Bush White House Knew Bill Had Not Passed House and Senate in Identical Form and Bush Signed the Bill Anyway

Washington, DC – The same day Public Citizen filed a lawsuit over the validity of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, Speaker Hastert's office confirmed the White House was informed of the \$2 billion discrepancy in bills. Hastert's office even went so far as to ask "the administration to delay proceedings until the problem could be addressed by the House and Senate." [WSJ, 3/22/06]. Presuming the White House would not disregard the Constitution and let the president sign a bill that had not passed both the House and Senate in identical form, Hastert "expected only a 'mock ceremony' -- not a real signing of the parchment that had been presented in error." [WSJ, 3/22/06]

"Now we know what he knew, and when he knew it. It is shocking that in their fervor to cut vital programs for needy Americans, the President and White House staff ignored warnings from Speaker Hastert's office that the bill did not pass even the most basic of constitutional guidelines, the Presentment Clause. The President ignored his responsibility to uphold the Constitution of the United States which requires a bill be passed in identical form by both the House and Senate. This admission by the White House and top Congressional Republicans further exacerbates the culture of corruption surrounding their party. It certainly doesn't help that the president is racking up charges of violating the constitution, from domestic spying to knowingly signing a bill that did not pass the House and Senate in identical form," said Cara Morris Stern, ECAP spokeswoman.

David Rogers of the Wall Street Journal points out the trouble the lawsuit and the controversy surrounding the signing presents for the White House and Republicans in Congress. "Nonetheless, the budget consequences would be huge if the court were to rule against the administration. Moreover, by keeping the controversy alive, the case could further damage the image of Republican stewardship of Congress, already under attack for corruption and record budget deficits." [WSJ, 3/22/06]

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