

45.7

41.5

37.9

30.9

29.2

28.3

26.7

24.5

22.2

22.I

21.9

21.7

\$20 billion Calfornia 2 New York Texas 3 4 Florida Illinois 5 New Jersey 6 Pennsylvania 7 Massachusetts 8 Ohio 9 Virginia 10 Michigan 11 Georgia 12 Maryland 13 Washington 14 Connecticut 15 North Carolina 16 Minnesota 17 17.2 17.1 Arizona 18 Colorado 19 16.7 Wisconsin 20 15.5 Indiana 21 15.3 Tennessee 22 15.3 Missouri 23 14.5 Alabama 24 10.1 10.0 Nevada 25 Oregon 26 9.5 South Carolina 27 9.5 Lousiana 28 8.5 Kentucky 29 8.5 Oklahoma 30 7.8 Kansas 31 7.2 Iowa 32 6.8 Utah 33 5.4 Arkansas 34 5.2 New Hampshire 35 4.9 Mississippi 36 4.4 Nebraska 37 4.3 New Mexico 38 4.0 Hawaii 39 3.7 Rhode Island 40 3.3 West Virginia 41 3.2 Idaho 42 3.2 District of Columbia 43 3.1 Maine 44 3.1 Delaware 45 3.0 Alaska 46 2.1 Montana 47 2.0 South Dakota 48 📒 I.9 Wyoming 49 1.9 Vermont 50 1.7 North Dakota 51 1.5

Congress Brushes Off \$20 Billion as 'Table Scraps'

82.2

Before leaving town for Christmas, Congress went on another budget-busting spending spree and charged all the goodies to the taxpayers. And the bill actually is a lot higher — \$20 billion more than lawmakers would have you believe.

68.6

66.3

Many in Congress say they acted responsibly in hurriedly passing an omnibus budget bill because, in combination with earlier defense appropriations, it keeps discretionary spending for fiscal 2008 in line with President Bush's cap of \$932 billion.

In fact, though, Congress used budget gimmicks and loopholes to fudge the numbers. Meanwhile, senators and representatives piled on the pork by earmarking billions to more than 11,300 of their pet projects.

Result: Lawmakers approved a bill that actually puts the government more than \$20 billion over budget.

To obscure this overspending, Congress employed such gimmicks as classifying items as "emergency" spending — because money designated that way isn't counted against the top line.

However, almost none of this spending fits the definition of a true emergency. For example, Congress allocated \$100 million for "emergency" security at next summer's Democratic and Republican national

For more information on the omnibus spending bill, go to:

www.heritage.org/Research/Budget/wm1737.cfm www.heritage.org/Research/Budget/wm1751.cfm

conventions — which always meet every four years.

Total Federal Income Tax Revenue, in Billions

\$133.5

To some in Washington, \$20 billion over budget may not sound like much.

Both House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid both recently dismissed a larger amount, \$23 billion, as a "small difference" with the president. House Appropriations Committee Chairman David Obey (D-Wisc.) shrugged it off as "table scraps."

But \$20 billion is real money to taxpayers. To reach that amount would take every federal income tax dollar paid in 2005 by residents of North Dakota, Vermont, Wyoming, South Dakota, Montana, Alaska, Delaware and Maine combined.

Put another way, \$20 billion is more than all the federal income taxes paid in 34 states and the District of Columbia. Obey's ''table scraps'' dwarf the annual income tax burdens in all but the largest metropolitan areas.

For the taxpayers' sake, Congress should have held true to pledges of fiscal responsibility early this year by refusing to resort to loopholes, earmarks and other gimmicks.

President Bush also promised to rein in earmarks and wasteful spending. Now he has several options to follow through on that promise. Taxpayers will watch with interest.