

August 6, 2007 These last few weeks the House has been in a rush to pass spending bills before August recess. In fact, visitors walking the hallways of Congress become immediately struck by the apparent spending battle between the “conservative Democrats” of the so-called “Blue Dog Coalition,” and the Republican Study Committee, or RSC, generally representing the more conservative bloc of Republican House members. Members of each of these groups place large posters on easels outside their offices. The purpose behind this seems clear, to point the finger at the opposite party for the current budget mess that continues to threaten America’s future. When Republicans had control of the Presidency and both houses of Congress, very little was done to stem the tide of federal spending. In fact, spending increased every year over the past decade. New programs such as “No Child Left Behind,” and entitlements like the Prescription Drug Benefit, were added at great cost to federal taxpayers. During this period, the Blue Dogs continued to make the rhetorical point of government financial misdeeds. Now that Democrats control the House, the RSC is highlighting the increases in spending and debt that will occur based on bills passed this year by the new majority. While both sides continue attempting to score political points, the country goes further and further into debt, because neither side is really willing to make the tough decisions necessary to halt the run away train of federal spending. Several Republicans go to the House floor with amendments to stop spending directed by Congress, often seeking to cut projects that total \$100,000 or less. While it is true that hundreds of thousands can and do add up, the same people who argue for these spending cuts think nothing of spending billions more in Iraq. At the same time, basically every spending bill that comes to the House Floor would have the majority spend more, even over and above the increases requested by the Administration. Current arguments over spending really have no connection to the idea of the overall reduction in the size and scope of government. The Democrats who argue that tax cuts are a form of spending are just as misleading as the Republicans who say they can make a serious dent by changing congressionally directed spending into administration directed spending. The federal government has a spending problem. Each year our current accounts balance gets worse and worse, and the amount of foreign held government debt has skyrocketed. Both Republicans and Democrats; conservatives, liberals and moderates, indeed nearly every single-member of the Washington political establishment, is addicted to one form of federal spending or another. Only when the American people absolutely demand that the spending spree be stopped, will their representatives in Washington stop using this issue as a political football to score public relations points, and finally face-up to the fact that we are a nation in a very precarious financial position, which demands real spending cuts in order to avoid bankrupting our next generation.