

# The Veto Lineup

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House Republicans have done an impressive job of ruining their fiscal credibility with voters, and it won't be easy making amends. Today, however, they are taking one step toward redemption when Texan Jeb Hensarling announces that he's gathered signatures from 147 House GOP Members promising to sustain vetoes of any spending bill that exceeds President Bush's budget requests.

That's one more vote than the 146 needed to uphold a Presidential veto, so it's a big deal if the Members keep their word. That won't be easy because Democrats will load up the bills with earmarks designed to buy votes even from the minority. But Mr. Hensarling and the Republican Study Committee have collected pledges from the GOP House leadership, and even from Appropriations Don Jerry Lewis. Among the notable missing in action are faux budget hawk Mike Castle (Delaware), earmark proliferator Don Young (Alaska) and 51 others.

A summer spending showdown would be good for the country, not to mention the GOP. Mr. Bush's budget request was a generous \$2.9 trillion -- with \$932 billion in discretionary spending. But Democratic proposals have already exceeded that by \$23 billion and this is still the early going. This week Mr. Bush threatened to veto a \$36 billion Homeland Security bill that exceeds his request by 6%. Democrats have larded up that bill precisely because its "homeland security" moniker makes it harder to oppose politically.

As we note below, with continued growth and a little spending restraint on non-defense accounts, the federal budget could be balanced in no time. We'll be watching to see if Team Hensarling holds the veto line.