A HELPING HAND?

Should the federal government expand its control over the economy to restore economic health?

The government's Emergency Economic Stabilization Act, a $700 billion plan to help U.S. financial institutions, has sparked a broad debate over how government should address the current economic crisis.

Throughout American history, citizens and government officials have debated the merits of government intervention in the marketplace to ease economic turmoil. During the Great Depression, President Roosevelt's New Deal used federal authority as never before to regulate the economy, control corporate power and create a vast public works program.

Economists and political scientists continue to debate the effectiveness of these programs to this day.

The current financial crisis has had significant and widespread effects on the American and global economy. The $700 billion plan seeks to stabilize the banking industry and make loans available to individual and corporate borrowers who rely on them. Politicians and the public have begun to debate how the money should be spent and whether the government should enact stricter regulation of the banking industry or take additional measures to stimulate the economy.

Should the federal government expand its control over the economy to restore economic health?

YES

- The federal government is the one engine capable of making our vast economy run properly.
- Ever since the New Deal, the American people have expected the government to protect them in grave economic emergencies.
- The private sector must be reined in and prevented from continuing the financial practices that created the crisis.

NO

- The free market system must be allowed to operate, and government interference through regulation prevents this from happening.
- Costly government initiatives will increase the deficit and leave taxpayers holding the bag for decades to come.
- Government intervention should be limited to simply stopping the panic.