

## BUSH POLICIES CAUSING HARM FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

*“I believe there is a fundamental duty for those of us who have been given the honor of serving the American people to solve problems before they become acute and not to pass them on to future presidents and future generations.” — George W. Bush, 1/11/05*

*President Bush has repeatedly said that he will not leave problems to future generations. However, his policies do the opposite, causing harm to the country for years to come. Ranging from millions of uninsured Americans to trillions of dollars in debt, the Bush administration’s failed policies will leave a trail of problems that will resonate long beyond Bush’s tenure.*

### DEPLETING MILITARY FORCES AND EXPOSING AMERICA TO ATTACK

**America Will Be Less Safe, More Prone To a Terrorist Attack.** Paul Pillar, a top CIA intelligence analyst who covers the Middle East, said the war in Iraq “probably has increased, rather than decreased, the chance of anti-U.S. terrorism.” “‘We’ve got more angry Muslims, with plenty to be angry about, who may be the basis for new and emergent cell groups,’ he said in an interview. ‘I don’t know how this nets out. Whether we’re safer or not, I don’t know.’” [[Dallas Morning News](#), 9/6/04]

**Bush Administration Will Have Permanently Damaged The Reserve Forces.** “The Army Reserve, a force of 200,000 part-time soldiers that provides key support in Iraq and Afghanistan with medics, engineers and truck drivers, ‘is rapidly degenerating into a ‘broken’ force,’ its top general told senior Army leaders. In a blunt memo, Lt. Gen. James R. ‘Ron’ Helmly, chief of the Army Reserve, noted the demands of overseas commitments and the unwillingness of Army and Pentagon officials to change ‘dysfunctional’ policies that hamper the Reserve on issues such as training, extension of service and the mobilization of his soldiers.” [[Baltimore Sun](#), 1/5/05]

**Long-Term Global War on Terror Will Continue With Weaker Force.** GAO: “Under DOD’s current implementation of the authority, reserve component members can be involuntarily mobilized more than once, but involuntary mobilizations are limited to a cumulative total of 24 months. If DOD’s implementation of the partial mobilization authority restricts the cumulative time that reserve component forces can be mobilized, then it is possible that DOD will run out of forces... it is unclear how DOD plans to meet its longer-term requirements for the Global War on Terrorism.” [GAO Report, “Military Personnel,” GAO-04-1031, 9/04]

### CUTTING SENIORS’ SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

**Bush’s Social Security Plan Would Slash Benefits, Cost Trillions.** President Bush is pushing to privatize Social Security, claiming that the system will soon be bankrupt. However, experts say that the system will be fine for at least another 50 years. The President’s plan to offer “voluntary” private accounts would be so expensive, at least \$2 trillion in the next decade alone, that the system’s lifespan would be cut in half to pay for them. The Bush White House is also planning to cut benefits by 25 to 45 percent regardless of whether a worker opts for his risky scheme. [[Economic Report of the President 2004](#); [Contributions to Economic Analysis & Policy](#), Volume 1, Issue 1, 2002; [Washington Post](#), 1/4/05; Congressional Budget Office]

## **LEAVING MORE AMERICANS WITHOUT HEALTH CARE**

**Bush Pushing for Health Coverage That Will Double Cost of Traditional Health Plans.** Bush is pushing a shift to a “consumer-based healthcare,” where costs are cut because patients pay more medical bills out of their own pocket. But this would segment the insurance market by encouraging young, healthy workers to drop out of group coverage. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Premiums for comprehensive, employer-based coverage could *more than double* if such accounts became widespread, according to major studies conducted in the past by RAND, the Urban Institute, and the American Academy of Actuaries.” Ultimately, traditional plans would be driven out of the market as premiums spiral upward. [National Journal, 1/24/04; CBPP Fact Sheet, [www.cbpp.org](http://www.cbpp.org), 12/8/03; Gail Shearer, Testimony Before Joint Economic Committee, 2/25/04, [www.consumersunion.org](http://www.consumersunion.org)]

➤ **The Wealthy Will Be Chief Beneficiaries From Bush’s Health Savings Accounts.** Under the Bush Medicare bill, both deposits and withdrawals are tax exempt, making them an ideal mechanism to reduce taxable income for the affluent. If individuals simply wait until retirement age, he or she can withdraw these funds for non-medical purposes with no penalty. In fact, the GAO has found that insurers have historically marketed such accounts primarily for tax advantages, not health benefits. [Democratic Policy Committee, [democrats.senate.gov](http://democrats.senate.gov); CBPP, 3/2/00, 12/1/03]

**Health Savings Accounts Will Cut Coverage, While Not Addressing The Uninsured Problem.** Tax deductions will do nothing to help most uninsured people. According to the GAO, 90 percent of the uninsured pay at or below the 15 percent tax bracket, meaning they would receive little benefit from the Bush policies. Alan Weir of the Urban Institute: “[A]t best, the budget proposal helps the wealthiest Americans while doing nothing for the uninsured. But at worst, the proposal increases the incentive for healthy people to leave the broader risk pool, thereby increasing premiums for everyone else, and making it harder for employers to continue providing coverage to their employees.” [GAO, 6/10/98; Ronald Pollack, Testimony Dem. Policy Committee, 1/6/04; Gail Shearer, Testimony Joint Economic Committee, 2/25/04; CBPP, 2/18/04; Alan Weil, Testimony House Budget Committee, 2/26/04]

➤ **Over 1.4 Million More Would Join The Ranks Of The Uninsured.** Some employers may decide to no longer offer health insurance to their employees, since their workers can now take advantage of both the tax benefits of existing HSAs and the new premium deduction to purchase coverage on their own in the individual market. As a result of these factors, more than 1.4 million workers with health insurance now would lose their employer-based coverage and become uninsured. Those 1.4 million would join the 45 million uninsured Americans, a number that soared by over 5 million during Bush’s first term. [CBPP, 4/10/04; Kaiser Family Foundation, 9/27/04]

**Small Businesses Pay More Under Bush’s Health Proposal.** The Congressional Budget Office estimated that Bush’s Association Health Plans could raise premiums for 4 out of 5 small businesses that keep traditional insurance. A study of Bush’s proposal found that overall insurance costs would actually increase by an average of 6 percent in the small-business market while also growing the number of the uninsured. [CBO, January 2000; Mercer Risk, Finance, and Insurance, 6/10/03; National Small Business Association, 6/10/03]

## **LEAVING HUGE DEBTS AND FINANCIAL BURDENS**

**Bush Is Presiding Over \$6.5 Trillion Fiscal Collapse.** The \$5.6 trillion ten-year surplus projected in January 2001 is gone, replaced with \$855 billion in deficits over the next ten years – a fiscal decline of \$6.5 trillion in just three years. [CBO, The Budget And Economic Outlook: Fiscal Years 2006 to 2015, 1/05]

**Bush Is Saddling Future Generations With Trillions in Debt.** Bush will pass on to future generations:

- (1) the \$5.7 trillion cost of making his tax cuts permanent over 20 years;
- (2) the \$8 trillion cost of Bush's prescription drug benefit plan over the next 75 years;
- (3) the \$2-6 trillion cost of Social Security privatization over 20 years.

This hoisting of costs on future generations takes place in the context of a federal government that already spends roughly \$17,000 on each senior, but only \$2,500 on each young person under 18. [Roll Call, 1/27/05]

**Making Bush's Tax Cuts Permanent Means Less Income In American Households.** A centerpiece of Bush's second term agenda is to make his tax cuts permanent. Even though the deficit has already ballooned to \$427 billion, the Bush administration wants to make the current tax cuts permanent. But, “over the next 10 years, if the cuts become permanent, it projects a deficit of more than \$5 trillion. That indebtedness would reduce annual household income by about \$1,800 a year because of slowed growth.” [Los Angeles Times, 1/29/04]

**Bush's Deficits Mean Higher Mortgage Interest Rates.** A family with a \$250,000, thirty-year mortgage, for example, will pay an additional \$2,000 a year in interest because of Bush's deficits. [Brookings Institution, Rivlin and Sawhill, Restoring Fiscal Sanity, 1/13/04]

**Higher Interest Rates Because of Bush's Deficits Will Reduce The Value Of Stocks.** Deficits such as those caused by Bush's tax cuts lead to higher interest rates in the future. Higher interest rates hurt stocks for two reasons. First, higher interest rates make bond, CDs, and money-market funds more attractive relative to stocks. Second, higher interest rates mean that a dollar of future corporate profit is worth less today than if rates were lower. [Newsweek, 2/9/04]

**Bush Has Spent The Entire Social Security Surplus--Mostly On Tax Cuts.** With deficits totaling \$2.3 trillion over the next decade, Bush will be spending nearly the entire projected Social Security surplus of \$2.4 trillion from 2005 through 2014. However, this does not include Bush's plans to make his tax cuts permanent-which is estimated to add \$1.3 trillion to the \$2.3 trillion deficit over the next ten years. [Congressional Budget Office, An Analysis of Bush's Budgetary Proposals for Fiscal Year 2005, 9/04; Senate Budget Committee Democratic Caucus, 2/27/04]

## **CAUSING IRREPARABLE HARM TO THE ENVIRONMENT**

**White House Plans to Push New Rules That Would Undercut Existing Clean Air Laws.** “The White House plans to push Congress to retool the nation’s air quality laws early next year, according to administration and industry officials,” the Washington Post noted. Bush’s “Clear Skies” legislation would undercut existing federal standards, postpone deadlines for meeting public health standards and make it easier for companies to continue polluting. The Bush plan would effectively allow 68% more nitrogen oxide pollution, a major contributor to smog that is linked to asthma and lung disease. [Washington Post, 12/14/04; Sierra Club, [www.sierraclub.org/cleanair/clear\\_skies.asp](http://www.sierraclub.org/cleanair/clear_skies.asp)]

**White House Plans For Drilling in Alaska, Destroying Rare Sanctuary.** It would take 10 years for any Arctic Refuge oil to reach the market, and when production peaks, in 2027, the refuge would produce 1 or 2 percent of America’s daily consumption. This, at the possible cost of the destruction of one of world’s last true wildernesses, which is one of the largest sanctuaries for Arctic animals. [Los Angeles Times, 11/10/04; NRDC, [www.nrdc.org/land/wilderness/arctic.asp](http://www.nrdc.org/land/wilderness/arctic.asp)]

**Republicans Plan to Gut Endangered Species Act.** Republicans in Congress will try to change the 30-year-old Endangered Species Act, which some Republicans have criticized as too restrictive to farmers and ranchers. For over 30 years, the Endangered Species Act has saved hundreds of plants and animals from extinction, putting hundreds more on the path to recovery, and safeguarding the habitats on which they all depend. [Baltimore Sun, 11/14/04; Los Angeles Times, 11/10/04; New York Times, 11/8/04]

## **SHORTCHANGING CHILDREN’S EDUCATIONS**

**Bush Proposing To Expand No Child Left Behind, While Not Providing the Resources For the Current Reforms.** In 2001, Democrats worked with Bush and the Republicans to mend America’s schools with the No Child Left Behind Act. But every Republican budget since then has shortchanged the reforms, by \$27 billion in all. And documents from the White House Office of Management & Budget indicate that Bush may actually be proposing \$1.5 billion in education cuts in his next budget. Now Bush is proposing to expand testing and remedial programs in high school. Given Bush’s track record on following through with education reform, Congressional Democrats and Republicans are reacting coolly to the proposal. Even Bush’s former Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, Ellen Neuman, stated, “In [the most disadvantaged schools] in America, even the most earnest teacher has often given up because they lack every available resource that could possibly make a difference.” [House Democratic Leader’s Office, 1/7/05; Washington Post, 5/27/04; Los Angeles Times, 1/4/05; [www.factcheck.org/article181.html](http://www.factcheck.org/article181.html)]

## **FORGETTING VETERANS**

**Due to Reduce Funding, Hundreds of Thousands of Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan Wars Will Be Cut From Their Health Care.** The Iraq war is creating more veterans, yet the veterans’ benefits system continues to be under-funded. The Bush Administration’s proposed spending on discretionary veterans benefits in 2005 is \$3.8 billion below the amount needed, according to leading veterans’ organizations. These shortfalls will severely affect VA hospital caseloads and health care pricing. [House Budget Committee Democratic Caucus, 2/19/04; National Priorities Project, 5/04, <http://www.nationalpriorities.org/issues/veterans/us.pdf>]

## **STACKING THE COURTS AND CURBING RIGHTS**

**Bush's Federal Judiciary Will Be More Conservative and More Hostile To Workers, Reproductive Rights, Minorities, Gay Rights, Freedoms of Speech and Privacy.** "In civil rights and civil liberties cases -- abortion, gay rights, freedom of speech, right to privacy, race relations, for example -- Bush judges made liberal decisions only 26.5 percent of the time. That was well below 37.9 percent for appointees of Richard Nixon, 32.3 percent for Ronald Reagan and 32.2 percent for George H.W. Bush, all fellow Republican presidents. 'George W. Bush is the most conservative president that we have data for,' University of Houston political scientist Robert Karp said. 'In civil rights and liberties cases, his judges were 25 percent more conservative than those of other Republicans.'" [Reuters, 9/9/04]

## **PUTTING DOMESTIC FOOD SUPPLY IN JEOPARDY**

**Lax Bush Policy Leaves U.S. Food Supply at Risk.** Before leaving office, Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson sounded alarm about the safety of the American food supply, saying "I, for the life of me, cannot understand why the terrorists have not...attacked our food supply, because it is so easy to do...We're importing a lot of food from the Middle East, and it would be easy to tamper with that." Thompson's statement was downplayed by President Bush, but recent Food and Drug Administration policies leave the food supply vulnerable. The FDA is the primary agency responsible for inspecting imported food, but according to the FDA itself, only two percent of all imported food is actually inspected. Four days after Thompson's comments, the FDA issued a new rule requiring supermarkets to keep records of food sources -- but with a dangerous caveat, the rule did not apply to "foreign-owned makers of food products." The records also do not have to contain certain details which will hamper efforts to trace contaminated food sources. [AP, 12/7/04; Des Moines Register, 12/12/04; Cox News Service, 12/17/04]

**Food Safety Concerns Heightened By Opening U.S. Border To Canadian Beef.** The United States banned Canadian beef after a Canadian cow tested positive for mad-cow almost two years ago. Just days after the Department of Agriculture agreed to resume importing Canadian beef, two more cases of mad-cow disease were discovered in Canada. Despite the new mad cow-cases, the Bush administration has not altered its position on reopening the border. A risk analysis says that there is a 99 percent chance of an inflected cow being imported to the United States from Canada if the borders are opened. The Ranchers Cattlemen Action Legal Fund is suing the Bush Administration, claiming "that lifting the ban will increase health risks in the United States and will have a negative long-term economic impact because increased exposure to mad-cow disease will make it harder to persuade other countries to start accepting U.S. beef exports." Additionally, Bush and his Congressional Republicans allies thwarted the immediate implementation of a bill which would help identify from where foods came. A bipartisan group of senators have voiced opposition to the Bush administration's plan to expose the United States food supply to Canadian cattle. Senator Tim Johnson (D-SD) criticized the move, calling it "reckless and hasty." [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 1/16/05; Aberdeen American News, 1/25/05, 1/30/04; Denver Post, 1/21/05; Johnson Press Release, 1/7/05]