



NEWS UPDATE - February 21, 2001

In the News...

- *ENVIRONMENT: NORTON BACKS DOWN FROM WILD-EYED CRUSADE AGAINST CONSERVATION:* The Washington Post that Interior Secretary Gale Norton announced that she will not seek to overturn any of President Clinton's designations of millions of acres of federal land as national monuments, which protect the land from mining and commercial activity.
- *CENSUS – LOS ANGELES-TO-BUSH: COUNT OUR POPULATION BETTER THAN YOUR BROTHER COUNTED THE VOTES IN FLORIDA:* The New York Times reports that the city of Los Angeles "will seek to block a Bush order revoking the Census Bureau's power to adjust the 2000 census to account for millions of people who were not counted." Recently, Secretary of Commerce Donald Evans stripped the power of professional statisticians at the Census Bureau to determine the most accurate counting methods and unilaterally gave it to himself. Most agree that the more accurate a count, the more minorities would be represented in the tally.
- *ENERGY - ARE BUSH AND HIS OIL BUDDIES ENJOYING CALIFORNIA'S CRISIS?:* The San Francisco Chronicle reports that "Ever since California voters told George W. Bush to drop dead during the 2000 presidential election, it seems - and this is just a theory - that the former Texas governor and his Lone Star friends are saying to California: "Y'all drop dead."" On energy policy, the article notes the connection between Bush's proclamation that "California should solve its own energy problems" and the fact that his Texas oil cronies stand to make millions off of high energy prices.
- *TRADE – U.S. TRADE DEFICIT SKYROCKETS; BUSINESS SHOULD THANK FREE TRADERS FOR HELP:* The Associated Press reports that "America's trade deficit with the rest of the world shot up to an all-time high of \$369.7 billion last year." For those corporatists who supported PNTR, the news was particularly fitting. As the article states, "China overtook perennial front-runner Japan as the country with the largest trade gap with the U.S."
- *PRESCRIPTION DRUGS – U.N. SUPPORTS GENERIC AIDS DRUGS TO STOP WORLD CRISIS WHILE U.S. GOES TO BAT FOR PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY:* The Guardian of London reports that the "U.N. is preparing to challenge the multinational drug companies' control over HIV and AIDS treatments in developing countries by encouraging a far wider use of cheaper, generic alternatives." The article notes that this new "gloves-off approach" comes as 42 drug companies begin a court case to stop South Africa importing generic versions of the drugs it so desperately needs" and as the U.S. prepares a WTO fight on behalf of drug companies looking to stop Brazil's efforts to acquire cheaper medicines.
- *POLITICS – THE NATION LOOKS AT TOP BUSH ADVISER KARL ROVE:* The Nation explores the career of Bush's closest adviser Karl Rove, describing what many call "Nixonian" efforts to topple political figures before coming to D.C.
- *LABOR – WHY ARE UNIONS LOSING MEMBERSHIP?:* In These Times explores the causes for declining union membership, noting that much of the decrease "probably reflects heavy job losses in manufacturing, where union density is relatively high" due to free trade efforts that allow American companies to exploit near-slave labor overseas.

From the Editorial Pages...

- *THE BOSTON GLOBE* writes that "it looks as if scientific accuracy could well be shoved aside" as Republicans are opposing statistical sampling because it might "jeopardize their majority in the House." If Bush goes along with this, his "valiant promise to be a 'uniter' and a president for every American would be tarnished. Instead, he would merely be a president for everyone whom it is politically convenient to count. He would not be much of a president for many minorities, big city residents, legal immigrants, poorer people and children."
- *RICHARD GWYN* of the Toronto Star writes that the inaction on global warming is absolutely "chilling." Despite the fact that there is overwhelming scientific proof of this environmental problem, the author writes "between analysis and action there is a complete disconnect. There is silence. There is timidity." He continues that, "today, few governments – Bush's is a prime example – aspire to do much more than make their country safe for their corporations."
- *THE SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS* writes that "Bush's tax policy has a patronizing contradiction. At the same time that he wants to repeal the estate tax, he wants to grant charitable deductions of up to \$500 to taxpayers who don't itemize their returns -- mainly low- and moderate income families. The result, he predicts: billions more for charity. Bush apparently believes that the poor need incentives to donate while the rich and their heirs don't. Logic and data -- the bases for credible tax policies -- say that's simply not so."

Quote of the Day...

"Bush is doing somewhat of a high-wire act in trying to protect the interests of the energy companies that have supported him for so long and at the same time not throwing an entire state down the drain by angering everyone in it."

- Steve Wise of the watchdog Center for Responsive Politics on how Bush's insistence on not providing any federal help to California could be motivated by his long time cronies who stand to make billions off the energy crisis (San Francisco Chronicle, 2/21)

In the News on February 21, 2001

WHITE HOUSE WON'T FIGHT MONUMENT DESIGNATIONS

Washington Post

Interior Secretary Gale A. Norton said yesterday that the Bush administration is not seeking to overturn any of President Bill Clinton's designations of millions of acres of federal land as national monuments largely off limits to mining and commercial activity.

Norton said the administration, western lawmakers and private property owners likely will attempt to adjust the boundaries of the new national monuments and alter the rules governing commercial activities within them, but that there will be no organized attempt to roll back Clinton's designations.

"I certainly disapprove of the process by which those monuments were generally created . . . [but] I have not yet heard any calls to repeal any of the monument designations," Norton said during an interview in her office.

While Norton's spokesman, Clifford May, said the administration has not announced a final decision, the approach outlined by Norton is certain to disappoint some western governors, lawmakers and property owners who view Clinton's wholesale use of the 1906 Antiquities Act to make monument designations as a symbol of federal intrusion into their way of life. Coming just a month after President Bush took office vowing to review Clinton's actions, it suggested that the administration recognized that a battle with environmentalists over land designations would be unwise as the White House seeks to push through its tax cut plan and other legislative initiatives.

During the interview yesterday, Norton criticized the Clinton administration for its haste in designating monuments without adequately conferring with state and local officials and property owners. She said that while Clinton justified the designations as a means of protecting unique or historically significant stretches of the country, there is no money available to carry out the management plans.

"We're now cleaning up after the fact and doing things that should have been done before the monuments were designated," she said. "The monument designations were more show than substance. We now have to provide the substance."

Norton signaled that while there is nothing the Bush administration can do to reverse Clinton's actions, the Interior Department and Congress could work with local officials, property owners and business executives to address their concerns -- such as by allowing existing mining operations to continue.

"We may need to manage those plans in a way that takes into account current uses and that better tailors the monuments for local needs and circumstances," Norton said.

Norton, a former Colorado attorney general, was confirmed by the Senate last month as the first woman to serve as interior secretary after overcoming strong criticism of her record by environmental groups. Although Norton took strong stands in favor of mining, grazing and logging interests during her career as a state official and as a private attorney, she defended her record on the environment and as a guardian of public lands during her Senate confirmation hearings.

Yesterday, she complained that environmental groups had distorted her record and had falsely claimed that she would have trouble enforcing federal environmental and mining laws because she had challenged their constitutionality in court cases and in legal writings.

She pledged to be a good steward of the public lands and said she would carefully weigh environmental concerns against initiatives to increase domestic energy supplies, including the administration's proposal for oil and gas exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

"When you talk about property rights, it's important that our environmental laws are applied in a way that works closely with landowners," she said. "Our farmers and ranchers are often the best stewards of wild places. Those who own property are the ones who often understand the habitat on the property and the uses of the property. . . . If the federal government approaches issues by punishing property owners, then it loses an important tool."

With minimal consultation with western lawmakers and business leaders, Clinton established 19 national monuments covering more than 5 million acres and expanded three others. Except for the 1.7 million-acre Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, which Clinton created in southern Utah in 1996, all the monuments were designated within the final year of Clinton's presidency.

Within hours of taking office on Jan. 20, Bush delayed and promised to review scores of last-minute Clinton orders and regulations dealing with the environment, health, food safety and workplace conditions. As the White House and Republican leaders in Congress explored ways to turn back the environmental rule making, however, they concluded it would be difficult, if not impossible, to undo many of the orders. That's because of the cumbersome and lengthy procedures for reversing an executive order as well as the prevailing mood on Capitol Hill, where a strong pro-environment coalition would oppose any major changes.

House Resources Committee Chairman James V. Hansen (R-Utah), perhaps the severest critic of Clinton's use of the national monument designations, sent letters last week to Republican and Democratic House members with monuments in their districts urging them to introduce legislation challenging the monuments if they are unhappy with them.

However, Hansen said he does not intend to introduce legislation of his own and does not foresee a major effort in Congress to roll back Clinton's designations, noting that a "slashing and burning" approach would not work.

Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho) is drafting a bill that would require congressional approval of any monument larger than 50,000 acres.

LOS ANGELES WILL CHALLENGE BUSH ON CENSUS

New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 20 — The City of Los Angeles will seek to block a Bush administration order revoking the Census Bureau's power to adjust the 2000 census to account for millions of people who were not counted, city officials said today.

City officials said they would file a suit accusing the administration of violating federal law when it transferred the authority to make any adjustment in the census count from the Census Bureau director to the secretary of commerce.

In transferring the authority to himself, Donald L. Evans, the commerce secretary, rescinded parts of a federal regulation the Clinton administration issued in October that placed the power to make an adjustment in the hands of the head of the Census Bureau.

"The City of Los Angeles is committed to challenging the decision by the secretary of commerce in revoking the authority of the census director to make any adjustment he deemed necessary," said James K. Hahn, city attorney of Los Angeles.

Mr. Hahn declined to specify the legal strategy the city would undertake.

But others familiar with the thinking of city officials said Los Angeles would seek an injunction based on the fact that the administration did not allow for the minimum 30-day comment period before altering a federal regulation.

Under the old rule, the head of the Census Bureau, who is a career civil servant, has to make a decision within five days of receiving a recommendation from a 12-member committee of experts, who are senior Census Bureau officials.

In revoking the regulation, Mr. Evans retained the part of the rule that required the panel of experts to make a recommendation.

Still, some Democrats and some mayors of big cities say they are fearful that Mr. Evans will decide not to adjust the census counts. They say urban areas suffered disproportionately from an undercount, which could deprive cities of millions of dollars in federal and state aid.

Democrats and officials of big cities are suspicious that Mr. Evans, who served as President Bush's campaign chairman, will opt not to adjust the census counts because adjusting for the undercount will probably add more people in traditionally Democratic areas, thus aiding Democrats when new Congressional districts are drawn.

With Republicans holding a wafer-thin majority in the House, partisans on both sides of the aisle believe that the way new Congressional districts are fashioned could be a key to which party controls the House after the 2002 elections.

Los Angeles officials have invited other cities to join in the lawsuit, and have received agreement from San Antonio and Inglewood and Santa Clara, Calif.

New York City, which was the lead plaintiff in an unsuccessful lawsuit to force the elder President George Bush's administration to adjust the 1990 census, was also asked to join the current litigation, Mr. Hahn said. So far, however, New York officials have not responded.

"New York hasn't been as active this time as they were 10 years ago," Mr. Hahn said.

CALIFORNIA SHIVERS -- TEXAS SMIRKS: LONE STAR STATE ENJOYING OUR PREDICAMENT

San Francisco Chronicle

Ever since California voters told George W. Bush to drop dead during the 2000 presidential election, it seems - and this is just a theory - that the former Texas governor and his Lone Star friends are saying to California: "Y'all drop dead."

Bush has proclaimed that California should solve its own energy problems. U. S. Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas says California is suffering "the consequences of their own feckless policies" and "environmental extremism," while our leaders "blame power companies, deregulation and everyone but themselves" for the energy crisis.

Kenneth Lay, a Texas buddy of Bush and chairman of the huge energy trader Enron, says California should be friendlier to his business. The head of Texas-based Dynegy said California has done nothing to curb demand for power. A Texas congressman working on energy issues says California issues threats and plays politics.

Harsh, Texas dudes. Is California experiencing some sort of karmic retribution?

"What we're going to do now is pay you back for The Catch," says Texas state Sen. Dave Sibley, a Republican, referring to 49er great Joe Montana's touchdown pass to Dwight Clark in their 1981 NFC championship win over Dallas.

Now, Sibley is a genial guy and expressed sympathy, but he couldn't help opening his conversation by casually saying: "I'm just sitting here looking at our lights on." Sibley is author of Texas' electricity deregulation, which goes into effect soon, and he spent some time in California studying our system.

"The people there were very, very nice," Sibley said, "and they bent over backward to help us understand what they did. And what we learned is what we didn't want to do."

Sibley said Texas officials looked at California's Power Exchange, which set up sort of a commodities market for power. The Power Exchange is defunct because utilities can no longer afford to buy power there.

"It took us about 15 minutes drawing on a napkin sitting in the back of an airplane to figure out how to game it," Sibley said. "If I can do that, then you can figure a whole lot smarter people than I can figure it out."

Except, of course, the entire 1996 Legislature and former Gov. Pete Wilson. They gave us deregulation as we know it.

At a recent hearing in Austin to consider a new Texas license plate design, lawmakers mocked up a new plate that reads: "TEXAS: We'll keep your lights on."

Long before The Catch, Texas and California have been fighting. They've got more land. We've got more people. They've got more oil. We've got more oily movie stars.

Who started this? Let us look to former President James K. Polk, who made a campaign promise to acquire Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. Things got bloody and money was spent. Texans seem to think it was all about them.

"Texas is mindful that California came into the union as an afterthought in a war to secure Texas," joshed Calvin Jillson, chairman of the political science department at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. "Texas has always thought Californians should be more respectful, and are perhaps mindful that they need a little discipline."

One of those is U.S. Rep. Joe Barton, a conservative Republican from the Fort Worth area who features barbed wire on his Web site. Barton is holding hearings on the energy crisis, and recently issued this statement to warm things up:

"Gov. (Gray) Davis should be looking for a practical, California-based solution rather than name-calling, threatening and playing politics with the pocketbooks of his consumers and stockholders."

That was in January. When reached by The Chronicle last week to throw some more dirt on California -- in a friendly way, of course -- Barton said he was in a sensitive position and he didn't want to make anyone mad. Then he offered this pleasantry:

"I think what you have in Texas is California envy," said Barton, who said he is coming to California this week. "You've got more people than we do. You've got more movie stars than we do. You've got more Clinton supporters than we do. The one thing you don't have is more electricity."

Barton's wariness is well-founded. California politicians are angry at a variety of Texans.

Garry South, Davis' political guru, said Bush has had just one telephone conversation with Davis and only wants to use California's energy misery to advance his own plan to drill for oil in the Arctic wildlife preserve.

Bush, he said, simply doesn't connect with California, which he lost by 12 percentage points to former Vice President Al Gore.

"Any guy that comes to California and says, 'I understand you and I'm just like you. I was raised in Midland, Texas, in West Texas,' doesn't understand California," South said. "We've got as much in common with Midland, Texas, as the moon."

South and others have noted the money connection between Bush, a former oil industry executive, and the vast Texas energy industry. Enron's Lay, who boasts he can get Bush on the phone whenever he wants, raised more than \$400,000 for the GOP and the Bush campaign. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, a campaign watchdog group, the Bush effort received more than \$1.8 million from the oil and energy industry.

Bush put Vice President Dick Cheney, also a former oil industry executive based in Texas, in charge of the federal response to the energy crisis. He is expected to announce a long-term energy plan soon.

"Bush is doing somewhat of a high-wire act," said Steve Wise with the Center for Responsive Politics, "in trying to protect the interests of the energy companies that have supported him for so long and at the same time not throwing an entire state down the drain by angering everyone in it."

Texas has become an increasingly common foil in the California Legislature. Sen. Debra Bowen, D-Marina del Rey, says everyone is looking to blame the utilities when "90 percent of the iceberg" may be south.

"We really ought to be taking a hard look at how it is that California's pocket has been emptied into the pockets of Texas and Southern corporations," Bowen said.

Bowen nearly spit the word "Texas" when she said it.

While Texas -- and Southern -- energy producers make big profits off California, they aren't overly sympathetic to the crisis. They're mostly interested in getting paid.

Lay said he's got some turbines that California desperately needs for new energy plants the state is rushing to build.

But Lay is holding the turbines hostage. He is reluctant to sell because the California Legislature recently stopped his company and others from selling power plants in the state that provide energy to California, at least through 2006. That, in turn, could ruin a \$3.1 billion deal Lay has in the works in Oregon.

"If California makes it attractive to do business in their state, they've got a chance of some of those turbines coming to California," Lay said recently.

Despite all the money owed to Enron and other energy companies, here's how attractive it was to do business last year: Enron's revenue doubled from 1999. To \$100.8 billion.

Bowen, the California state senator, says power brokers have taken the money and run.

"I would say Texas doesn't think much about California. Texas is pretty pleased with itself right now," Professor Jillson said.

Perhaps we deserve it, he added. "There were times when the Texas oil industry was flat on its back and the federal government and California did nothing except say, 'Ain't life a bitch.'"

AMERICA'S TRADE DEFICIT CLIMBS TO ALL-TIME HIGH IN 2000

Associated Press

WASHINGTON - America's trade deficit with the rest of the world shot up to an all-time high of \$369.7 billion last year. In a sign of things to come, China overtook perennial front-runner Japan as the country with the largest trade gap with the United States.

The Commerce Department said the deficit for all of 2000 was 39.5 percent higher than the previous record-holder, a deficit of \$265 billion in 1999. The increase occurred even though the deficit for December narrowed a slight 0.4 percent to \$33 billion, the third straight monthly decline. The trade deficit has set an annual record for the past three years as the strong U.S. economy has been a magnet for imports while many of America's major export markets have been struggling to recover from currency crises in 1997 and 1998.

UN BACKS USE OF CHEAP GENERIC ANTI-AIDS DRUGS BY

Guardian of London

The UN is preparing to challenge the multinational drug companies' control over HIV and AIDS treatments in developing countries by encouraging a far wider use of cheaper, generic alternatives.

The organisation, frustrated by slow progress in brokering discounts between pharmaceutical giants and countries threatened by social and

economic chaos because of Aids, is ready to back states such as Brazil, Thailand and India where national laws allow them to override drug patents in cases of dire emergency.

The new gloves-off approach, outlined by the UN's secretary general, Kofi Annan, is likely to be widely welcomed by aid agencies. It comes as 42 drug companies begin a court case to stop South Africa importing generic versions of the life-enhancing drugs it so desperately needs. The United States is meanwhile preparing to challenge Brazil's attitude towards drug patents in the World Trade Organisation.

Mr Annan, in his report to the general assembly's special session on HIV and Aids in New York in June, says that the "equitable and affordable" provision of life saving treatments is a cornerstone of the worldwide battle against Aids.

Although some progress has been made in price reductions by big companies, the UN chief says more needs to be done through other measures such as "tiered" pricing between rich and poor countries, subsidies by the public and private sector, and "the effective use of health safeguards in trade agreements".

Governments must bring their "power and authority" to bear in fighting the "most formidable development challenge of our time", he says.

Mr Annan praises Brazil, where reported Aids deaths have been reduced by a quarter. "With a rights-based approach to care, together with local production of generic anti-retrovirals in some countries, coverage of patients is increasing in Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, where HIV-positive people are living longer, positive lives."

His report makes a stark case for affordable treatment and care. In many African states, more than half today's 15-year-olds will die from HIV/Aids if present rates of infection continue. Only adults who escape HIV infection can expect to survive to middle and old age.

UNAids, the agency set up to combat the disease, says it supports Oxfam and Médecins sans Frontières, which have been highly critical of drug companies' pricing policies.

A UNAids initiative to improve access to drugs and care attracted 29 applications involving generic products but the emphasis until recently appeared to concentrate on brokering discounts with five major pharmaceutical companies. The discounts have only been taken up in Rwanda, Senegal and Uganda.

UNAids insists it is sticking by a multiple approach to tackling epidemics, but its call for the "reinforcement and use" of health safeguards indicates a big change of gear.

BUSH'S HIT MAN

By Louis Dubose
THE NATION

In early December 1999, George W. Bush's chief political strategist, Karl Rove, and Dallas Morning News reporter Wayne Slater squared off in the Manchester, New Hampshire, airport. Rove was angry over a story Slater had written suggesting that it was plausible that Rove was behind the whispering campaign that warned that Senator John McCain--then soaring in the GOP presidential primary polls--might any day unravel because he had been under so much pressure when he was tortured as a POW in Vietnam.

In a 700-word article that Slater said wasn't the most significant thing he'd written about Rove, he referred to questionable campaign tactics attributed to Rove: teaching College Republicans dirty tricks; spreading a rumor that former Texas Governor Ann Richards was too tolerant of gays and lesbians; circulating a mock newspaper that featured a story about a former Democratic governor's drinking and driving when he was a college student; spreading stories about Texas official Jim Hightower's alleged role in a contribution kickback scheme; and alerting the press to the fact that Lena Guerrero, a rising star in the Texas Democratic Party, had lied about graduating from college. Rove was explicitly linked by testimony and press reports to all but the gay and lesbian story; the college incident had been so widely reported for fifteen years that it was essentially part of the common domain. Slater also reported that primary candidates Steve Forbes and Gary Bauer blamed the Bush camp for the smear campaign.

"He said I had harmed his reputation," Slater recalls. Says another reporter who was traveling with Bush, "It was pretty heated. They were nose to nose. Rove was furious and had his finger in Slater's chest." Adds the same reporter, "What was interesting then is that everyone on the campaign charter concluded that Rove was responsible for rumors about McCain."

That Karl Rove, who, according to the White House press office is not giving interviews, hasn't always abided by the Marquess of Queensberry rules of political engagement is not exactly breaking news. As long ago as 1989, when Rove collaborated with an FBI agent investigating Hightower, the then-Texas agricultural commissioner complained about "Nixonian dirty tricks."

That was at a time when Rove was a big player only in Texas. Since then, he has become George W. Bush's closest adviser, directed Bush's presidential campaign and is now working in an office just down the hall from the most powerful official in the world. Some wonder to what extent Rove will use the power of the federal government against those who would cross the President. Rove's past suggests such worries are not unfounded. "This guy is worse than Haldeman and Ehrlichman," a source who worked in Hightower's office twelve years ago said in a

recent interview, referring to Nixon's advisers at the time of the Watergate break-in. "He'll have an enemies list." The interview ended with a request common among sources speaking about Rove, even those no longer involved in politics: "I'd prefer you didn't quote me on this."

Rove operates from deeply held conservative beliefs, which were shaped when he was a child growing up in Utah. His sister told Miriam Rozen of the Dallas Observer that as a child Rove had a Wake Up America poster hanging above his bed. Rove has said that while going to college, he was never inclined to identify with the antiwar movement and supported the troops because "it was hard to sympathize with all those Commies." The "die-hard Nixonite" remains deeply resentful of the legacy of the counterculture of the sixties. Visitors to his Austin office would often leave with a copy of *The Dream and the Nightmare* by Myron Magnet, a Manhattan Institute fellow who argues that the political and cultural left corrupted the nation's poor and deprived them of the work ethic they now need to lift themselves out of poverty. Rove is an eclectic and voracious reader, and although he never completed college, a self-taught historian. He is absolutely dedicated to George W. Bush, whom he describes as "the kind of candidate and officeholder political hacks like me wait for a lifetime to be associated with."

Rove arrived in Houston in 1977 to work for a George Herbert Walker Bush PAC run by James Baker 3d. Rove subsequently moved from Houston to Austin, and in the ten years it took George W. Bush to lose \$2 million of other people's money in the oilfields of West Texas, he became the Republican Party's premier political consultant. At the time of Rove's arrival, US Senator John Tower was the only Republican holding statewide office. When Rove left earlier this year to serve as a senior adviser to President Bush, all twenty-nine statewide elected offices were held by Republicans, and both US Senate seats were occupied by Rove clients: Phil Gramm and Kay Bailey Hutchison. Almost half of GOP officeholders--including the governor, the attorney general, the chief justice and several justices on the Texas Supreme Court--were also clients. Rove and the consulting firm he owned until joining the Bush campaign have represented more than seventy-five candidates in twenty-four states.

There have always been nagging questions about the tactics Rove has used to establish market domination. So when a tape of Bush's practice debate sessions was mailed to Congressman Tom Downey, Al Gore's opponent in practice debates, the speculation among the press corps in Austin was that Rove had arranged it. (A post office surveillance camera captured an image of an employee of Bush media consultant Mark McKinnon mailing a package that might have been the tape; a federal grand jury in Austin is still looking into the incident.) Some speculated that the move was intended to eliminate Downey from his role as debate coach (which it did), others that it would provide an excuse to cancel the debates (which, in hindsight, would have been helpful to Gore).

Rove, after all, works in the tradition of the late Lee Atwater, the Republican attack-dog/consultant who said of Michael Dukakis that he would "strip the bark off the little bastard" and "make Willie Horton his running mate."

Rove's first foray into politics involved gaining entry to the office of Alan Dixon--a candidate for state treasurer in Illinois in 1970--stealing some campaign stationery and printing and distributing a fake invitation to Dixon's campaign headquarters, promising "free beer, free food, girls, and a good time." "I was nineteen and I got involved in a political prank," Rove told the Dallas Morning News in 1999. A year later, Atwater ran Rove's campaign for the presidency of the national College Republicans, and working together they defeated Terry Dolan, the Republican operative who later founded the National Conservative Political Action Committee that helped elect Ronald Reagan.

When, in the wake of the Watergate break-in, Rove was accused of teaching dirty tricks to college Republicans, he attributed the accusations to rumors started by Dolan. After the FBI interviewed Rove, the Republican National Committee--then chaired by Bush the Elder--looked into the charges, decided they were baseless and offered Rove work. Rove later joined Bush and Baker to work on the PAC that Bush set up to position himself for the 1980 presidential campaign, which he lost to Ronald Reagan.

Rove soldiered on in obscurity until 1986, when he was working on the second campaign of Bill Clements, a Republican trying to recapture the governor's office after losing it to Democrat Mark White. Rove made news by going public with a complaint that an electronic bugging device had been found in his office--shortly before a scheduled televised debate between the two candidates. "We never took it seriously, because we knew nobody in our shop had anything to do with it," says Dwayne Hollman, who worked for White at the time. Hollman said it was assumed that it was a publicity stunt. "It was investigated by the FBI," Hollman said, "and nothing ever came of it."

Yet some wonder what "came of" Rove's meeting with FBI agent Greg Rampton, who conducted that investigation. Local authorities who looked into the bugging seem to agree with Hollman's assessment. "We were the first on the scene and concluded that Rove had hired a company to debug his office, and that the same company had planted the bug," says a source involved in the Travis County DA office's investigation. But the media reported that Rampton had determined there was nothing to pursue.

Two years later, Rampton began an investigation that involved his setting up shop in the offices of Garry Mauro, the state land commissioner and later the loser in the 1998 gubernatorial race won by George W. Bush. Mauro said Rampton informed him that a former Land Commission employee was involved in an appraisals scheme that involved the commission. "I told my general counsel to tell [Rampton] to come on in," Mauro said. Rampton accepted the invitation. "On the day of the Democratic state convention, I got a subpoena for every document you could possibly imagine," Mauro said.

Mauro says he was warned by Lieutenant Governor Bob Bullock--who, Mauro said, insisted on speaking to him outside their office buildings--that three Democrats, including Mauro, Hightower and himself, were being targeted. As Mauro puts it, "Greg Rampton lived in my office. He roamed the halls. He had us put in a computer room, he picked out files of people who had given money and tried to establish by regression analysis...that anytime somebody gives you a contribution, there is a quid pro quo. Once they showed up with twelve agents

and brought their own copier." In the end they found nothing, according to Mauro. "But," he adds, "they made it hard to run a campaign." (Attempts to contact Rampton through the FBI office in Denver, from which he recently retired, were not successful.)

If Rampton struck out in Mauro's office, he connected in Hightower's, after slowing down only to subpoena Bullock's campaign finance filings. In the summer of 1989, pending indictments against two aides to Hightower--who used his office to attack what he called "the bullies, bankers, bastards and tort reformers" who run the state--were announced in Washington. But it wasn't Rampton or any other Justice Department official who announced them. It was Karl Rove, the political consultant working for Hightower's Republican opponent, Rick Perry.

Hightower refuses to discuss the incident. Rove later admitted under oath that he had met with Rampton during the summer of 1989 "regarding a probe of political corruption in the office of Texas agriculture commissioner Jim Hightower." And in June of 1990, Perry sent out a fundraising letter claiming that Hightower's office was rife with corruption and was under investigation by the FBI, though there were no indictments until after the 1991 general election, in which Hightower lost his re-election bid.

Rove has repeatedly denied involvement in the FBI investigations of top Democrats in the 1980s and did not respond to questions submitted to him regarding this story. When questioned under oath before a Texas Senate committee in 1991, Rove was evasive about his relationship with Rampton and engaged in semantic hairsplitting worthy of Bill Clinton. "How long have you known an FBI agent by the name of Greg [Rampton]?" a Democratic senator asked Rove. The answer should have been fairly straightforward, as Rampton had cleared Rove of the bugging incident five years earlier and had met with him a number of times subsequently, which Rove had disclosed in a federal questionnaire in 1989. Yet Rove was, to say the least, evasive: "Senator, it depends. Would you define 'know' for me?"

Rove became acquainted with George W. Bush while working for his father and Baker in Houston but didn't work for the younger Bush until he decided to run for governor in 1994. The campaign was all Rove: a four-point message, rumors about the opponent (Ann Richards) circulated by surrogates and little direct exposure to the press.

To those following the Bush campaigns that Rove ran, it was evident that he was more than just a political consultant to Bush. Writing in the Boston Globe magazine, David Shribman posed the questions that many in the press corps dared not ask during the presidential campaign: "Is there a place where George W. Bush ends and Karl Rove begins? Are you the wizard behind the curtain of George W.? Is W. too dependent upon you? And, worst of all: Are you George W. Bush's brain?"

Rove has certainly done much of Bush's thinking for him. Asked by a reporter for the National Review what thinkers had shaped Bush's political philosophy, Rove cited Magnet's *The Dream and the Nightmare*, Gertrude Himmelfarb's *The Demoralization of Society*, James Q. Wilson's *On Character* and several other books--none of which Bush would have been likely to see but for Rove. (Recall Bush's response in the debate about which political philosopher had most shaped his thinking: It was not Magnet, Himmelfarb or Wilson but Jesus Christ.)

When working as a political operative and not a mentor, Rove has been bipartisan, eliminating Republicans who represented a threat to his boss's career with the same zeal with which he attacked Democrats. "He's enormously effective," says Dallas lawyer and Bush critic Tom Pauken, noting that Rove's political bible is Machiavelli's *The Prince*. And it is Machiavelli--not the authors of the conservative and neocon canon--who has informed Rove's treatment of Pauken. In 1994, as Bush was beginning his first race for governor, the machinery of the Republican Party of Texas was taken over by Reagan Republicans and fundamentalist Christians, and Pauken--who had worked in the Reagan Administration--was made party chairman. It was a faction that Rove correctly perceived would create problems for Bush, who had always understood that the Christian conservatives must be kept in line. Rove called big funders and diverted money from the state party to Bush political accounts that he controlled. "He did everything he could to cut off the money to the party...throughout the time I was chair," Pauken says. "Karl understands the importance of money in politics, and he made it more difficult for me to function."

Similarly, after two Christian-right candidates for the State Board of Education, Bob Offutt and Donna Ballard (Offutt was an incumbent), traveled to New Hampshire to endorse Steve Forbes in the Republican primary, they returned home to find their opponents' campaigns suddenly flush with cash from big Republican givers associated with Rove. "You don't cross Karl Rove and not expect repercussions," a defeated Offutt told the Austin American-Statesman. A Republican political consultant was more colorful: "To put it in a nutshell, you don't tug on Superman's cape."

In January, Superman moved into the White House office previously occupied by Hillary Clinton. And he's only a phone call away from Attorney General John Ashcroft.

LABOR'S CRITICAL CONDITION

In These Times

When John Sweeney became the president of the AFL-CIO in 1995, he set organizing a million new members a year as the labor movement's top priority. Without a turnaround in the four-decade-long decline in union strength, organized labor faced not only losing its power in bargaining and politics, but disappearing altogether. Last year, when the percentage of the work force in unions failed to drop for the first time since 1975, there was hope that the long slump had bottomed out.

That celebration was short-lived. In January, the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that in 2000 the number of union members had

dropped once again to 16.3 million, representing only 13.5 percent of the work force, a decline of 0.4 percent from 1999. The character of the labor movement also continues to change: 37.5 percent of government workers are organized (a slight increase from last year), but only 9 percent of the private sector work force now belongs to a union. While emphasizing that there was still a net growth of 150,000 members over the past three years, AFL-CIO organizing director Mark Splain acknowledges that "clearly it's not good news that the numbers are going in the wrong direction."

Although there are many reasons for the renewed decline, the central problem is that, despite strong efforts by a few unions, there is still only a spotty and superficial commitment to organizing at all levels of the labor movement. "We think there's a crisis," says Andy Stern, president of the Service Employees Union (SEIU)--one of the most aggressive organizers in the labor movement--and co-chairman of the AFL-CIO Executive Council Organizing Committee. "What I'm most concerned about is that there needs to be more of a sense of crisis from the AFL-CIO and throughout the labor movement."

The decline of members last year probably reflects heavy job losses in manufacturing, where union density is relatively high, that were obscured by overall low unemployment figures. Also unions diverted much money and staff to politics this year rather than organizing. There were also some big wins in 1999, such as the 70,000 home health care workers in Los Angeles, that reflected many years of previous organizing. The AFL-CIO claims that 400,000 new workers were organized last year (although the running tally in its "Work In Progress" newsletter identified only 160,000) compared with 600,000 in 1999 and 500,000 in 1998. But several experts privately express doubts about the reliability of those numbers.

A few unions are widely acknowledged as organizing leaders, such as SEIU, UNITE, the Hotel Employees (HERE) and the Communications Workers (CWA). Other unions that have made major new commitments to organizing include AFSCME (public workers), the Steelworkers, the Autoworkers and the Carpenters. But even in these unions, there isn't universal commitment. For example, CWA locals have resisted international efforts to increase spending on organizing, and only a few AFSCME district councils, such as in Illinois, have made organizing a top priority.

Much of the problem reflects internal union politics: Officials succeed by catering to members, who often must be persuaded to spend their dues money on expensive, risky efforts to recruit new members rather than providing services for themselves. Since nearly three-fourths of union funds are controlled by often autonomous local unions, even a committed international union president may have limited influence. Although last summer the AFL-CIO agreed to hold unions more accountable to membership goals, the federation has no power over affiliated unions. Furthermore, despite its continual emphasis on organizing, the AFL-CIO and its leaders often send the message that political work is even more important.

When Sweeney came into office, the best estimates were that few unions spent more than 5 percent of their budgets on organizing. With a few exceptions--again most notably the SEIU--very few unions reach the AFL-CIO recommended level of spending 30 percent of their budgets on organizing. "There are only a very few unions at the national or local level that have made a dramatic changes," says Richard Bensinger, the former AFL-CIO organizing director who is now a consultant to several unions. "Most union commitment to organizing is still at the level of rhetoric. You can see substantial growth and commitment in those few, but there's next to nothing in many others."

The issue is partly money. "There's no way to do this on the cheap," Bensinger says. "The law is too weak and employers too vicious to think we can get by inexpensively." But the more fundamental issue is changing the internal culture of the labor movement. Starting with Bensinger's tenure, the AFL-CIO has encouraged union officials and staff to develop a new outlook on their work. Unions like HERE, for example, extensively train union stewards to mobilize members and handle grievances on the job, freeing staff to focus more on organizing new members with the help of newly energized member volunteers. This represents a dramatic change from the old "insurance" model of unions, where business agents handle individual union members' problems.

Cultural change also demands a new organizing strategy. First, the best organizing unions have moved away from simply responding to "hot shop" calls from agitated workers or desperately seeking new members in seemingly easy targets outside their traditional realms. Unions like SEIU and HERE build on their strengths to develop power in particular industries (the two have even swapped locals). Against great resistance, SEIU's Stern is pushing hard for all unions to pursue more clearly focused strategies.

Successful unions also approach organizing as a task of building a union at the workplace even before it is recognized, starting with the creation of an internal committee of dedicated workers who do most of the organizing. Union organizers can't succeed with old tactics of handing out leaflets at plant gates. They must pursue more aggressive tactics such as holding solidarity days at work, surveying workers about their needs, conducting actions on the job, or involving the community--including clergy, elected officials, community groups and the press--in support of workers who are trying to organize. According to Cornell University researcher Kate Bronfenbrenner, unions that used five or more of these "union building" tactics as part of their organizing efforts in 1998 and 1999 were 30 percent more likely to win an NLRB representation election than unions that did not. In the long run, these tactics are also likely to build stronger unions, but they have been adopted mainly because unions needed to counter intense employer opposition.

Consider the case of Certech, a 500-worker unit of the global Carpenter Technology Corporation that manufactures advanced ceramics for the auto, aerospace and electric power industries in northern New Jersey. In 1999 workers from the plant, which primarily employs immigrant women from Central America, contacted UNITE for their third try to form a union. The company responded, as usual, with a campaign of threats, including moving the company to Mexico, bribes and intimidation, even firing seven union supporters. Last March the workers voted against unionization.

But the union worked with the core of committed union members to continue the fight with protests, leafleting and mobilization of support from clergy, local politicians, other unions and community groups. That support gave workers courage to testify at hearings on 70 charges of unfair labor practices that the union brought to the National Labor Relations Board. As the testimony continued into the third week, the company called and said it was ready to negotiate a contract, which was signed at the end of January. The outside support was essential, but the key was a well-organized group of workers on the job. "We put our heart into this campaign," says regional organizing director Rhina Molina, "but nothing can be done unless the workers decide they want to do it."

At a time when surveys show more than a third of unorganized workers would like to join a union, the chief obstacle to unionization remains employer opposition, which exploits labor laws that have grown weaker over the years. In a scathing report issued last fall, Human Rights Watch concluded that American labor law fell far short of international standards. "Many workers who try to form and join trade unions to bargain with their employers are spied on, harassed, pressured, threatened, suspended, fired, deported or otherwise victimized in reprisal for their exercise of the right to freedom of association," the group reported.

The problem has only grown worse with globalization. Bronfenbrenner has found that more than half of employers threatened to close all or part of the work site during organizing drives, nearly double the rate of threats in the late '80s. In the most mobile industries, like manufacturing, 68 percent of employers threatened to move during organizing drives; those threats cut union wins by about 40 percent. Although the threats (made as often by financially strong companies as weak ones) were often idle, 15 percent of plants where unions won recognition actually did shut down within two years, triple the rate in the late '80s.

The fierce level of employer opposition still chills union organizing, despite improved strategies of the best unions. Unions now win more than half of all NLRB elections (53 percent in fiscal year 1999), but the number of elections held and workers eligible to vote remains below even what it was in the late '80s. Partly that reflects a shift away from NLRB elections to other methods, such as pressuring companies to recognize the union when a majority of workers have signed union cards. Yet the overall picture remains grim: Roughly one-third of the time, unions withdraw even before an election is held, as employer opposition destroys union support. Even after winning an election, only 60 percent of private sector workers typically secure a first contract.

Union organizing increasingly focuses on the nonprofit-private and public-service sectors, where win rates are much higher (often 60 to 70 percent in sectors like health care and finance) because opposition is usually less fierce. With the growing influence of globalization, unions are devoting less effort to organizing in manufacturing, where they win about 42 percent of elections overall--but only about 31 percent of elections in the most global companies, according to Bronfenbrenner. Not surprisingly, multinational companies are far more likely to threaten to close and move than nationally based firms.

Unions like CWA and HERE have led the effort to reduce employer opposition by using their bargaining or political clout to win agreements from companies to stay neutral during organizing drives. But unions have also used their political leverage to make sure that publicly supported local development deals provide for labor peace--no strikes during organizing in exchange for employer neutrality. California last year also approved legislation mandating that businesses not use state funds to oppose unionization. Unions won about two-thirds of organizing campaigns with neutrality agreements, according to a study published last year.

It is also possible to curtail employer tactics in less formal ways. The AFL-CIO has encouraged central labor councils to promote "the right to choose a voice at work" through public actions. Stern wants the AFL-CIO to increase pressure on officials who are elected with labor support to take concrete actions to support union organizing efforts as well as push for local and state legislation, such as reversing right-to-work laws and passing legislation prohibiting public money from being used to fight unions. Splain adds, "The action for us will be at the local and state level where union density, strength, ties to the community are pretty good, like Los Angeles."

President Clinton did little to help union organizing, and there is no prospect for federal legislation to aid organizing in the near future under Bush and a Republican Congress. Human Rights Watch recommended a long, reasonable list of reforms that would strengthen workers rights in the United States, but the greatest value of the report is in highlighting this country's failure to live up to established international law and human rights treaties. In a related effort, the Labor Party has launched a campaign to ground workers rights in the guarantee of First Amendment rights of free speech and association at work and in the constitutional prohibition of involuntary servitude, rather than a focus on reforming existing labor law, which is based on the federal government's power to regulate interstate commerce.

Ultimately, the most effective campaign for workers rights would be massive organizing drives--some focused on a particular corporation, others on a regional industry or other target--that would combine all of the demonstrated elements of a successful organizing campaign with a high-profile political and community fight to guarantee workers rights. It is unlikely that unions will break out of the cage formed by the law, employer power and globalization until the crisis of the labor movement becomes a social crisis as well. But first the labor movement must recognize its own critical condition and be willing, as the civil rights movement was, to create a social crisis if workers rights are not respected.

On the Editorial Pages on February 21, 2001

AN ACCURATE CENSUS

Boston Globe

JUST AS SOME of President Clinton's staffers are said to have pried W's from White House computer keyboards, President Bush may end up flicking people off the American landscape - a far more serious act of vandalism.

At issue is the Census Bureau's response to the question: How many people are in the United States?

The bureau's preliminary estimate in December was 281,421,906. But that's only a rough inventory.

In every census, such tallies have been notorious for failing to count millions of people. Even Census 2000, which appears to be the most accurate one in American history, is estimated by Census officials to have undercounted some 3 million to 4 million people.

Science can come to the rescue. Bureau professionals can assess the quality of the head count and decide whether its accuracy can be improved by sampling.

So by April 1, when detailed population estimates must be given to the states, the Bureau could come up with far more precise numbers. Better numbers are crucial, since they will affect how voting districts are drawn and how the federal government hands out some \$2 trillion before the next census in 2010.

Sadly, with fairness and all this money at stake, it looks as if Bush may settle for a less accurate count.

Last week, the Bush administration decided that the final decision on the census count would be made not by census professionals, but by Commerce Secretary Donald Evans.

Bureau staff will make a recommendation on whether to use sampling, but Evans will have the final say. It's a troubling responsibility for Evans, who is Bush's friend and was his presidential campaign manager. Evans is a man steeped in the oil industry and party politics, not statistics.

And since Republicans tend to oppose sampling - which some fear could jeopardize their majority in the House - it looks as if scientific accuracy could well be shoved aside. The less precise head count could stand in order to keep Bush's political colleagues happy.

If this happens, it would be an odd and unfortunate choice for a president who failed to win a majority of the popular vote. And Bush's valiant promise to be a "uniter" and a president for every American would be tarnished.

Instead, he would merely be a president for everyone whom it is politically convenient to count. He would not be much of a president for many minorities, big city residents, legal immigrants, poorer people, and children - all groups that the census traditionally undercounts.

Bush should stand tall. He should allow the most accurate count to be made and not be driven by the political consequences.

CHILLING INACTION ON GLOBAL WARMING

Richard Gwyn
Toronto Star

ONCE THE PILE of snow in your backyard begins to melt, it melts ever faster as the exposed patches of earth or stone reflect the sun's heat onto the receding pile.

The Earth behaves in the same way. Global warming generates its own self-reinforcing cycle of warming.

Once scientists anticipated that the globe would warm up by about 4 degrees C over the next century. In its latest report, published this week, the United Nations Panel on Climate Change reckons the globe may heat up by as much as 6 degrees C over the same time frame.

Probably the most chilling - if that's the right word - evidence of what's happening comes from drilling done in the Vostok ice core in Antarctica: Temperatures there are not only the highest ever - by far - but have never risen by as much as quickly in 400,000 years.

Evidence that's easier to relate to than deep down ice samples is now cropping up all over the place. Last summer, a stretch of open water was discovered at the North Pole. The ice cap on Africa's famous Mount Kilimanjaro is retreating so rapidly that it may disappear entirely in less than 15 years. Pacific salmon are turning up in Arctic waters.

The scale of the impending temperature increase isn't certain. Computer models, while impressive, are still iffy: The climatic variables are almost infinite and their interactions are complex.

Even after allowing for some important question marks - while the Earth's surface is warmer, the temperature of the lower troposphere (the atmosphere up to eight kilometres) hasn't changed - there is no doubt now that the globe is warming up.

Nor can any doubts remain that humans have caused the greater part of the problem and are continuing to do so.

Nor do any doubts remain about the principal consequences of global warming of this magnitude. More and more severe weather, such as cyclones, floods, droughts, heat waves. A rise in sea levels, with disastrous consequences for poor, low-lying countries like Bangladesh. Acute water shortages in the Mediterranean and equivalent regions on both sides of the equator with the lush Amazon Basin turning into a parched savannah.

But between analysis and action, there is a complete disconnect. There is silence. There is timidity. There is an impregnable absence of will and of imagination.

The U.N.'s environmental conference in the Hague last November, called in an attempt to get an agreed action plan on reducing carbon dioxide emissions, ended in complete failure. A group of naysayers, led by the U.S. and including Canada, Australia, Japan, succeeded in preventing any agreement being reached to implement the modest emission reduction targets (a 5 per cent cut from 1990 levels, to be achieved by 2010) agreed to at the U.N.'s 1997 conference in Kyoto, Japan. Indeed, most of the political attention is now being given to how not to cut emissions - by substituting carbon dioxide "sinks," such as expanded forests, which will absorb carbon dioxide but will also quicken warming by their dark leaves.

It makes a major difference that none of today's decision makers, from George W. Bush to Jean Chrétien, will be around to shoulder the blame. It's critical, also, that developed countries, like Canada, will have to bear the principal cost of Kyoto-type remedial measures and, at the same time, by sheer geographic luck, will be affected adversely only tangentially. Indeed, in some respects global warming will benefit Canada - with a longer northern growing season, for example.

The root problem is a more fundamental one. Action can only be taken by government, including by requiring industries to meet agreed targets. Moreover, this action has to be taken collectively, on a global scale.

Governments, though, have lost their nerve. For more than a decade, government itself has been trashed and ridiculed by the neo-conservatives. Today, few governments - Bush's is a prime example - aspire to do much more than make their country - and the world, to the extent they can - safe for their corporations. Our only collective regulatory instrument left is the marketplace. Or everyone looking after their own, immediate, needs.

The scale of the global warming problem is so vast that it can only be tackled by institutions that believe in themselves and that can persuade their public to believe in their actions. Our governments now are too hollowed out to do that.

So not until the seas rise and the Earth starts to crack will we actually do anything. Unless we regain our sense of ourselves as a collectivity, all we will do before the crisis hits will be to sigh with regret as Mount Kilimanjaro turns into a dusty brown hill - and then switch to another TV channel.

MONEY TALKS - SENSE, FOR ONCE

San Jose Mercury News

MONEY'S talking again in Washington, as always. But this time Washington should be listening hard.

A who's who of wealthy Americans is urging Congress to reject President Bush's plan to eliminate the estate and gift taxes. The list of 120 includes billionaires George Soros and Warren Buffet and a smattering of Rockefellers.

They and their heirs would benefit fantastically if the tax were abolished. Their opposition is a rare expression of altruism in a city where self-interest is all elbows.

Repealing the estate tax "would be bad for our democracy, our economy and our society," says a petition organized by William Gates Sr., the father of Microsoft Corporation's billionaire founder.

Bush would phase out the estate and gift taxes over 10 years, at a cost of \$236 billion, as part of his \$1.6 trillion tax cut. States would lose an additional \$9 billion.

Eliminating the "death tax," as Republicans call it, would be a craven gift to the rich in an era when wealth is becoming increasingly concentrated in a few hands. It would mark a retreat from the American ideal of success based on merit, not inheritance alone.

The estates of fewer than 48,000 Americans -- 2 percent of those who die each year -- pay the tax. In 1998, half of the total collected was paid

by the estates of only 3,000 Americans -- those who left \$5 million or more. Gifts of up to \$10,000 per person, per year, are also exempt from taxes.

The estate tax is not without problems. Only the first \$675,000 of an estate's net value is tax-exempt. That figure, which is the value of an average home in many parts of Silicon Valley, is too low and should be raised significantly. The stiff 55 percent rate on estates above \$3.7 million can create hardships for heirs of farmers and small business owners who want to keep their businesses in the family.

But these and other matters can be dealt with without abandoning the tax. Accountants warn that abolishing it will inspire new tax schemes. (One idea: deed stock to a dying uncle; when he dies, you can inherit it at a higher value, not subject to capital gains.)

Gates' petition notes that the loss of revenue from the estate tax "will inevitably be made up" either by forcing others to pay higher taxes or by cutting Social Security and other vital programs.

Abolishing the tax would also result in fewer gifts to charities. Allowances for charitable deductions have served as an important incentive for people to leave gifts in their wills. Those gifts totaled \$15 billion in 1999.

Defenders of Bush's plan suggest that repealing the tax would spur a new era of philanthropy by putting more money in people's hands. To the contrary, analyses show that those estates subject to higher tax rates leave a larger percentage to charity than those not subject to the tax. The prospect of avoiding taxes does influence how much and when people give away money.

Bush's tax policy has a patronizing contradiction. At the same time that he wants to repeal the estate tax, he wants to grant charitable deductions of up to \$500 to taxpayers who don't itemize their returns -- mainly low- and moderate income families. The result, he predicts: billions more for charity.

Bush apparently believes that the poor need incentives to donate while the rich and their heirs don't. Logic and data -- the bases for credible tax policies -- say that's simply not so.