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NEWS UPDATE - March 23, 2001

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Quote of the Day

"ANWR will have its day."

- Republican Senator Pete Domenici (NM), promising a vote to open up Alaska for drilling (CongressDaily, 3/23)

1. ECONOMY TUMBLES WHILE CONGRESS DOES NOTHING (editorial)

“Last Friday the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 207 points. On Monday it fell another 135 points. On Tuesday the Fed cut interest rates a half-point, and the market fell another 238 points. On Wednesday, the market fell 233 points. And yesterday, after diving toward an intraday low of nearly 300 points, the DJIA finished the day off merely 97 points. There is probably not a single nook or cranny in America where people are oblivious to what is going on in the markets or the economy. Nuns in their cloisters are agog. We do believe, however, there is one place in this great country of ours where you can go away and hide if you don't want to hear about it: Capitol Hill.”

Wall Street Journal, Editorial Board, 3/23

<http://interactive.wsj.com/articles/SB985310380901973891.htm>

2. BUSH WANTS TO CUT CHILD CARE, CHILDREN'S HEALTH (news)

“As part of his budget, President Bush intends next month to propose cuts in programs to provide child care, to prevent child abuse and to train doctors at children's hospitals, administration officials said today.”

New York Times, Pear, 3/21

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/23/politics/23SPEN.html>

3. MAJOR EMPLOYER CUTS 9,600 JOBS (news)

Procter & Gamble announced today that it would eliminate 9,600 jobs, or 9 percent of its work force, in the company's second substantial effort to reduce its payroll in two years.

NY Times, Barnes, 3/23

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/23/business/23PROC.html>

4. GOVERNOR WANTS TO BAN TEACHERS FROM STRIKING (news)

Gov. Jesse Ventura on Wednesday said the Minnesota Legislature should consider classifying teachers as essential employees under state law and take away their right to strike.

Pioneer Press, Welch, 3/23

http://www.pioneerplanet.com/yhoo/mtc_docs/026290.htm

5. NEW BATCH OF STATES WANT THEIR OWN DRUG PURCHASING POOL (news)

“Looking for ways to control rapidly escalating prescription-drug costs that threaten to swamp health-insurance budgets, officials from a half-dozen states are expected at a meeting Friday in Atlanta to lay the groundwork for forming a multistate drug-purchasing pool. Ten states were invited to the meeting. In addition to West Virginia, state health officials from Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, New Mexico and Washington have said they will attend. As news of the incipient pooling effort spreads, it is drawing interest from additional states, such as Kentucky, Alabama and Maryland. This comes just a few months after Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire began an effort to purchase prescription drugs together.”

Wall Street Journal, Gold, 3/23

<http://interactive.wsj.com/articles/SB985301347904016524.htm>

6. HEALTH CARE: A SYSTEM THAT'S SET UP TO FAIL (editorial)

“A system that's set up to fail: That's how a ground-breaking report describes the American health system.

It's not the fault of individual doctors or nurses that the reality of health care falls so far short of its potential for excellence. It's not even the fault of profit-driven insurance companies or giant health maintenance organizations -- the usual villains -- says a new report from the Institute of Medicine, part of the prestigious National Academy of Sciences. Rather, it's a system that's mired in an obsolete view of how to provide care, resistant to change.”

SJ Mercury News, Egbert, 3/23

<http://www0.mercurycenter.com/premium/opinion/columns/044584.htm>

7. CHEAP DRUGS ONLY THE FIRST STEP IN AFRICA AIDS CRISIS (editorial)

“Like ice breaking in the spring, the solid front of pharmaceutical companies against allowing cheap, generic versions of their AIDS drugs into Africa is cracking. This is a welcome development, but genuine hope for the 26 million Africans infected with HIV requires more help from industrialized countries and a greater leadership role by local governments.”

Boston Globe, Editorial Board, 3/23

http://www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/081/editorials/AIDS_breakthrough+.shtml

8. ALASKA DELEGATION PUSHES FOR OIL DRILLING (news)

“Members of Alaska's all-GOP congressional delegation, who favor expanded oil drilling in their state but face opposition on Capitol Hill, are planning ways to overcome the opposition and win approval for drilling, sources told CongressDaily. The Alaskans may try to hitch the measure to a must-pass spending bill later this year if they fail to steer the provision through the normal legislative channels this summer, delegation sources said. “

CongressDailyAM, 3/23

<http://www.nationaljournal.com>

9. CALIFORNIA CONSUMERS GOT RIPPED OFF TO THE TUNE OF \$6.3 BILLION (news)

“California's power grid operator boosted its estimate of potential overcharges by major electricity suppliers from \$5.5 billion to nearly \$6.3 billion Thursday. But lawyers and industry observers said prospects for a massive refund are highly uncertain.”

Los Angeles Times, Brooks, 3/23

<http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/calpol/20010323/t000025234.html>

10. BUSH USING ENERGY CRISIS AS JUSTIFICATION TO ASSAULT ENVIRONMENT (news)

“The Senate's top Democrat accused President Bush on Thursday of using the country's energy problems “as justification for an all-out assault on the environment.””

Associated Press, 3/32

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/washdc/2001-03-22-demsenergy.htm>

11. CORPORATIONS FIRMLY IN CONTROL OF WHITE HOUSE ENVIRO POLICY (editorial)

“President Bush's actions in recent days, rolling back key environmental and workplace rules, are wrongheaded but hardly surprising. In fact, more policy reversals of this sort seem inevitable in coming months. What's particularly dismaying, however, is how quickly and completely the special pleaders from business and industry have taken over at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. “

Los Angeles Times, Editorial Board, 3/23

<http://www.latimes.com/news/comment/20010323/t000025086.html>

12. BUSH MOVE ON ARSENIC THREATENS 13 MILLION AMERICANS (editorial)

“The Bush administration said this week that it intends to withdraw new drinking water standards designed to protect the public from arsenic pollution. This rash move could threaten the health of 13 million Americans whose drinking water has elevated levels of arsenic.”

New York Times Editorial, Fox, 3/22

<http://www.commondreams.org/views01/0322-04.htm>

13. SANDERS TO INTRODUCE BILL TO FORCE PRESIDENT TO PROTECT ENVIRONMENT (news)

Rep. Bernard Sanders, I-Vt., announced today he will introduce legislation to force the EPA to follow through on implementing strict clean water standards in the face of efforts to dismantle protections by the Bush administration. On Tuesday, President Bush announced he would revoke a rule to reduce the level of the carcinogen arsenic in water from 50 parts per billion to 10 parts per billion. The rule, which Congress mandated, would have brought the United States in compliance with a World Health Organization and European Union standard.

CongressDaily, 3/21

<http://www.nationaljournal.com>