

	CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS CHAIRMAN <b>Dennis Kucinich</b> Rep. Barbara Lee, Vice Chair <a href="http://progressive.house.gov">http://progressive.house.gov</a>	
Officers: Sen. Paul Wellstone, Rep. Cynthia McKinney, Rep. Bernie Sanders, Rep. Major Owens		

## **PROGRESSIVE NEWS UPDATE - March 28, 2001**

### ALERT

Progressive Caucus Chairman Dennis Kucinich will appear on CNN's Crossfire to debate the Progressive Caucus \$300-per-person tax plan currently gaining momentum in Congress

### TAXES/BUDGET

1. CNN: Progressive Caucus The Real Fire Behind the Tax Rebate Plan
2. Administration Digs In Heels Against Progressive Caucus Tax Plan
3. 'Has Any Previous Administration Been So Shameless?'

### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS/HEALTH

4. Another Drug Company Bows to Pressure
5. Corporate Pension Raids Now Affecting Worker Health Care Benefits

### ENVIRONMENT

6. Another Day, Another Bush Swipe at the Environment
7. Plunder of Enviro Unites Dems, Moderate Repubs Against White House

### ENERGY

8. Bush Crony Not Going to Get Top Government Energy Job After All

### LABOR

9. Corporatists of D.C., Unite!
10. GOP Leader: 'Wonderful Opportunity' to Enact Fast-Track
11. China Trade 'Likely' To Come Up For Another Vote This Year
12. Economic Slowdown Could Exacerbate Inequality

### MEDIA CONSOLIDATION

12. Media Consolidation Damaging Educational Programming

### Quote of the Day

"No, we have no interest in implementing that treaty."

EPA Administrator Christie Todd Whitman on the Bush Administration's efforts to take America's signature off of the International Kyoto Treaty that addresses global warming.

1. CNN: PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS THE REAL FIRE BEHIND THE TAX REBATE PLAN (news)

“What idea has Joe Lieberman stolen from Bernie Sanders? Lieberman came up with a proposal and when Tucker and I heard it, we thought, this sounds familiar. Sure enough, we went back and we looked at the tape at one of our earlier shows. Here is Joe Lieberman with his idea and then you will see where he got it from. Please listen up: (Lieberman) “I would divide the 60 billion by the almost 200 million Americans who paid income or -- and I stress -- payroll taxes last year. And send each and every one of them a \$300 check.” (Sanders) “We are saying that we will give every American \$300 a year if underlying, there is a surplus.” I guess he takes his policy cues from Bernie Sanders.”

CNN's The Spin Room, Bill Press/Tucker Carlson, 3/26

<http://www.cnn.com/spinroom>

2. ADMINISTRATION DIGS IN HEELS AGAINST PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS TAX PLAN (news)

“President Bush urged lawmakers today not to let the momentum in the Senate for a one-time tax rebate serve as a substitute for his 10-year tax-cutting plan that he values at \$1.6 trillion.”

New York Times, Bruni, 3/28

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/28/politics/28BUSH.html>

3. ‘THE HOSTAGE ECONOMY’ (editorial)

“George W. Bush's tax cut plan has never been distinctive for its content, which is standard-issue conservatism — big tax cuts for the rich, a few crumbs for middle-class families with children the right age, nothing for the poor. What is distinctive is the way the plan has been sold. I can't think of any precedent in the history of American economic policy. Has any previous administration been quite this shameless about misrepresenting the actual content of its own economic plan?”

New York Times, Krugman, 3/28

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/28/opinion/28KRUG.html>

4. ANOTHER DRUG COMPANY BOWS TO PRESSURE (news)

“In the latest drug industry response to the growing global debate on the prices of AIDS drugs, Abbott Laboratories said yesterday that it would sell two of its treatments for H.I.V. infection at “no profit” in Africa. The announcement by Abbott, based in Abbott Park, Ill., follows similar offers earlier this month by Merck and Bristol-Myers Squibb. All of the makers of AIDS drugs are under increasing pressure to reduce the prices of their medicines in African nations and other developing countries. Health officials estimate that in Africa alone, 25 million people may be infected with H.I.V.”

New York Times, Peterson, 3/28

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/28/business/28DRUG.html>

5. CORPORATE PENSION RAIDS NOW AFFECTING WORKER HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS (news)

“Earlier this year, IBM worker Fran Asbeck discovered that accepting a lower level of health coverage for himself and his wife wasn't going to work anymore. Worried about the risks of emergency hospitalization, he decided to start paying \$80 each month. It sounds relatively cheap as far as health insurance goes. But Asbeck says he can't afford the cost, in part because his pension has not kept up with the cost of living. That's why he's had to get another job. According to a December 2000 study by William M. Mercer, Inc., a human resources and benefits firm, only 31 percent of companies with 500 or more employees now provide health care coverage to retirees under the age of sixty-five (the age that people qualify for Medicare). This is down from 35 percent in 1999 and 46 percent in 1993. The number of larger companies covering insurance for seniors ages sixty-five and older also fell, from 28 percent to 24 percent. This was the seventh year in a row that retiree insurance coverage declined.”

The Progressive, Anne-Marie Cusac, 3/28

6. ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER BUSH SWIPE AT THE ENVIRONMENT (news)

“The White House recently sought advice from the State Department about how the United States can legally withdraw its signature from a landmark 1997 global warming agreement, signaling its intent to pull out despite efforts by European and Japanese leaders to try to keep the agreement alive, an administration source said yesterday. The global warming treaty -- negotiated and signed in Kyoto, Japan -- marked the first time that the world's industrial nations committed to binding limits on the heat-trapping gases that scientists believe threaten catastrophic changes in the planet's climate.”

Washington Post, Pianin, 3/28

<http://washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A2354-2001Mar27.html>

7. PLUNDER OF ENVIRO UNIFIES DEMS, MODERATE REPUBS AGAINST WHITE HOUSE (news)

Stunned by the Bush administration's reversal of a series of environmental regulations, environmental lobbying groups are working to enlist Democrats and moderate Republicans in an effort to prevent any further reversals, and even overturn some of them.

The Hill, Fonder, 3/28

[http://www.hillnews.com/news/nws\\_7.htm](http://www.hillnews.com/news/nws_7.htm)

8. BUSH CRONY NOT GOING TO GET TOP GOVERNMENT ENERGY JOB AFTER ALL (news)

“President Bush has dropped a bid to replace the chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission with Texas Utility Commission Chairman Patrick H. Wood III, settling to name his friend to a seat on the commission instead. Mr. Wood had worked on Texas energy-deregulation legislation.”

Wall Street Journal, Cummings, 3/28

<http://interactive.wsj.com/articles/SB985733510114150927.htm>

9. CORPORATISTS OF D.C., UNITE! (news)

“While much attention this week has been given to the debate in the Senate on campaign finance reform, the budget and the status of the death tax, Republican House leaders have begun to quietly whip a vote on fast-track, or trade promotion authority (TPA) as the Bush administration has taken to calling it. And if the leadership has its way, the bill will be a stand alone, without additional labor and environmental riders that some Republicans have indicated they would need in order to support the bill.”

The Hill, Fonder, 3/28

[http://www.hillnews.com/news/nws\\_6.htm](http://www.hillnews.com/news/nws_6.htm)

10. GOP LEADER: ‘WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY’ TO ENACT FAST-TRACK (news)

“House Majority Leader Arme Tuesday urged President Bush to present Congress with a request for renewal of trade promotion authority--formerly known as fast track--within the next month, and promised to quickly fit such legislation onto the House calendar. Arme said there was "a wonderful opportunity" for Bush to make his request--and thus kick off the legislative debate on trade.”

CongressDailyAM, Norton, 3/28

<http://www.nationaljournal.com>

11. CHINA TRADE ‘LIKELY’ TO COME UP FOR ANOTHER VOTE THIS YEAR (news)

“House Majority Leader Dick Arme expressed worries about an increasingly likely vote this spring or summer on extending normal trade relations with China for another year, which would be necessitated by China's failure to join the World Trade Organization by a set time.”

CongressDailyAM, Norton, 3/28

<http://www.nationaljournal.com>

12. ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN COULD EXACERBATE INEQUALITY (news)

“Despite the sharp slowdown in growth in gross domestic product (GDP) that occurred in the last quarter of 2000, the overall unemployment rate remained at 4.0%. Yet, An analysis of the unemployment and underemployment rates, as well as that of wage trends, suggests that younger workers, minorities, and those with at most a high school degree are beginning to feel the pinch. A closer look at last year’s data reveals that the overall economic slowdown has dampened the recent real wage growth of lower- and middle-wage workers while sparing the highest earners. If this trend persists, the economy could revert to the trend of rising inequality that dominated the first half of the 1990s.”

Economic Policy Institute, 3/26

<http://epinet.org/qwes/qwes.html>

13. MEDIA CONSOLIDATION DAMAGING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING (news)

“Msgr. Michael J. Dempsey of Brooklyn came to Washington earlier this month, hoping to save his small educational television network from becoming a casualty in a fight between the nation's largest telephone companies and the Pentagon. The monsignor founded the network 35 years ago and it now provides educational and Roman Catholic religious programming not only to 70,000 children in parochial schools in Queens and Brooklyn, but to hundreds of thousands more around the nation as well. Caught between the military, a huge consumer of the airwaves, which says it must keep its licenses for national security purposes, and the nation's biggest telephone companies, which say they must have more licenses to offer the kind of technology now being developed abroad, Monsignor Dempsey's and scores of other educational broadcasting services find themselves vulnerable. With limited space on the airwaves and increasing demand by new technologies, the debate in Washington presents stark choices for the Bush administration.”

New York Times, Labaton, 3/28

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/28/technology/28SPEC.html>