

CLAIM vs. FACT: President Bush's Speech to U.S. Governors - 2/23/04

HOMELAND SECURITY CLAIM: “We are on the hunt for al Qaeda. You just got to know that there's a lot of brave people searching them out. And I view the hunt for al Qaeda as part of the war on terror. And it requires all assets, intelligence assets and military assets, to chase them down and bring them to justice.” – President Bush, [2/23/04](#)

FACT: Knight-Ridder reported that experts now say the “Iraq war is diverting resources from war on terror.” Specifically, “a growing number of counter-terrorism experts are questioning whether the U.S. invasion of Iraq has hurt rather than helped the global battle against al Qaeda.” Republican and Democratic experts “are increasingly suggesting that the Iraq war has diverted momentum, troops and intelligence resources from the worldwide campaign to destroy the remnants of al Qaeda.” Similarly, the U.S. Army War College reported that the Iraq war “diverted attention and resources away from the security of the American homeland against further assault by an undeterrable al Qaeda.” [Source: Knight-Ridder, [11/26/03](#); BBC, [1/13/04](#)]

ECONOMY CLAIM: “At home, obviously, the economy and jobs are on my mind. I know they're on yours, as well. I'm pleased that the economy is growing -- 5.6% unemployment is a good national number.” – President Bush, [2/23/04](#)

FACT: “There are the 8.7 million unemployed, defined as those without a job who are actively looking for work. But lurking behind that group are 4.9 million part-time workers who say they would rather be working full time — the highest number in a decade. There are also the 1.5 million people who want a job but didn't look for one” because the economy had become so bleak. “Add these three groups together and the jobless total for the U.S. hits 9.7%.” Even the official unemployment rate is misleading. While “the unemployment rate fell to 5.7 percent from 5.9 percent, that was because more people gave up looking for work.” All told, the recent drop “was wholly due to a contraction in the labor force, which declined by 309,000.” As the New York Times noted, “compared with previous economic recoveries, job growth remains well below par.” [Source: LA Times, [12/29/03](#); Knight-Ridder, [1/10/04](#); EPI, [1/9/04](#); NY Times, [2/22/04](#)]

JOB TRAINING CLAIM: “And, of course, I've always felt that the community college system provides a great opportunity for job training. Elaine will talk about that to you. Community colleges are available, affordable; they're flexible...So we've got money in our budget to help invigorate the community college system.” – President Bush, [2/23/04](#)

FACT: While the Administration is proposing a modest increase in job training funds for community colleges, it is overshadowed by the Administration's push to cut more than \$1 billion out of job training over the last three years. Last year alone, the White House proposed a \$300 million cut to vocational education, a \$60 million cut to adult job training, and a \$225 million cut to youth job training, effectively eliminating all funding for the Youth Opportunity Grants. As the Salt Lake Tribune noted, overall spending on job training is roughly flat “and work-force training advocates note that the Administration and Congress have failed to recognize how little the government spends on training.” [Source: American Progress backgrounder, [1/20/04](#); Salt Lake Tribune, [1/5/04](#)]

TAX CLAIM: “The tax relief we passed...helps small businesses...When you cut income taxes, all taxes -- not a few, but all -- you're providing additional capital for subchapter S and sole proprietorships. And if you're worried about job growth, it seems like it makes sense to give a little fuel to those who create jobs, the small business sector.” – President Bush, [2/23/04](#)

FACT: According to nonpartisan analyses of IRS and Treasury Department data, just 3.7% of small business owners are subject to the top tax rate cuts that make up the bulk of the President's tax cuts - meaning 96% of small businesses receive little to nothing from his first tax cut. All told, small business owners “would be far more likely to receive no tax reduction whatsoever from the Administration's tax package than to benefit” in any way. In terms of the 2003 tax cut, “52% of people with small business returns would get \$500 or less” and the bill included provisions that actually hurt small business. [Source: CBPP, [5/3/01](#) and [1/21/03](#)]

EDUCATION CLAIM: “I'm going to vigorously defend No Child Left Behind because I know in my heart of hearts it's the absolute right role for the federal government -- to provide money, but insist upon results... And [if schools do not pass], there will be special help to make sure they do.” – President Bush, [2/23/04](#)

FACT: In 2005 alone, the Administration has requested \$9.4 billion less for its own No Child Left Behind bill than the bill demands. The Title I program – the main program targeted to disadvantaged children - is underfunded by \$7.2 billion, leaving “nearly five million disadvantaged children without extra academic help and services.” In all, the Administration has underfunded the bill by a total of \$27 billion since it was signed. [Source: House Education & Workforce Committee, [2/11/04](#)]

HIGHER EDUCATION CLAIM: “We have [been] increasing Pell grants...” – President Bush, [2/23/04](#)

FACT: The Administration has frozen the maximum Pell Grant available to students \$4,050, despite the President's campaign pledge in 2000 to increase the award to \$5,100. The program freeze comes at the same time “state colleges and universities in every region of the country are preparing to impose this fall their steepest tuition and fee increases in a decade.” Because of the Administration's budget, “most students won't get any more help than they receive now” – all at the same time the White House has proposed a rule change that would cut off 84,000 students from receiving college aid. [Source: Wall Street Journal, [2/3/04](#); Washington Post, [7/22/03](#); Cincinnati Enquirer, [10/10/03](#)]