



FACTS TO CONSIDER: A STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS WATCHING GUIDE

The following is a sampler of key issues that may come up during tonight's State of the Union address. President Bush will likely highlight small funding increases for programs that benefit children – a tactic intended to soften the blow of his \$674 billion tax cut giveaway to the rich – while in reality he is ignoring the needs of America's poorest and most neglected children. The President is expected to discuss his economic plan to revive a stagnant economy, announce compassionate budget priorities, and address a possible war with Iraq.

JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

Rhetoric: “The benefits of this [dividends tax cut] will be felt throughout the economy.”
– President Bush (*Chicago annc.*, 01-07-2003)

Reality: **This new tax cut for millionaires is shameful in the face of other needs.**
The ten year cost of the dividend tax cut could provide comprehensive health care for all 9.2 million uninsured American children and Head Start for all unserved eligible preschoolers in need of comprehensive services that prepare them for school and a productive future. The same Administration that starves and freezes children's services is willing to heap more money on millionaires.

Rhetoric: “The time to deliver the tax reductions is now, when they can do the most good for American businesses.” – President Bush (*Chicago annc.*, 01-07-2003);
The President also has said repeatedly that he is committed to Leave No Child Behind[®].

Reality: **The President's plan leaves no millionaires behind.**
The Administration's economic plan proposes speeding up most of the 2001 tax breaks leaving millions of children behind. President Bush chose not to speed up the portion of the child tax credit that helps families with low earnings or accelerate extra help for married low-income parents.

Rhetoric: “A third challenge facing our country is the need to help unemployed workers and prepare them for new jobs of a growing economy... it's higher than it should be – and the unemployment rate is projected to rise even further in the short run.” – President Bush (*Chicago annc.* 01-07-2003);
“One way to make sure that we continue to make progress is to insist upon work, and then help people who need help to find a job, either through training and/or job placement.” – President Bush (*TANF annc.*, 07-02-2002)

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Reality: **Long-term unemployment is spreading fastest in families with young children.**

Over a half-million parents experienced long-term unemployment (more than 26 weeks) in October – almost three times the number two years ago. For parents with children younger than six, long-term unemployment more than tripled. The Administration opposes extending benefits for more than one million long-term jobless workers who have exhausted all their unemployment insurance benefits.

Rhetoric: **“Good jobs begin with good schools and here we’ve made a fine start.”** – President Bush (*NPR’s “Market Place,” 01-28-2003*)
“We need to prepare our children to read and succeed in school with improved Head Start and early childhood development programs.” – President Bush (*NPR’s “Market Place,” 01-28-2003*)

Reality: **Head Start currently serves only 3 out of 5 eligible 3- and 4-year olds and only 3-percent of children ages 0 to 3 eligible for Early Head Start.**
The Administration’s past budgets have not recognized the need to extend Head Start to additional disadvantaged children who need these comprehensive services to enter school ready to learn.

Rhetoric: **“Being a single mother in America is the toughest job in America. It’s the hardest work.”** – President Bush (*TANF annnc. 07-02-2002*)

Reality: **Only 1 in 7 children eligible for federal child care assistance receives it.**
While hundreds of thousands of children are on waiting lists for child care the President has proposed to freeze federal child cared funds for the next 5 years. His welfare plan doubles the required work hours from 20 to 40 hours per week for parents with children under 6, who are almost all single mothers.

HEALTH CRISIS

Rhetoric: **The Bush Administration has said repeatedly that it is important to address the health crisis faced by more than 41 million uninsured people in America, including more than 9 million uninsured children.**

Reality: **1 in 6 children is born to a mother who did not receive prenatal care in the first three months of pregnancy.**
The Administration proposes giving tax credits of up to \$3,000 for families to use to find health insurance coverage. These tax credits are inadequate to make health insurance affordable when family insurance premiums are likely to cost an estimated \$7,000 per year. While it sounds good to give people tax credits to buy

insurance coverage, a significant portion of the uninsured will still be unable to afford health coverage.

Rhetoric: **The Bush Administration has said repeatedly that it is important to save federal funds from expiring from the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in order to provide health insurance for more uninsured children.**

Reality: **Every minute a baby is born without health insurance in America.** \$2.7 billion in federal CHIP funds are in jeopardy of expiring, which would result in 900,000 children losing health care coverage. The solution the Bush Administration proposed last year would only put \$1.2 billion of those funds to work to insure uninsured children leaving \$1.5 billion to expire in the future – meaning more than 500,000 children would lose their coverage through the program. Unless this proposal is significantly modified, instead of reducing the number of uninsured children in America from more than 9 million, the Bush Administration will be contributing to increasing the number of uninsured children.

PEACE AND HOMELAND SECURITY

Rhetoric: **“Americans seek peace in the world. War is the last option for confronting threats. Yet the temporary peace of denial and looking away from danger would only be a prelude to a broader war and greater horror.”** – President Bush (*radio address, 12-07-2002*)

Reality: **The President must make a positive commitment to the homeland security of all our children. The U.S. has the highest child poverty rate of any wealthy nation.** The President’s under-funded No Child Left Behind bill does not ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, or a Safe Start. The Dodd-Miller comprehensive Act to Leave No Child Behind, in contrast, ensures every child successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. It is way past time to end preventable and shameful child poverty, sickness, violence, abuse and neglect, and inadequate education in the richest nation on earth.

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MOMENTS IN AMERICA FOR ALL CHILDREN

- Every 11 seconds a child is reported abused or neglected.
- Every 43 seconds a baby is born into poverty.
- Every minute a baby is born without health insurance.
- Every 2 minutes a baby is born at low birth weight.
- Every 4 minutes a baby is born to a mother who received late or no prenatal care.
- Every 3 hours a child or teen is killed by a firearm.
- Every day a young person under 25 dies from HIV infection.

A COMPARISON OF THE DODD-MILLER COMPREHENSIVE ACT TO LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND AND THE BUSH NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

	Dodd-Miller Act to Leave No Child Behind	Bush No Child Left Behind Act
Reform education	√	√
Provide health care for all uninsured children	√	
Provide Head Start for all eligible preschoolers	√	
Provide child care for all eligible children	√	
Provide after-school and youth development programs for children and youth	√	
Set goal to lift all children out of poverty	√	
Provide tax relief for low-wage working families	√	
Provide nutrition and housing assistance for low-income children	√	
Protect children from abuse and neglect and provide permanent families for vulnerable children and youth	√	
Protect children from gun violence	√	
Provide prevention and intervention to reduce juvenile delinquency	√	
Build supportive communities for children and their families	√	

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