The issues that concern young voters most have assumed a prominent role in the 2004 presidential election as both John Kerry and George W. Bush strive to secure the youth vote.

"Younger voters are particularly interested in what the future might hold," American Studies professor Robert Schmuhl said. "Whether the candidates have addressed these concerns in compelling ways is an open question. ... Historically, economic issues tend to assume dominant importance in a presidential campaign. This year is different, with the war in Iraq and the threat of terrorism vying for voter concern."

Media organizations such as Rock the Vote and Vote or Die emphasize the environment, gay rights, health care, education and terrorism as the most prominent issues facing voters under 30. For many Notre Dame students, national security is their top concern.

"I think that everybody in the country, including young voters, is concerned about security issues," said Nicola Bunick, co-president of Notre Dame's College Democrats.

Co-president of Notre Dame's College Republicans, Tom Rippinger, agrees. "Younger voters should be especially interested in the policy decisions that we're making right now," he said.

Particularly at Notre Dame, with its Center for Social Concerns and strong emphasis on Catholic social teaching, issues of social welfare also tend to become a priority. Kerry and Bush's respective stances on these social issues will determine for whom many young people vote, said Bunick.

"A lot of people are really involved in social justice — it strikes a chord with them," she said. Even issues that don't directly seem to affect young people, such as the status of Social Security, should be considered, said Tom Guglielmo, an American Studies assistant professor.

"You could make the case that Social Security is for older people, but there's the question that this will even be around," he said.

Like Guglielmo, Rippinger cited Social Security as a concern, noting that the Social Security trust fund might become bankrupt by 2018, according to information provided by the Institute for Policy Innovation. "That's something that will directly affect us if either party doesn't do something about it," Rippinger said.

Health care also concerns young voters, Rippinger said, in light of recent debates over creating a government-based health care system.

Other students are concerned with issues that deal with Catholic values. "On Notre Dame's campus, there's always a lot of issues over abortion and stem cell debate. For some people, that can be a big factor," Bunick said.

While some students are impelled to become activists in such hotbed issues, others find it difficult to determine which candidate is most closely aligned with their own views.

"For younger voters, mostly occupied with college and work — it's hard to actually take the time to do the research and make an informed vote," Rippinger said.

But Guglielmo believes students must take time to educate themselves so they can make an informed decision on Nov. 2.

"There are some really big issues on the table," he said.

Contact Maddie Hanna at mhanna1@nd.edu and Joe Hettler at jhettler@nd.edu
WASHINGTON — George W. Bush loves to tell people about the time Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi compared the War on Terror to the Western movie "The High Noon." Americans' 43rd president cultivates the tough-guy image, offering himself as a blunt-spoken man of action. "I'm a got player," he says. 

Americans do want their presidents to be strong and decisive. But with President Bush, the question is: Strong in what way? Is he strong on fighting the war? Yes. But no longer strong on fighting U.S. forces in Iraq by taunting, "Brittas, Britain!"

"Those who love him say 'leader, decisive, passionate.' His detractors, though, say he's inattentive to detail, even to the point of capacity to connect the dots. He doesn't get the big picture," says Doug Wead, a family friend who worked with Bush on his father's 1988 presidential campaign. "But everybody agrees that his logic is something in his gut, something that's really driving him.

Whatever the motivation, that drive is now propelling Bush through what has become a tough reelection campaign. He's feeling the pinch of Sept. 11, even as he pats it, bring everything to the field, leaving nothing in the locker room.

Four years after the Supreme Court sealed Bush's victory by delivering Florida's electoral votes, friends and critics alike say he has been remarkably unaffected by his first term in office.

"I'm the kind of person who doesn't take business personally," Bush said in an interview with USA Today on Sept. 11, 2001, and the nation's response to them have "added a solemnness and a seriousness to his husband's personality," she hastens to add, though, that he still likes to laugh.

One lesson Bush has learned is that his hope to replicate the chunky bipartisanism he had with Texas Democrats when he was governor was a dream. The George W. Bush of today, where comity in private can quickly sour in public, is one of Bush's biggest disappointments, although Democrats point the finger back at the War on Terror.

Physical changes in Bush are easier to pinpoint. "He's fatter, for sure," says Laura, Adviser Karen Hughes's former housekeeper. "You can see his face. He's under a lot of stress, and that shows right there in his face." The President Bush Back at 60.

Still, there are plenty of echoes of Bush's days as a Texas governor.

When the son prepared for war after the Sept. 11 attacks in 2001, he declared: "This act will not stand." The same words his father, who declared war after the 1990 Iraq invasion Kuwaiti.

Bush's sister, Doro Bush Koch, says that when family members gather at the Bush compound in Kennebunkport, Maine, they sometimes congregate around the speakerphone in her parents' bedroom at 6 a.m. to call George W. at the White House.

"It's 99.9 percent family stuff," says Koch. "He likes to know what's going on in Maine, and who are the cousins who are the grandchildren, and who are the great-grandchildren who are the cousins who are the grandchildren."

The president loves to keep tabs on what the rest of the Bush family is doing, and that's something he doesn't think George Bush knows that we're seeing the negative impact of the War on Terror.

Waldman, editor in chief of The Nation, says Bush's religious convictions feed into his image as a steadfast president in a time of war. But, Waldman says, "clearly some people feel that he's kind of stepping underfully of that, that his stance has come to stick stubbornness and unwillingness to face disappointing facts.

Waldman says Bush fails to court evangelicals during the 1990s, while the president's expressions of faith are both sincere and calculated: "I don't think he's the kind of person who's religious, but he's an attentive politician."

Laura Bush jokes that her husband has such a strong "Alpha male" personality that even her dog, Barney, pays more attention to him than to her. But she also says he "has a heart of gold, which doesn't always come across." Aides mention George Bush as a "man of the people" that don't appear on the president's schedule in which he comforts the families of those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan or who lost a loved one to the war.

The president loves to keep tabs on what the rest of the Bush clan is doing, and that's something he doesn't think George Bush knows that we're seeing the negative impact of the War on Terror.
WASHINGTON — Vietnam, anti-war protests and politics were still years in the future. In 1963, John Kerry was a college kid looking for adventure on a summer abroad. Traveling on anti-war protests and politics was a guy who knew his place in history, "says his travel companion and longtime friend, Harvey Bundy.

Even the youthful hijinks of John Kerry in Vietnam, with his <s>in" above intensity about them. Now, at age 60, Kerry is pursuing the American presidency with the same doggedness and focus that is a lifelong trait for a son of privilege who nonetheless had to fight for much of what he got.

The impotent young man whose first two tries for Congress fizzled, who waited another 15 years for the right entree to Congress and two more decades for a good shot at the White House, is right where his stars always been the kind of guy who knew his place in history," says Bundy, who roommates, remembers his relationship meant the world to his grandmother, "It's just there," he says, "part of my material existence."

Kerry's service became a major campaign issue this year as several veterans who served on other boats appeared in bling TV ads questioning his record and criticizing his later anti-war commentaries. Veterans who served on Kerry's boat defended him and sometimes campaigned alongside him.

Vanessa Kerry says she remembers poking around her father's room during a break in the fighting during the war, where he had a poster of President Lyndon B. Johnson with the words, "The reason we fight."

She still talks of a generous aunt. She is the daughter of Robert Kennedy, D-N.Y., with whom she grew up with, "I think it has made my dad value every day. He's the first to say every day is extra."

Kerry went to war with doubts about Vietnam and came home with certainty that the war was wrong; he received early release from the Navy to run for Congress as an anti-war candidate. His candidacy fizzled because a more prominent anti-war figure was already in the race. But as a decorated veteran, Kerry quickly emerged as a spokesman against the war.

Bob Muller, president of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation and a friend who has known Kerry since their war-protest days in the 1960s, says her father sometimes can get so focused that "it precludes having a fuller life," he says. "He says he can be witty and silly, even goofy, in more relaxed settings."

His younger daughter, Vanessa, 27, offers four words to sum up her father: dedicated, curious, intelligent, playful. "I like 'playful' above all," Kerry says, when offered his daughter's list.

Then, somewhat reluctantly, he comes up with an own description: romantic, passionate, realist, engaged.

Friends speak of small, frequent acts of generosity, and loyally built up over decades. There is no one whose father served with Kerry in Vietnam and who killed there, remembers how Kerry took time to make rubbings of his father's John D. Logan War Memorial to send to her grandparent's home in the suburbs.

"That relationship meant the world to my grandmother," says Tracy Tragos.

Kerry, whose service as captain of the Connecticut boat in Vietnam brought him three Purple Hearts and a Silver Star for heroism, still has the scarred knee, the Baker dorm roommate, and friend since before that.

Kerry wincos at any such hint of desolation.

Life, he says in an interview in his stocking feet aboard his campaign plane, too often offers a Yippee! cake. As a child, Kerry was always "the most politically attuned," says his younger brother, Cameron. "He was always the leader of the pack in the neighborhood among the cousins, the quick-witted, the successful."

His drive to the competitiveness, says Cameron, are "just hard-wired."

They are still there in adulthood, as Kerry windsurfed Nauset Beach in a full-on Northeastern gale or silenced a campaign heckler by declaring: "I never run away from anything, especially George Bush."

William Stanberry, Kerry's debate-team partner at Yale, says Kerry's mind is a "black hole."

The first thing that people must come to grips with when they consider John Kerry, even before they begin to parse his words, is his appearance. He is so long, so thin, he looks deceptively fragile. One's head must scan up, down to take in his full 6-foot-4 frame. His wingspan, when he gestures with his arms, seems to stretch to the walls.

His face, too, is long and thin. Comic Billy Crystal jokes that someone needs to tell Kerry's face know that he has a good time — talk about something other than this."

As a 27-year-old war protester and Kills in Vietnam he brought him three Purple Hearts and a Silver Star for heroism, still has the scarred knee, the Baker dorm roommate, and friend since before that.

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"President Bush got some things wrong, but there is much he got right. We are faced with an unprecedented challenge. Bush's resolve and commitment to stay the course are clear." — Austin American-Statesman

"Kerry is a serious man with the skills. He is the one candidate who can heal the deeply bitter divisions in the country." — Miami Herald

"On the signal issues of this campaign — the Iraq war and terrorism — Kerry is up to the challenge. He is best suited to lead our painful exit now — not just with the necessary bravado, but with the gruff realism that only his 25 years in Congress can provide. These are the strengths of America. We are confident a Kerry presidency will restore both unity and strength." — Boston Globe

"The debates have placed a spotlight on the skills and abilities of the two candidates, with the president getting the word of it." — Houston Chronicle

"Like many people, Bush finds it difficult to admit a mistake, particularly when under attack on all sides. It is hard to believe that a man who announced his candidacy with such optimism which inspired some of the nation's leaders, proved preferable to cautious, indecisive ones." — Houston Chronicle

"Keey knows how to effectively join with U.S. allies to leverage the vast power of international will. Kerry's approach demonstrates maturity, nuance and thoughtfulness. These qualities don't always play well in campaign sound bites. But they will serve America exceedingly well in the Oval Office." — Minneapolis Star Tribune

"We find ourselves deeply conflicted today about the character and performance of President George W. Bush. But we will be voting against the president, not for the candidate who lost. It is a vote of confidence in the leadership of the country's commander-in-chief." — Philadelphia Inquirer

"Despite it all, he has his biases. Kerry the U.S. Senator's skills are on display." — Canton Repository

"Despite the best efforts of the campaigns to do otherwise, what sets these men apart is not their qualifications to be president, but their positions on the issues. Bush and Kerry offer distinctly different visions for the country. It is on this basis that the candidates are best judged, and it is because we believe Kerry has, on the whole, the better plan for a future that we endorse him for president of the United States." — Maine Sunday Telegram

"Let us face the tough, make the tough calls, and gain the respect of the world in the process." — Photographers' News Publishing Co.
his mistakes, America knows who Bush led the country through immense trou­ble, burdened by all the votes that came in 20 years, still leaves many questions about what kind of president he would be." — Associated Press

"It can be assumed that the next president, be it Bush or Kerry, will do everything in his power to make America safe from terrorists. And on the broad range of other issues, Kerry has more to offer. He is in touch with the middle class. He is better informed on health care and has sound ideas for creating jobs." — Des Moines Register

"On Sept. 11, 2001, this country accepted a great challenge — to inflict justice on terrorists who threaten America and to close every imaginable gap to prevent such an attack. The task has been pursued with dogged determination, and we will fight President Bush is best suited to continue the fight." — Denver Post

"When a president is seeking re-election, the controversy is inevitably a referendum on his service. We think it's fair to say that the record on too many matters important to our country." — Charlotte Observer

"We have been impressed with Mr. Kerry's wide knowledge and clear thinking — something that became more apparent once he was reined in by that book in the Oval Office. He is truly willing to re-evaluate decisions when conditions change. He strikes us, above all, as a man with a strong moral core." — New York Times

"This election is an opportunity to demonstrate to terrorists throughout the world that America is not a nation that sits back and reacts to events, but a nation that is prepared to act with determination and with the understanding that it can win this fight and can do so more forcefully and effec­tively than his opponent." — Omaha World-Herald

"John Kerry's record of waffling on issues large and small does not inspire confidence that he would provide the steady leadership that these uncertain times demand. With George Bush, however, there need be no doubt of where he stands or why he has been another four years in the White House." — San Diego Union Tribune

"We want leaders to stay the course only when the course is a good one. ... The question that any leader should ask himself is, 'At the end of the day, will the American people wish they had taken a different course?' The answer is no, then your vote should be for Sen. John Kerry." — Chicago Sun-Times

"There is much to like about our current president, but there is much to dislike about America's current war policy. The lesson of Iraq is that having won the battle, one must engage in the fight to settle the peace and drive the terrorists from the region. ... We are not taking the right steps to win the peace in Iraq, and the nation's leaders have not managed the war as well as they have promised. ... We must be prepared to take the necessary steps to secure peace and freedom in the Middle East." — Chicago Tribune

"American voters are mad at Bush and Kerry today, just as they were in the 2000 election. But the truth is that Bush is not dithering and Kerry is not mad. Both men are determined to do whatever is necessary to win the election. Bush translated this into his campaign theme of 'Mission Accomplished.' This theme is a political stunt. It is a calculated attempt to make voters forget their desire for a change. " — Rocky Mountain News

"John Kerry, as an analytical candidate who sees the world as it is, did not hesitate to bring up issues that were sure to undermine his campaign. John Kerry, as a leader who sees the world as it should be, emphasized the need for the United States to join the world. John Kerry, as a candidate who sees the world as it can be, was in the thick of things, fighting for his country and his principles." — Los Angeles Times

"The Massachusetts senator possesses a prodigious intellect capable of grasping the complexities of the world's problems. He is a man of the world." — South Florida Sun-Sentinel

"The observer's point of view. The first round of Electoral Vote Totals from NBC-Wall Street Journal reports that the electoral votes will be a contest between George W. Bush and John Kerry.
Electoral might come down to who can get out the vote

By CLAIRE HENINGER
In focus

Armed with reused stump speeches and fanned by polar opposite voices, President George W. Bush and Sen. John Kerry are increasingly targeting women voters as the 2004 presidential campaign begins to heat up.

Women cast 8 million more votes than men in the 2000 election, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. And because women compose a sizeable percentage of this vote, those remaining undecided voters—between 55 to 60 percent, according to polls conducted by the Associated Press, Reuters, the New York Times and CBS—are both candidates in hot pursuit of this critical demographic.

In the swing state of Wisconsin, Sen. Kerry told a mostly female crowd that he understands women’s struggles, that he believes balance is key to success in the states.

He promised that if he is elected, he will assist them with economic and educational initiatives. Campaigning the same day in Pennsylvania, another loss- up state, Bush countered that such issues pale in comparison to national security, as he security, as he believes that he is better equipped to present American families from terrorist attacks.

The last-minute end of the attention to women’s concerns may be an attempt to compen- sale for the Iraq war’s demor- nation of the initial months of the campaign, said Diana Hess, co-president of the League of Women Voters South Bend branch.

The National Council of Women’s Organizations identified such "women's issues" as health care, pay equity, family leave, social security, and human rights as topics of par- ticular interest to women in its "ABC's of Women's Issues for your vote guide — many of which have only recently hit the headlines.

"Domestic issues were over-shadowed by security up until now," Hess said. "I think a lot of issues are just now being brought to the surface — and they are women’s issues across the board."

Bush and Kerry might also be playing on these issues similar to sicing a narrowing win- dow of opportunity, Hess added.

"Part of it is the race is just so close that women voters are one group they might be able to capture, especially in the swing states," she said.

Chris Wolbrecht, a Notre Dame political science profes- sor who specializes in women’s voting behavior, said poorly undecided women to a particular state, is only half the candidates’ battle; we must still be lured into the booth.

"The candidates have two weeks to convince people who don’t know who they’re voting for to vote for them, and to mobilize those who support them already to turn out," Wolbrecht said. "So a lot of people who didn’t turn out last time are casting votes for the candidates trying to give them a rea- son to turn out and vote on a rainy Tuesday when they have a million other things to do."

However, many women vot- ers in the area haven’t needed extra attention from the can- didates to recognize voting importance, Hess said. The League of Women Voters South Bend branch registered between 100 and 150 new voters this year, she said, and agencies across St. Joseph County have reported huge registration turnout overall.

"We want to make sure women vote and are informed voters," Hess said.

But since women do not comprise a uniform voting bloc — diverging along single vs. married, working vs. stay- at-home, rural vs. urban and other lines — the candidates have been forced to focus on groups of women who benefit most from their par- ticular platforms. While Kerry has tried to paint himself as the most attractive candidate for single working women, as reflected in his Wisconsin speech, Bush has become pop- ular with married women and the "security room" who plan to cast their votes on safety and family values.

This gap between single and married voters — and this year, single and married women — is actually for either more acute than the well-known "gender gap" between male and female voters, Wolbrecht said.

Stable marriages often lead to a relatively conserva- tive perspective, resulting in many married women voting for a Republican ticket, she said. And since dual-income households, couples are better equipped to deal with sudden job loss than a single-income woman supporting herself. Democratic inclusive economic policy can become more attrac- tive to those who aren’t mar- ried, Wolbrecht said.

"Traditionally, working women vote Democratic and stay-at-home mothers vote Republican," the said. "Single women may feel the brunt of economics more harshly."

Despite these differences among women voters, recent surveys indicate that overall gender gap still exists. Women are consistently favored the Democratic Party since the 1960s, after backing Bush in 2000. The lone exception would be the 2000 election when Bush was able to capture a majority of women voters, 53 percent to 47 percent, according to a poll published Thursday in the Associated Press.

Voters have been made to focus on issues like abortion, wage equi- ty, mini-mum and family leave, wel- fare, education and sexual harassment law during Democratic presidencies, women may trust the party's history of encouraging reform in these areas, Hess said. "A hypothesis for why women have... been more likely to be Democrats is they favor a party that provides more of a social safety net," she said. "I don't want to say either party doesn't care... but the Democratic Party has a better record of fighting for women."

That record bodes well for this year’s Democratic candi- date, she said. "We don’t know how Kerry would go into the White House and do that," she said, "but he may be more likely to cause." Few women vot- ers view the security issue as paramount, however, the gen- der gap may not be as big, Wolbrecht said.

Electoral decisions often come down to convincing people what is most important," she said, pointing to Bush’s claims — echoed consistently in his speeches and the presiden- tial debates — that terror- ism and homeland security trump all else, and this keeping families safe from attack is of utmost priority. That strat- egy reflects Bush’s attempt to convince women that "my issues are your issues," Wolbrecht said.

While the president and Kerry have only recently stepped up the intensity of their appeals to women, their wives, First Lady Laura Bush and her counterpart, Teresa Heinz Kerry, actually have focused more on women voters. Teresa Heinz Kerry has been con- troversial because of her role in the campaign, previous outbursts, a brief in support of the Republican Party, now-decreased Pennsylvania, engulfing their attacks on the White House, and keeping supportive of him. Heinz Kerry therefore stands in contrast to Laura Bush, Wolbrecht said.

"Laura Bush behaves more like a typi- cal first lady, smiling when her hus- band speaks, favoring traditional First Lady causes, like education and health, while Teresa is less polished," she said. "Teresa’s less polished."

To appeal to women in their parties’ respective bases, the Bush and Kerry campaigns have spun these differences as major issue, Wolbrecht. But ultimately the impact isn’t as great as the candidates themselves.

'The three women and women's health issues she's running on are so different," she said. "They aren’t as polished."

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Candidates target women voters

Women show their support for the Democratic and Republican candidates for president. Both John Kerry and George W. Bush have increased their efforts to woo women voters as Election Day draws near.
Third-party candidates hope to make impact
But it's unlikely any can play a significant role in determining presidential outcome

By JOE HETTLER
In Focus

WASHINGTON — As the presidential race winds down, the two camps are dialing up the rhetoric. That's led to some far-out statements, unscripted behavior and foot-in-mouth comments from both sides.

Generating homestretch shock waves were Vice President Dick Cheney's nuclear-bomb terror warnings for U.S. cities, Sen. John Kerry's efforts to blame President Bush for anthrax vaccine shortages and Teresa Heinz Kerry's suggestion that Laura Bush never had a "real job."

Heinz Kerry apologized, saying she "forgets" that the first lady worked for 10 years as a teacher and librarian.

The comments which could hurt Kerry among undecided women voters who are stay-at-home moms, appeared to reflect the enormous pressures on both campaigns in a close race.

"Part of what's happening is the consequence of all the tensions and anxieties from the fact that neither candidate made a big move in the polls after the debates. We're left with the same dead heat we had at the start," said Wayne Fields, an expert in presidential rhetoric at Washington University in St. Louis.

Republicans are still seething at Kerry for mentioning Cheney's openly gay daughter in the final presidential debate. "I thought it was over the line," Bush said last week in an interview with The Associated Press.

Kerry has said he was just complimenting the Cheneys on their parenting. They denied the claim by Pat Robertson that God told him Iraq would be "messy," but that Bush assured the religious broadcaster in early 2003 there would be no U.S. casualties. Bush aides denied the president said any such thing.

With people concerned about the economy and Iraq, both candidates are turning to pre-election gimmicks to try to meddle in the needle's favor.

Kerry accuses Bush of ponders a reviving of the military draft that would require everyone to try to raise a "January surprise" on Social Security. Bush labels the Massachusetts senator an unrepentant tax- and-spend "liberal" too wisely to stand up to the terrorist threat.

Each suggests the other would lead the country toward despair, defeat, lowering debt.

"Everybody's beginning to recognize the stakes of this election are huge, both campaigns are fired, and they appear to be letting it all hang out," said GOP consultant Scott Braden, who ran Bob Dole's 1996 presidential campaign.

Bush and Kerry, other candidates have received little coverage across the country. Some may deem this unfair, but Colwell disagrees.

"You have to earn your coverage," he said. "If somebody was coming on strong like a Ross Perot or even a Nader, it's sunken unfair for the real candidates — the ones who have a real chance of winning. The race devotes a lot of time to these candidates that have no chance."

The third parties offer Americans a candidate that is radically different than those candidates from the Republicans and Democrats. The Green Party's Cobb major issues include pulling all troops out of Iraq immediately, providing health care for all Americans and establishing rights for homosexuals. Badnarik devotes a lot of time to these candidates that have no chance.

"But, really, Nader is the only one at the end that you'd say played any role at all."

Jack Colwell professor

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Third-party candidates will likely make little impact on the 2004 presidential election on Nov. 2. From left to right, Michael Badnarik of the Libertarian Party, David Cobb of the Green Party, independent candidate Ralph Nader and Constitution Party candidate Michael Peroutka are all running for the presidency this year.

Flu vaccine was not an issue in the debates. Since then, it has become a major issue. But the claim by Pat Robertson that God told him Iraq would be "messy," but that Bush assured the religious broadcaster in early 2003 there would be no U.S. casualties. Bush aides denied the president said any such thing.

With people concerned about the economy and Iraq, both candidates are turning to pre-election gimmicks to try to raise a "January surprise" on Social Security. Bush labels the Massachusetts senator an unrepentant tax- and-spend "liberal" too wisely to stand up to the terrorist threat.

"Part of what's happening is the consequence of all the tensions and anxieties from the fact that neither candidate made a big move in the polls after the debates."

Wayne Fields presidential expert

Contact Joe Hettler at jhettler@nd.edu

Campaign finale fades far-out rhetoric, gaffes on both
Bush

ABORTION

Record deficits in a time of war, terrorism and tax cuts. Deficit expected to surpass $400 million this year; the government had a $327 surplus three years earlier. Says deficits can be halved in five years but has not fully explained how. Bush proposes that Congress limit discretionary spending in programs outside defense and homeland security to a 0.2 percent increase next year.

BUDGET

Supports.

DEATH PENALTY

Wants $3,000 re-employment accounts to help the unemployed. Wants job-search expenses to make recently passed temporary tax cuts permanent, ease business regulations, pursue more free-trade deals, increase domestic energy production, limit class-action lawsuits and medical malpractice liability. Also, give tax breaks, regulatory relief and investment incentives.

ECONOMY - TAXES

Championed a 2002 overhaul of elementary and secondary education that toughened standards for teachers, schools and student achievement. Budget proposal would increase spending on poor school districts, children with disabilities. Pell grants to help poor students attend college, and experimental private-school voucher programs. The plan would cut spending on vocational education, a family literacy program, arts in education, dropout prevention and more. Bush proposal, if passed, would make 43 percent increase in federal spending on programs under the No Child Left Behind Act since Bush took office.

EDUCATION

Change clean air laws to use a market-based approach to reduce pollution from power plants, including first national cap on mercury emissions. Cut spending next year on low-interest loans for local clean water projects. Increase federal support for development of hydrogen-fueled car. Open Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling.

ENVIRONMENT

Proposes constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. Has continued former President Clinton's policy allowing gays to serve in military if they are not open about their homosexuality.

GAY RIGHTS

Number of Americans without health insurance has risen in his presidency to nearly 45 million in 2003, up from nearly 40 million in 2000. Achieved prescription drug benefit for older Americans that subsidizes costs for low-income patients and encourages private insurance companies to offer coverage for the elderly willing to opt out of traditional Medicare. Cost of drug benefits and other Medicare changes now estimated at $534 billion over 10 years, up from $395 billion when changes were enacted. New tax-free medical savings accounts can be opened by people under 65 who meet certain conditions. Monthly Medicare premiums for doctor visits are rising a record $11.60 next year and 17 percent. Independent study finds family health insurance premiums in employer-sponsored plans up 11 percent, averaging $9,950 annually for family of four.

HEALTH

Swift military victory followed by violent aftermath and halting efforts to stabilize new government, with more than 1,000 U.S. military deaths. Won congressional approval of $87 billion for continued military operations and aid in Iraq and Afghanistan. Defended decision to go to war despite later findings that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction, the central rationale at the time, and that Saddam Hussein’s ties to al-Qaeda were tenuous at best. Says Saddam had the will to foment unrest, cooperate with terrorists and develop nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

IRAQ WAR

Says military commanders believe active-duty forces are adequate. "If they need more, I will make sure they get it." It is beginning an overhaul of overseas deployments, with 70,000 troops coming out of South Korea and Europe, many Cold-War era bases to be closed, and more troops to be stationed in U.S. with temporary assignments to growing network of no-frills "forward operating sites" in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. "We’re not going to have a draft so long as I am the president." Iraq and war on terrorism have stretched both active-duty forces and reserves.

MILITARY

Using diplomacy to try to stop nuclear proliferation in the remaining "axis of evil" countries, North Korea and Iran. May offer Iran economic incentives to suspend its uranium enrichment activities, preparations if Iran does not concede. Six-nation negotiations have produced little progress in persuading North Korea to end its nuclear program.

NUCLEAR

Give younger workers the opportunity to put part of their payroll tax into retirement accounts, giving them a chance to make a higher return on that investment in return for less Social Security benefits.

RETIEMENT

Signed executive order in August 2001 limiting federal research money spent on embryonic stem-cell lines then in existence, to ensure government does not support future production of embryos for research purposes. No controls on private embryonic stem-cell research.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Supports liberalized trade and is pursuing a variety of bilateral trade deals as well as one for the Western Hemisphere.

TRADE

Kerry

Yes. Would nominate only Supreme Court justices who support abortion rights. Voted against partial-birth ban.

BUDGET

Cut deficit by half, at least, in first term, but has not fully explained how he would do so in light of major proposals on health care, education, defense and more. Repeat of Bush tax cuts for wealthy Americans would cover some costs.

DEATH PENALTY

Opposes "other than in cases of real international and domest­ic terrorism."

ECONOMY - TAXES

Keep Bush’s tax cuts for middle- and low-income people but raise taxes on people who made $200,000 or more to raise "fair taxes" on people who can afford them. Would increase child-care tax credit by $3,000. Spend on highways, school construction, pollution cleanup, energy projects and more to create 3 million jobs in 500 days. Provide $50 billion in tax cuts for people who earn just over two years, to states with needs driven by budget deficits.

EDUCATION

Establish community service plan for high school students that would qualify them for the equivalent of their states’ four-year pub­lic college tuition if they perform two years of national service. Provide a tax credit for every year of college of the first $4,000 paid in tuition. Credit would provide 100 percent of the first $1,000 and 50 percent on the rest. Opposes private-school vouchers. Blocked 2002 changes but says insufficient money was spent on them and too much emphasis is placed on tests for measuring student achievement. Wants to establish $200 billion education trust fund to help pay for the 2002 school reforms and special education.

ENVIRONMENT

Re-engage "in the development of an international climate change treaty" to counteract U.S. opposition to the Kyoto Protocol. Would restore federal support for research into alternative energy. Goal of unprecedented collaboration among Asian, Middle Eastern and European nations.

GAY RIGHTS

Opposes gay marriage but also opposes constitutional amend­ment against it; supports right to civil unions. Would ban dis­crimination against homosexuals, extend hate-crime protections to gays and let gays serve openly in the military.

HEALTH

Expand existing insurance system for federal employees to provide more than doubled coverage to others. Would increase out-of-pocket costs in Medicare by 20 percent of drug expenditures. Would increase funding for medical research, would increase spending on Medicare, and would eliminate deductibles for prescription drugs. Would increase Medicare and other medical spending on programs that promote achievement. Wants to establish a federal scholarship to help fund the Left Behind Act since Bush took office.

IRAQ WAR

Opposes presidential resolution letting Bush go to war but says he differs from Kerry on "the scope and constraints of our military strategy." Would not have rushed into war if he believed the president would build a true coalition and exhaust options short of war. Opposed $87 billion package for Iraq and Afghanistan. Would vote to give President Bush the power to order U.S. troop withdrawal in six months and complete it in four years, by encouraging allies to commit more forces.

MILITARY

Boost active-duty forces worldwide by 40,000, double Army National Guard and Air National Guard, and propose creation of a new "global response force" that could be deployed anywhere in the world in six months.

NUCLEAR

Supports one-on-one talks between U.S. and North Korea alongside the six-nation negotiations. Says U.S. and other nations should offer Iran nuclear fuel for peaceful purposes, then take back and spent fuel so it cannot be used to develop nuclear weapons.

RETIEMENT

Opposes partial privatization of Social Security. Would require companies switching to cheaper lump-sum pension plans to offer retirees the choice of staying with traditional company pension.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Would reverse Bush’s restrictions and put money into the research, ensuring unspecified ethical standards are followed for young embryos used to create them. Would establish $100 million fund to help pay for the research. Would use "good will and good sense." Aides say Kerry would not support creation of embryos specifically for research, but would finance research letting scientists study leftover embryos created for infertility treatment.

TRADE

Supported North American and world trade agreements and ele­vated trade status with Europe, many Cold-War era treaties to be closed, and more troops to be stationed in U.S. with temporary assignments to growing network of no-frills "forward operating sites" in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. "We’re not going to have a draft so long as I am the president." Iraq and war on terrorism have stretched both active-duty forces and reserves.

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