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NEWS UPDATE - April 4, 2001

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

“And about those who thought Mr. Bush meant something kinder and gentler by ‘compassionate conservatism,’ all I can say is, let them eat cake. And drink arsenic.”

Columnist Paul Krugman (New York Times, 4/4)

SUMMARIES

1. ADMINISTRATION BUDGET PROPOSES 'DEEP CUTS' IN HEALTH PROGRAMS FOR UNINSURED (news)

"President Bush's budget will propose deep cuts in a variety of health programs for people without health insurance, administration officials said today. Budget documents from the Department of Health and Human Services show that these programs, providing "health care access for the uninsured," would be reduced 86 percent. Mr. Bush's budget request, to be unveiled next Monday, would also cut federal spending for the training of doctors, dentists, nurses, pharmacists and other health professionals."

New York Times, Pear, 4/4

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/04/04/politics/04HEAL.html>

2. VICE PRESIDENT CASTS FIRST VOTE AGAINST MORE FUNDS FOR PRESCRIPTION DRUGS (news)

"On the first vote of a contentious week on the FY02 budget resolution, Senate Republicans--using the tie-breaking power of Vice President Cheney for the first time--turned back Democratic efforts to boost spending for Medicare by trimming President Bush's proposed \$1.6 trillion tax cut. But in so doing, Republicans Tuesday also acknowledged that the \$153 billion Bush set aside in his budget for Medicare reforms and a prescription drug benefit would be inadequate."

CongressDailyAM, Rovner, 4/4

<http://www.nationaljournal.com>

3. HOUSE TO VOTE TODAY FOR ESTATE TAX CUT THAT IS 'BLATANTLY IRRESPONSIBLE' (editorial)

"The House will be asked today to approve a tax cut so blatantly irresponsible that the authors have had, in effect, to white out the cost. The bill would repeal the federal estate and gift taxes -- but not until 10 years from now. The slow fuse makes the proposal seem affordable -- nearly cost-free, in fact -- because under budget rules only the cost of the first 10 years of any legislation is estimated. So most of these costs aren't counted, but that makes them no less real. When fully effective the bill would cost the Treasury more than \$60 billion a year. The vast majority of the savings would go to some of the wealthiest people in the country. Only the largest 2 percent of estates each year owe estate taxes."

Washington Post, Editorial Board, 4/4

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/opinion/A34987-2001Apr3.html>

4. CLASS WARRIOR (editorial)

"When George W. Bush first became governor of Texas, he tried to cut the state tax on business profits while increasing the sales tax -- that is, he tried to cut taxes on wealthy shareholders while raising taxes that bear most heavily on ordinary families. This top-down class warfare was too much even for Texas, and Mr. Bush learned that it's better to take a less direct approach: use unrealistically optimistic budget projections to justify tax cuts for the rich, then when reality strikes use the pressure of a tight budget to squeeze programs for the poor and middle class. Will Mr. Bush eventually accept a revised tax plan that is less tilted toward the wealthy? I doubt it. Everything we have seen so far is consistent with the theory that those tax cuts for the rich are the whole point of the plan, that the middle-class cuts, such as they are, are no more than a loss leader designed to attract unwary customers."

New York Times, Krugman, 4/4

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/04/04/opinion/04KRUG.html>

5. ADMINISTRATION ENVIRO ROLLBACKS RISK REVOLT AMONG GOP MODERATES (news)

"These are not easy days for the greener wing of the Republican Party. A series of environmental reversals by the Bush administration has highlighted an old fault line in the party that is both geographic and ideological, and shaken many of the party's Northeastern moderates. Ted Roosevelt, a Republican who is chairman of the League of Conservation Voters and whose great-grandfather President Theodore Roosevelt helped found the modern conservation movement, said of Mr. Bush: "The environment is such a key issue, and he's got such a very small margin in Congress. If the administration is consistently anti-environment, I can almost guarantee that he will lose a majority in both the House and the Senate.""

New York Times, Toner, 4/4

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/04/04/politics/04ENVI.html>

6. INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ATTEMPTS TO KEEP GLOBAL WARMING ON THE TABLE (news)

"The European Union's environment officials embarked on a blitz tour through the U.S., Canada, Japan, Russia, China and Iran in an attempt to drum up support for a beleaguered international treaty aimed at cutting emissions of greenhouse gases in industrialized nations. Last week, President Bush publicly dismissed the 1997 Kyoto Protocol in its current form, saying it would place an undue burden on American economy and give an unfair break to developing countries, which aren't bound by the protocol's guidelines on cutting emissions. President Bush's comments widened the gulf between the U.S. and the EU approaches to fighting global warming, which scientists believe is caused in part by greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane.

Wall Street Journal, Shiskin, 4/4

<http://interactive.wsj.com/articles/SB986331291335007974.htm>

7. BUSH CONTINUES TO IGNORE CALIFORNIA CRISIS (news)

“President Bush’s Cabinet has more Californians than Texans and Silicon Valley executives form the backbone of his high-tech team, yet some state Democrats say the president is brushing off their pleas for help at a critical time.

The state is reeling from an energy crisis that includes the nation’s highest natural gas costs, high wholesale electricity prices and a tight power supply that has led to rolling blackouts four times this year.”

Associated Press, 4/4

<http://www.cnn.com/2001/ALLPOLITICS/04/04/bush.california.ap/index.html>

8. WOMEN STILL EARN LESS THAN MEN IN SAME JOBS (news)

“The average woman working on a U.S. government contract job is paid 72 cents for every dollar a man earns, a disputed Labor Department survey of federal contractors found. The woman gets 82 cents if she has the same position and 89 cents if she has equal tenure and experience at the same company, the study reported.”

Associated Press, Strobe, 4/4

http://dailynews.yahoo.com/h/ap/20010403/pl/equal_pay_4.html

9. THE FIRST 100 DAYS ESCALATE FEAR ON A NUMBER OF FRONTS (editorial)

“Seventy-five days into the Bush regime and I’m a wreck. I’m afraid to drink the water. I’m afraid to breathe the air. I’m afraid glaciers will melt and seas will rise. I’m afraid to visit California in the dark. I’m afraid the Dow will dip below 5,000. I’m afraid Russia will take leave of its senses. I’m afraid China will take leave of its senses. I’m afraid North Korea will lob a missile our way.”

New York Times, Dowd, 4/4

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/04/04/opinion/04DOWD.html>

10. IS THIS WHAT HE MEANT BY ‘COMPASSION?’ (editorial)

“George W. Bush advertised himself as something better on the political scene, a conservative with compassion. Before, these words were found in proximity only in the dictionary. The idea that they could be blended into a new policy direction appealed to America’s goodness of heart as well as its faith in bootstraps, not to mention our exhaustion with partisanship. But now I have on my workbench the first stack of clippings in the category, compassion. A proposed prescription drug “benefit” that would require a widow with a \$15,000 pension to spend thousands on medicine before getting assistance? A budget draft with a \$200-million cut in child care grants by the man who would “leave no child behind”? A suggested 18% reduction in child-abuse programs? A side-door Pentagon deal to prop up Boeing while the bankruptcy noose is tightened around the necks of people seduced into credit card debt? A rollback in new safety standards for arsenic in drinking water—returning the country to the days of lead paint and unfiltered Camels? Compassion, according to Webster’s, means this: sorrow for the suffering or trouble of another or others, accompanied by an urge to help. Instead, Bush feels the urge to joke.”

Los Angeles Times, Balzar, 4/4

<http://www.latimes.com/news/comment/20010404/t000028579.html>

11. DELAYS MEAN ELECTION REFORM PROBABLY WON’T HAPPEN BY ’02 (news)

“Election experts warned today that Congress had been so laggard in taking up an overhaul of the voting system that meaningful change by next year’s midterm elections was increasingly remote.”

New York Times, Seeyle, 4/4

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/04/04/politics/04VOTE.html>

12. PROFIT MOTIVE OFTEN HURTS JOURNALISTIC ACCURACY (news)

“Public or private? The question of how best to structure a media company to balance good journalism and good profits has an extra-sharp edge these days as advertising revenue drops and the cost of newsprint rises. But there are no simple answers. There is a civil war between those who believe the industry’s goal of high profit margins is killing good journalism and those who believe that strong financial performance will save good journalism.”

New York Times, Barringer, 4/4

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/04/04/business/04PAPE.html>