

while the uninsured go without coverage. By addressing the health care needs of the uninsured, the entire system will work more efficiently, more cost effectively. Instead of trying to solve this problem with a tax credit that forces the uninsured to shop in the inefficient and expensive individual market, we should shape a policy for the uninsured around the principles of market competition.

I will propose legislation this year that provides the uninsured a voucher, a health care voucher, to purchase health insurance through a subsidiary of the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program, the same program where Members of Congress and the United States Senate and members of the administration get their health care. This plan will use the efficiencies of the group health insurance market to provide comprehensive insurance and reduce prices, while giving people a voucher. It also will keep the prices in a competitive range to the tax credit the President proposed.

There is nothing wrong with the health care system that competition and choice cannot fix.

#### THE WAR IN IRAQ AND WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, last night the President gave his State of the Union address to the Nation and to the Congress; and he brought up, rather surprisingly, weapons of mass destruction. The President said that American inspectors have "identified dozens of weapons of mass destruction-related program activities" in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know what a weapons of mass destruction-related program activity is. I would like to find out. I do know this: it is not weapons of mass destruction. We have not found weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. David Kay, the American inspector, has not found them. The international inspectors did not find them.

Like many Members of this House, I voted in favor of the war in Iraq. I did so in order to disarm Saddam Hussein of weapons of mass destruction. I am glad that we have defeated Hussein. I am glad he is in our custody. We and the Iraqi people are better off with him in custody. He was a murderous tyrant. But we have not found the weapons of mass destruction, and it is clear that an extraordinary amount of exaggeration and deception occurred from the White House on the subject of weapons of mass destruction before we went to war in order to win congressional support for going to war.

The President talked last night about our international coalition. The President would like us to believe that we have a broad-based and effective international coalition in Iraq to move forward with securing what is still an

unstable country and to move forward with reconstruction. He listed a long number of nations that have supplied some number of troops to the efforts in Iraq.

The fact is that well over 90 percent of the troops in Iraq are American. About 95 percent of the money being spent in Iraq is American taxpayer dollars, well over \$160 billion to date. The fact is that we did not turn effectively to our traditional and historic allies and move forward with the international community in order to build a coalition to defeat Hussein in Iraq.

The President, when he won his authority to go to war, made a number of commitments. He said that he would exhaust diplomatic options before going to war. He did not. He said he would allow the international inspectors the opportunity to complete their work in Iraq. He did not. He said he would go to the United Nations and build a coalition, and he did not. And now the President would still have us believe that we are on a successful hunt and are turning up weapons of mass destruction in Iraq as part of a broad-based coalition in that country, and neither of those statements is true.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that the arrogance, the unilateralism, and the cowboy diplomacy of the President and the White House have made our challenges in Iraq much harder than they should have been and have made our war on al Qaeda and terror riskier and harder than it should be.

#### JOB CREATION AND THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S POLICIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, last evening the President of our country addressed us here in the House Chamber, and it is always a great historic moment when that happens. But subsequent to his address, he left on Air Force One this morning for our home district and landed there at taxpayer expense in Air Force One, 6 weeks before the Ohio primary. With his campaign coffers loaded, I am a bit surprised that he did not use campaign funds for his visit today. He moved from the Toledo Express Airport to Owens Community College in order to talk about worker training or job training, which is one of the topics that the President addressed in his address last night. And one of the questions I would ask the President is his administration has cut job-training funds over the last 3 years and though Ohioans welcome any job-training funds this administration finally sees the light of day to produce, I am wondering if the President could not also concentrate on job creation so that jobs are there for workers who receive the training.

It was somewhat ironic that in this morning's Toledo Blade, the major

daily in the region, it was pointed out that though the President is talking about job training at Owens College, the headline reads "Owens lays off training employees before Bush's visit," and one of the several workers who has been handling workforce development at Owens College says she has worked there for 7 years and has been given a pink slip and is this not ironic. Another worker says, "I've been informed that my position has been eliminated." She had been employed at the college for 25 years and started there as a student in 1978. She said, "I'm 5 years from retirement. I really had thought after all this time I'd finish my career at the college and I'd still be a benefit" to the college. "It's just really hard for me to believe."

The other names of those who have been pink-slipped at Owens College I will place in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

This morning, as the President spoke, in his remarks he talked about job training. And Terry Thomas, the executive director of the Ohio Association of Community Colleges, which represents Owens College along with 23 other technical and community colleges in the State, added that there has been little funding for workforce development in Ohio; so any money from the government would help.

I would also like to place in the RECORD that the Bush administration and the Taft administration, both Republican administrations, have had a devastating impact on the State of Ohio where we have had now over 300,000 people out of work and 167,000 manufacturing jobs just in the last 3 years disappear from our State; and while all this is happening, hundreds of millions of dollars that I have voted for here in Congress have not been used by the State of Ohio. Indeed, there is over \$242 million still available for job training and workforce development on deposit here with the Federal Government under programs that have been severely cut back by this administration, and the State of Ohio is not spending those dollars. There are severe problems in Ohio, and it is one of the reasons that Owens College cannot do as good a job as it might do simply because of poor performance by our State government as well as cutbacks in these workforce development programs here at the Federal level.

Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration nationwide has the worst record of job creation since Herbert Hoover, since the Great Depression.

□ 1345

Over 2,700,000 Americans are without work today. The President did not even use the words "extending unemployment benefits" in his remarks last night. What a tragedy.

Few States have been more severely impacted by the failed Bush administration policies than our State of Ohio. So it is an honor for us to receive a President of the United States, but,

really, he should be coming to help us. He should be coming to release the dollars that I had voted for here at the Federal level, and, most of all, helping us with job creation.

He is landing in a major corn producing State in Ohio. He could be helping us with transitioning America to fuel independence. Our farmers want to build ethanol plants and biodiesel plants in order to help this Nation break its dangerous addiction on foreign petroleum. Why does he not help us? When over 60 percent of the petroleum that fires this economy is imported from some of the most dangerous places in the world, we need his help.

Our State has been devastated by Republican economic policies at the national level and at the State level. Community after community has seen its jobs destroyed. The soaring Federal budget deficit and unemployment ranks deserve the President's attention. I am just so sorry he could not help us with job creation and workforce development when he visited our district today.

[From the Toledo Blade, Jan. 21, 2004]

OWENS LAYS OFF TRAINING EMPLOYEES  
BEFORE BUSH'S VISIT  
(By Ryan E. Smith)

Just days before President Bush's visit today to Owens Community College to tout job training programs at such two-year schools, at least six Owens employees who handle work-force development have been given pink slips, The Blade has learned.

The timing of the news, so near the presidential visit and expected speech about proposed federally funded job training grants for community colleges, was not lost on Kathy Munger.

Ms. Munger, who has worked at Owens for seven years, is one of those given a pink slip. "It's very ironic," she said.

Although some of those who received the two-week notices on Friday may be able to relocate in other departments, Ms. Munger, a training coordinator, and three other employees interviewed by The Blade said they will no longer have jobs.

"I've been informed that my position has been eliminated," said Pam Pullella, director of special projects who has been employed at the college for 25 years and started there as a student in 1978.

"I'm five years from retirement," she said, "I really had thought that after all this time I'd finish my career at the college, and I'd still be a benefit. It's just really hard for me to believe."

Others with the college's Center for Development and Training who confirmed to The Blade that they have received pink slips were Dr. Joseph Conrad, director of health and wellness; Jim Kronberg, director of spatial projects; Donna Brecht, records specialist, and Veronica Rice, records specialist. All work on the Perrysburg Township campus except for Mrs. Brecht and Ms. Rice, who are part of the college's Findlay operation.

Owens President Christa Adams called the personnel action a "realignment," but could not say last night whether any of the movement would result in layoffs.

She and other officials were busy preparing for the President's visit and could not be reached for further comment.

Earlier in the day, Owens officials refused to discuss any of its work-force programs with The Blade.

The affected employees who spoke with The Blade said they believe the cuts at the Center for Development and Training are not the only ones to occur at the college. They said they were given no reason other than restructuring.

Dr. Conrad, who has been at the college for almost eight years, said he worries about whether the programs will be able to function adequately with the reduction in personnel.

"It has to be detrimental," he said. "We don't have the manpower to continue the level of service to the community."

Mrs. Brecht, 40, who said she helps put together classes and make sure there are enough instructors, indicated the move will leave Findlay's Center for Development and Training with only half its manpower. She said she will not be bumped to a new position because she is the "low man on the totem pole."

TOLEDO, OHIO.—President Bush promoted his job-creation and worker-training goals Wednesday in Ohio—a state hit hard by manufacturing losses and one that is key to his 2004 campaign.

Hours after his State of the Union speech, Bush touted his proposal for new job-training grants channeled through community colleges at one of the state's fastest growing community colleges.

He called for \$250 million for programs to match workers and employers during his speech at Owens Community College.

"There's no better place to do that than the community college system," he said.

In addition to offering classes that help workers learn a new skill, community colleges often work with businesses to train their workers to use computer software or other skills.

"It's what we're all about," said Terry Thomas, executive director of the Ohio Association of Community Colleges, which represents 23 technical and community colleges.

But he added that there has been little funding for work force development, so any money from the government would help.

Owens Community College has seen its enrollment increase for 26 consecutive semesters. It now has about 40,000 full- and part-time students at its campuses in Toledo and Findlay.

Job training and counterterrorism proposals were among several plans Bush said Tuesday night that he would offer in his 2005 budget—a blueprint to be released Feb. 2 that will be constrained by record deficits expected to approach \$500 billion this year.

Even as Democrats scrapped among themselves over who would oppose him in November, the State of the Union address touted his administration's successes: the toppling and capture of Saddam Hussein, revival of economic growth, and passage of major tax cuts and a Medicare prescription drug benefit.

The address contained few major new proposals, underlining the limitations of a budget burdened by deficits and a campaign year in which far-reaching legislative accomplishments probably will be hard to come by. After calling last week for a resumption of human flights to the moon and eventually sending astronauts to Mars and beyond, Bush didn't mention space exploration in his speech.

From Congress to the presidential campaign trail in New Hampshire, where next week's presidential primary will be held, Democrats balked. They said Bush had ignored the job losses, ballooning budget deficits, diplomatic reversals and growing ranks of Americans without health insurance that have characterized his administration.

Bush touted a cluster of issues sure to energize conservative voters who are the core of the Republican Party.

He said he would support a constitutional amendment defining marriage as being between a man and a woman if courts struck down a law mandating that. He asked lawmakers to renew expiring portions of the USA Patriot Act that strengthen the investigative reach of law enforcement agencies, double funds for abstinence education and codify his administration's award of federal grants to religious charities.

He also took a swipe at Democrats who have challenged the path he took in Iraq, who have said his tax cuts were an unnecessary boon to the rich and that his Medicare expansion and education initiatives were inadequate.

He said the nation needed to stay the course against terrorism and admonished those who would "turn back to the dangerous illusion that terrorists are not plotting and outlaw regimes are no threat to us."

"We have not come all this way—through tragedy and trial and war—only to falter and leave our work unfinished," the president said.

By far, the most expensive proposal in his speech was one he has made repeatedly: Making his already enacted cuts in personal income and other taxes permanent. That has a price tag estimated at \$2 trillion, and an uncertain fate in Congress, considering projections for year after year of huge budget deficits.

Bush also called for more money—likely to be relatively small amounts—for spreading democratic institutions abroad, helping students performing poorly in math and reading, training prisoners for future employment and testing for drugs in schools.

He proposed tax breaks to help low-income people afford health care, and renewed his call to let people divert part of their Social Security taxes into retirement accounts whose investment they would control.

Congress is unlikely to touch an overhaul of politically sensitive Social Security at least until next year, after the elections.

RESPONDING TO STATE OF THE  
UNION MESSAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I, too, like many of my Democratic colleagues this afternoon, would like to respond, if you will, to the President's State of the Union address, which, of course, he gave to the Nation last night from the House podium just right behind me here.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, thanks to what I consider extremist policies of President Bush and the Republican leadership here in Congress, the priorities of the American people, priorities of good jobs, better access to healthcare and the best education for our children, are not being addressed, either at the White House or here by the House Republican majority, and certainly the President's speech last night did nothing to convince me that any of these priorities will be addressed in the forthcoming year.

The problem, as I see it, Mr. Speaker, is that President Bush and Congressional Republicans continue to cater to