

MAY 19, 2004

**SCHAKOWSKY: BUSH ADMINISTRATION MISSTATEMENT OF THE DAY -  
COMMUNITY POLICING**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) issued "The Bush Administration Misstatement of the Day" on community policing.**

**On March 11, 2004, Carl Peed, Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, said:**

***"I am pleased that the cities and towns that received today's grants are able to use COPS funding to advance their community policing efforts and provide better protection for their citizens. These funds will provide police and sheriff's departments with added resources, and it will help make our communities safer places to live and work"****The New York Times*

**, reported today, however that:**

***"many administration officials are taking credit for spreading largess through programs that President Bush tried to eliminate or to cut sharply. For example, Justice Department officials recently announced that they were awarding \$47 million to scores of local law enforcement agencies for the hiring of police officers. Mr. Bush had just proposed cutting the budget for the program, known as Community Oriented Policing Services, by 87 percent, to \$97 million next year, from \$756 million."****White House Is Trumpeting Programs It Tried to Cut*

*New York Times*

May 19, 2004

By ROBERT PEAR

**WASHINGTON, May 18 - Like many of its predecessors, the Bush White House has used the machinery of government to promote the re-election of the president by awarding federal grants to strategically important states. But in a twist this election season, many administration officials are taking credit for spreading largess through programs that President Bush tried to eliminate or to cut sharply.**

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agencies for the hiring of police officers. Mr. Bush had just proposed cutting the budget for the program, known as Community Oriented Policing Services, by 87 percent, to \$97 million next year, from \$756 million.

The administration has been particularly energetic in publicizing health programs, even ones that had been scheduled for cuts or elimination.□

Tommy G. Thompson, the secretary of health and human services, announced recently that the administration was awarding \$11.7 million in grants to help 30 states plan and provide coverage for people without health insurance. Mr. Bush had proposed ending the program in each of the last three years.□

The administration also announced recently that it was providing \$11.6 million to the states so they could buy defibrillators to save the lives of heart attack victims. But Mr. Bush had proposed cutting the budget for such devices by 82 percent, to \$2 million from \$10.9 million.□

Whether they involve programs Mr. Bush supported or not, the grant announcements illustrate how the administration blends politics and policy, blurring the distinction between official business and campaign-related activities.□

In recent weeks, administration officials have fanned out around the country. Within a 48-hour period this month, Treasury Secretary John W. Snow was in Wisconsin and Illinois, doling out federal aid to poor neighborhoods. Anthony J. Principi, the secretary of veterans affairs, was in Las Vegas to announce plans for a new veterans hospital. Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham was in South Carolina to announce a new national research laboratory. And a top transportation official was in Portland, Me., awarding a \$13 million grant to the city's airport.□

In some cases, overtly political appearances are piggybacked onto such trips. Earlier this month, Mr. Principi was in Florida announcing plans for another veterans hospital, in Orlando, with a side trip to Tampa to kick off a national coalition of veterans supporting the re-election of Mr. Bush.□

A few days earlier, while traveling to Marco Island, Fla., on official business, Commerce Secretary Donald L. Evans stopped in Daytona Beach to attend a large prayer meeting, where he praised Mr. Bush as "a leader you can trust 100 percent of the time."□

The combination of official business and politics is neither illegal nor unusual in an election year, though Bush administration officials were reluctant to provide details. In fact, the Bush administration is using techniques refined by President Bill Clinton. The difference is that in the Clinton years the White House was often trying to add and expand domestic

programs, not cut them.□

The government has byzantine rules for documenting mixed official and political travel. The goal is to ensure that the campaign or some other political group pays for parts of a trip that are purely political.□

But as the General Accounting Office, an investigative arm of Congress, has said, "it is often impossible to neatly categorize travel as either purely business or purely political."□

Ron Bonjean, a spokesman for Mr. Evans, said the Republican National Committee paid for the commerce secretary's stop in Daytona Beach on May 6. A local newspaper, The News-Journal, said the prayer meeting there "evolved into a rousing Republican political rally."□

The contrast between politics and policy is particularly striking when the administration takes credit for spending money appropriated by Congress against the president's wishes.□

In April, Secretary Thompson announced that the administration was awarding \$3.1 million in grants to improve health care in rural areas of Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, New Mexico and New York. He did not mention that the administration was trying to cut the same rural health program by 72 percent, to \$11.1 million next year, from \$39.6 million.□

Mr. Thompson likewise recently boasted that the administration was awarding \$16 million to 11 universities to train blacks and Hispanic Americans as doctors, dentists and pharmacists. But at the same time, the administration was urging Congress to abolish the program, on the ground that "private and corporate entities" could pay for training.□

Alberto R. Gonzales, the White House counsel, has sent a memorandum to Cabinet officers saying they must carefully allocate travel costs between the government and the campaign.□

"There is considerable room for discretion in determining whether an event giving rise to an expense is political or official," Mr. Gonzales wrote. Ultimately, he said, the decision depends on the facts of each case.□

Interior Department lawyers said that Secretary Gale A. Norton had made eight entirely political trips and 17 trips combining official business with political activity, for which the government was reimbursed. The political sponsor typically pays a share of the costs, based on the amount of time spent on political activity, said Timothy S. Elliott, a lawyer at the department.□

**Last month, on a trip to Alaska, Ms. Norton attended two fund-raisers, in Juneau and Anchorage. "It's always beneficial to have members of the cabinet at these events," said Randy Ruedrich, chairman of the Republican Party of Alaska.**

**A trip to Minneapolis by Education Secretary Rod Paige shows a similar mix. John M. Gibbons, a spokesman for the secretary, said Mr. Paige went to a Republican fund-raiser there on Feb. 17, then visited schools the next day.**

**On March 13, Mr. Paige made a political trip to Orlando for a Republican dinner. He was back in Florida for a Bush-Cheney fund-raiser in Fort Lauderdale on March 26 and for the annual conference of the National School Boards Association, in Orlando, on March 28-29.**

**Likewise, Anthony T. Jewell, a spokesman for Mr. Thompson, said the health secretary attended a Republican fund-raiser on April 22 while visiting Detroit to promote organ donation.**

**The precedents for such activity run deep. Phillip M. Caplan, who was a special assistant to President Clinton, said the Clinton White House had a weekly conference call with chiefs of staff at Cabinet departments.**

**"We would tell officials, for example, that the president will be in Ohio on the 27th of this month, so you should scour the agency, and if you have something coming up in Ohio, let us know," Mr. Caplan recalled. "The announcement of grants was timed to coincide with the president's visit. The goal was to maximize the credit and visibility for the president."**

**Scott M. Stanzel, a spokesman for the Bush campaign, said: "The law sets forth clear guidelines as to how costs should be allocated. We adhere to the guidelines. We pay travel and other costs for government officials participating in political events."**