

# *Are We Better Off Now than Four Years Ago?*

## **Vote with the Facts!**

### **US Face to Face Voter Project**

**The national movement of citizens educating citizens about the current administration in time for the 2004 election.**

*We feel there is no more urgent matter than to share these facts nationwide in order to counter “the spin,” register voters, and support them all the way to the polls.*

**[www.usfacetoface.org](http://www.usfacetoface.org)**

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#### **1. Jobs are disappearing**

- The US economy has lost millions of jobs since the Bush administration took office leaving 8 million people unemployed—creating the worst hiring slump since the Great Depression.
- Manufacturing jobs have declined for 41 straight months. Most new jobs are low-paying temp and retail work.
- Real wages have been stagnant or are declining for virtually all professions.

#### **2. Poverty is Increasing**

- 34.6 million fell below the official poverty line in 2002, a 10% increase over 2000, and nearly 12% of the US population. 12.1 million of these are children—or about 1 out of every 6 children
- From 2000 to 2002 we had the highest rate of personal bankruptcies in history.
- Requests for emergency shelter increased 20% in 2002, the largest annual increase since 1990.

#### **3. A Health Care Crisis is Upon Us**

- 43.6 million people, or 15% of the US population, had no health coverage for the entire year during 2002.
- Health care costs are increasing: costs for prescription drugs are 1.6 to 3 times higher than in Canada; and altogether there are 300,000 more health care administrators in the US than doctors and nurses combined.

#### **4. Educational needs are being neglected**

- The Bush administration's 2004 budget request for K-12 was \$1.2 billion less than the amount approved by Congress for the prior year. After-school and recreational programs are to be cut by \$400 million, which will leave a half million children without after-school programs.
- President Bush proposes to turn Head Start over to the states. According to the National Head Start Association, this could kill Head Start within 5 years, because of increased administrative costs, and lack of financial resources at the state level.
- The Bush Administration's "No Child Left Behind" program emphasizes standardized testing, which results in "teaching to the test." The "Houston Miracle" on which it is based, has recently been discredited, with false reporting of educational achievement and dropout rates, in order to meet program goals.

#### **5. The environment is under attack.**

- Within two months of taking office, the Bush administration directed the EPA to roll back drinking water safety standards, allowing higher levels of arsenic.
- The "Clear Skies Initiative" increases allowable air pollution levels by 42 million tons by 2020, three times more toxic mercury, 50 percent more sulfur emissions, and hundreds of thousands of tons of smog-forming nitrogen oxides annually. An estimated 100,000 premature deaths will result by 2020.
- The "Healthy Forests Initiative" exposes 58.5 million acres of our most pristine national forests to logging and environmental disruption, including Alaska's Tongass rainforest.
- The Bush Administration has refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol on Global Warming, which has been endorsed by 100 countries, including Britain and Canada. The Bush Administration disputes the scientific validity of global warming, and calls for further study.

#### **6. Military Spending is out of Control**

- The US military budget for 2004 is \$401.3 billion.
- The US spends as much on the military as the next 20 countries combined.
- The US has an estimated 8,000 nuclear warheads in its stockpile; plus 31,000 tons of chemical weapons, including 3.3 million bombs, rockets, artillery shells and cartridges—and 315,682 binary munitions, in which chemicals are mixed in flight to produce deadly gas.
- In 2001 and 2002 together the US paid \$76 billion to weapons manufacturers and military contractors (Lockheed Martin, Boeing, United Technologies, etc.). The lobbying strength of these contractors and "revolving door" practices create a climate of ever-increasing military expenditures.

#### **7. "The occupation of Iraq is a disaster" – Spanish Prime Minister elect Jose Zapatero**

- The administration led the US into war based on false pretenses. No weapons of mass destruction have been found. Reports of Saddam's alleged attempt to purchase uranium from Africa, given as evidence of a nuclear weapons development program, were false. In January

2004 Secretary of State Colin Powell acknowledged that there was no link between Iraq and al Qaeda.

- The Iraq War was in violation of the UN charter, which outlaws attacks by one sovereign nation on another. The war was illegal and morally reprehensible.
- The US went into this war essentially on its own, with the backing of Great Britain. Lukewarm support was coerced from a handful of governments—many of whom acted despite the passionate convictions of a majority of their constituents. Millions of people around the world demonstrated in opposition to the War. Ultimately the US chose to go to war without UN backing, which would have been blocked by vetoes in the Security Council.
- The cost of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan is running at approximately \$5.4 billion per month.
- Over 550 Americans have been killed in the Iraq War, and over 10,000 injured or fallen ill.
- The war has been catastrophic for Iraqis. Between 20,000 and 50,000 Iraqis have died, mostly civilians. Based on the results of the first Gulf War, the use of depleted uranium (DU) weapons has created a long-term health crisis of monstrous proportions.
- Reconstruction has stalled. Electricity and water supplies are still not restored through much of the country. Security is a nightmare, with a vigorous guerrilla insurgency and little police presence in the country. The Iraqi provisional government set up by the US has not demonstrated that it can claim legitimacy with the populace and rule without US support.
- As in Vietnam thirty years ago, the US has no clear exit strategy.

#### **8. Tax Cuts have been a Giveaway to the Rich which did not lead to jobs**

- 36.3% will go to the wealthiest 1%.
- 53.3% will go to the wealthiest 5%.
- 7.8% will go to the bottom 60% of taxpayers.
- 0.3% will go to the poorest 20% of taxpayers.

What was the result of these tax cuts which would create jobs according to the Bush Administration? Only 294,000 jobs were created out of a total 2,448,000 jobs projected to be created in the first seven months after the 2003 tax cuts took effect. This is 2,154,000 jobs short of the mark.

To reach the 5.5 million target by the end of 2004, job growth would have to average 473,000 per month over four times the level of job growth in January 2004.

#### **9. US Government Spending has skyrocketed**

- There was a \$236 billion budget surplus in 2000, and a \$374 billion deficit in 2003—a drop of over \$600 billion.
- Government spending has been growing at 12% per year since 2000, compared to a historic average of 4% per year during the 1990's.
- Since the Bush administration took office, the national debt has increased nearly 25.3%, from \$5.67 trillion to \$7.11 trillion as of March 17.

**10. Overall the Bush Administration's policies are a disaster.**

- More Americans are under greater economic stress—through decreases in wages, job loss, descent into poverty, and vulnerability to health
- We are not investing in our future. Our children are not being educated properly. Our natural resources are being despoiled, and our air and water polluted.
- By our actions in the Iraq War we have alienated our friends throughout the world, and have created legions of new terrorist enemies.
- We are squandering our national wealth on runaway military expenditures and give-aways to the rich.
- As the baby-boomers begin to retire over the next ten years, there will be a great strain on the social welfare system—Social Security and Medicare in particular. At the same time there will be dwindling resources to fund these needs and pay for our children and grandchildren, and offer a safety net for the increasing numbers of the poor.

Please consider sharing this information face to face with as many others as possible based on as much commitment you can muster in yourself for your country, your fellow Americans and for the world. For referenced questions and answers please visit our website at:

[www.usfacetoface.org](http://www.usfacetoface.org)