

Bush program cuts could face strong opposition in Congress

By ALAN FRAM
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slaves. Kyl, Peterson and DeWine are all loyal Republicans.

Bush proposed the cuts this month as part of his \$2.57 trillion budget for 2006. He wants to trim non-security programs except automatically paid benefits like Medicare by an overall 1 percent from this year's levels, the first such reduction proposed in a presidential budget since President Reagan was in office.

Of Bush's 154 targets, the Education Department would suffer the most losses: He would kill 48 of its programs worth \$4.3 billion and cut two others.

They range from vocational education aid distributed to states and communities nationwide to the B.J. Stupak Olympic scholarships. It provides \$1 million for athletes training at the four U.S. Olympic training centers including Northern Michigan University, in the district of the

program's sponsor, Rep. Bart Stupak, D-Mich. The program is named for the lawmaker's late son.

Another nine Justice Department programs worth \$1.5 billion would be erased, including grants for hiring local police officers and for communications equipment.

Others targeted for elimination include \$9 million for traumatic brain injuries, \$136 million in subsidies for advanced technology research, \$90 million in state recreation grants, and hundreds of millions of dollars that lawmakers won last year for environmental, disease and agriculture projects in their home districts.

Bush's rationale for the cuts is the need to control relentless federal deficits that the White House expects to set a third straight record this year, hitting \$427 billion. He also would slow the growth of the Pentagon's budget and pluck savings from Medicaid, farm aid, veterans payments and

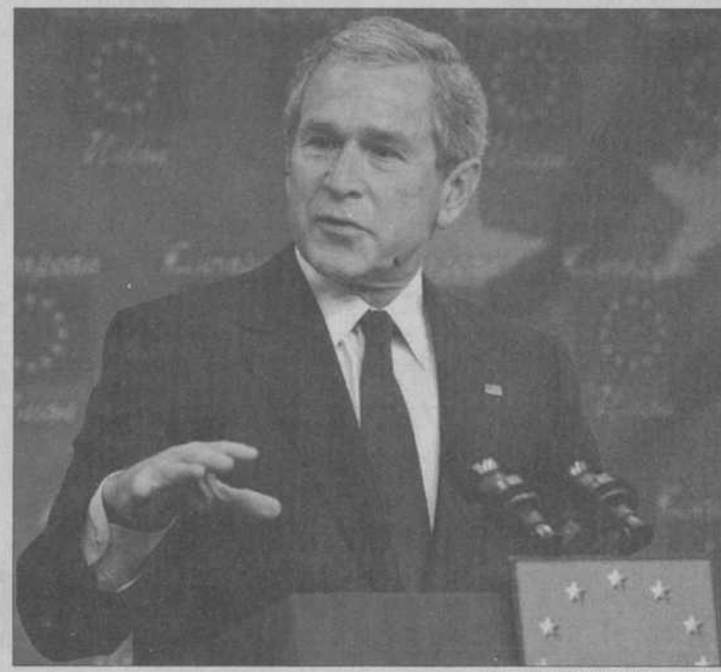
other benefit programs.

"The principle here is clear: Taxpayer dollars must be spent wisely, or not at all," Bush said in his State of the Union speech this month.

Many interest groups and members of Congress, including plenty of the president's fellow Republicans, think what's unwise are his proposed cuts. That's why his plan to save \$15.3 billion by eliminating 99 programs and cutting 55 others faces bleak prospects.

"We want to be fiscally responsible," House Agriculture Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte, R-Va., said of the 28 agriculture programs Bush would cut or abolish. "But we also want to make sure American agriculture remains competitive."

Last year, Bush persuaded Congress to limit non-security



President George W. Bush holds a news conference at the EU Council building in Brussels, Belgium on Tuesday.

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