



A REVIEW OF NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS OPPOSING BUSH TAX CUT PROPOSAL

PREPARED BY: DEMOCRATIC STAFF, SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE

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American Newspapers Continue to Speak Out Against President Bush's Tax Cuts Including Revised Plan for \$550 Billion Tax Cut

A Senate Budget Committee review of newspaper editorials from around the country indicates continued strong resistance and opposition to the Bush administration's tax cutting plans, including the slightly smaller tax cut contained in the Congressional Budget Resolution Conference Report.

The Senate's decision to cut the President's tax cut by limiting the reconciled tax cut to \$350 billion prompted a new round of editorials with an overwhelming majority of newspapers rejecting the President's continued call for more tax cuts. With limited exception, most newspapers are either applauding the Senate for its decision to reduce the tax cut, or argue for a smaller tax cut or even no tax cut at all at this time.

Interestingly, Maine and Ohio newspapers, home to Senators Snowe and Voinovich, had much to say about the importance of limiting the size of the tax cut.

In total, this document includes excerpts from 85 editorials from 40 states and the District of Columbia. This is not intended to be an all inclusive list as these editorials represent only those that have come to the attention of the Committee.

NATIONAL

USA Today: "Sold as economic cure, tax cuts hike deficit instead" April 24, 2003

"...the federal government is on track to accumulate an unprecedented shortfall of \$400 billion this year — or \$3,600 for every family — after the bills for the Iraq war arrive. And it would saddle taxpayers with higher interest payments on a ballooning national debt, just as the government must finance the retirement of the huge baby-boom generation that starts in 2011.

"Yet the dire forecast seems to have been lost on the Bush administration, too. Instead of responding responsibly to congressional fears about the exploding deficit, it is maneuvering to paint its outsized tax-cut plan as something it is not: an affordable tonic for an ailing economy...

"The administration has no plan to pay for the tax cuts or an extra \$725 billion it wants to spend on defense, health and other programs during the next decade. Following this path would add \$2.7 trillion to the national debt during that 10-year period — increasing it by two-thirds. That would burden taxpayers with an extra \$500 billion in interest payments...

"Shrinking the deficit — and sparing future generations from bearing its cost — requires fiscal responsibility. That means forgoing tax cuts the nation can ill afford."

ALABAMA

Birmingham News: "Settling for smaller; Now is not the time for large tax cut" April 17, 2003

"But the biggest problem with the Bush tax cut is the soaring national deficit. Even without the proposed tax cuts, the deficit is expected to approach \$400 billion this year. Hefty deficits are projected for the following years as well. And with baby boomers starting to retire soon and putting more strain on Social Security and Medicare, more fiscal restraint is needed.

"Keep in mind, as well, that in 2001 Bush pushed through Congress a \$1.3 trillion, 10-year tax cut. The \$726 billion tax cut would be in addition to that cut. Meanwhile, the red ink adds up.

"Americans and Congress are increasingly thinking huge tax cuts aren't a good idea. At least, not now."

CALIFORNIA

Desert Sun (Palm Springs): "Tax cut adds to America's deficit" April 16, 2003

"There are too many unanswered financial questions for which taxpayers will ultimately be accountable to endorse a tax cut now. We still do not know the final cost of the war in Iraq, not to mention what it will cost to get that nation back on its feet. Those factors, coupled with a ballooning debt compounded by tax cuts could be more damaging to the U.S. economy than any benefit the tax cuts could provide."

San Jose Mercury News: "Tax cut fantasy vs. deficit reality" April 16, 2003

"It's not if we have a package, it's how big will the package be," said the president. "The 'if' is over with."

"That's too bad, because the president hasn't provided a satisfactory answer for the 'why'? Why cut taxes additionally when the budget is heading for record deficits? Why cut taxes when there is a war to pay for? Why cut taxes when states from the Atlantic to the Pacific are slashing their budgets, and could use some federal help? Why cut taxes when the federal tax burden on the average family is at a two-decade low?

"And why continue to pile up debt when the nation is a mere decade away from the retirement of the baby boomers that will stretch Social Security and Medicare funds to the limit?

"A poll by the Associated Press found that six in 10 Americans think this is not the time for a tax cut. Half of them also said they thought their taxes were too high. Pollsters can't stop people from giving contradictory answers. But it's also possible that Americans were thinking: "I'd like lower taxes, but right now the country can't afford them."

"Now, if we can just get that economic theory to trickle up."

Sacramento Bee: "Deeper into the red" April 16, 2003

"Congress passed a budget resolution last week that calls for the federal government to run its biggest deficit ever, \$385 billion. And what did Congress debate in the face of that tide of red ink? Let history record that Republican lawmakers squabbled over how much worse they could make things by cutting taxes..."

"President Bush wants a tax cut amounting to \$726 billion over the next 10 years. Republicans in the House approved \$550 billion. But four Republican senators held out for a lower amount. Two of them, Sens. Olympia Snowe of Maine and George Voinovich of Ohio, described in the press as "moderates," wanted the tax cut to total no more than \$350 billion. (In fiscal terms, a "moderate" Republican is apparently

someone who's willing to drive the country deeper into debt but wants to take the slow lane to get there.)..

“The press may have scored that a defeat for Bush, but it's not a victory for the country. Although it may hurt to hear it the day after tax filing, the average income tax rate for a typical American is lower than it's been for nearly a half-century. With deficits mounting and the challenge of paying for baby boomers' retirement fast approaching, no tax cut is wise this year.”

Los Angeles Times: “Right Direction on Taxes” April 15, 2003

“With Bush's \$1.3-trillion tax cut of 2001 still going into effect, the annual federal deficit poised to hit \$400 billion this year and states including California facing their severest budget cuts in decades, it doesn't take a doctorate in economics to see the consequences of more tax cuts. Since February, the Treasury Department has been using accounting tricks to keep spending below the \$6.4-trillion statutory debt threshold, until Congress can get around to raising it again -- an embarrassing move that it's in no hurry to do. Even the \$350-billion compromise should at this point be tabled.”

The Daily News of Los Angeles: “Budgeting for war; Operation Iraqi Freedom calls into question the wisdom of major tax cuts” March 26, 2003

“Of course, that projected deficit could be scaled back by reducing the president's planned tax cuts, which are expected to cost \$726 billion over 10 years.

“It's a tough sacrifice, as most Americans would no doubt like to see their annual tribute to the IRS reduced. But it's only logical that if, because of war, the cost of government dramatically goes up, then the revenues of government must not at the same time dramatically go down...

“A compromise is in order, and one seems to be afoot in Congress, specifically in the Senate, which on Tuesday approved \$350 billion in tax cuts - less than half as much as the president wants, but a lot more than no tax cuts at all, which many Democrats have urged.

“Both parties would be wise to sign on to this kind of compromise.”

Ventura County Star: “Clever timing on war costs” March 26, 2003

“Perhaps because they finally got a look at the bill for the war, the senators unexpectedly voted Tuesday, reversing their earlier vote, and cut the president's planned tax cut by more than half, to \$350 billion over 10 years. One hopes this vote

reflects a new seriousness about the problem of deficit spending.

Right now, there is no other plan to pay for the war other than the government going ever deeper in debt.”

San Francisco Chronicle: “War and taxes” March 24, 2003

“The uncertain cost of war is another compelling reason for Congress to reject President Bush's latest tax cut proposals, which would cost the U.S. Treasury at least \$726 billion during the next decade.”

COLORADO

Fort Collins Coloradoan: “War places new demands on federal budget” March 28, 2003

“The U.S. Senate did the country a favor this week by not going along with President Bush's plan to cut taxes by \$726 billion over 10 years and run up the national debt.

“Given that the president has asked for \$75 billion to pay for the war in Iraq through September, now is not the time to reduce the federal government's income on the theory that cutting taxes would boost the economy to such an extent that revenues will increase.

“Cutting taxes and kicking up military spending at the same time just doesn't make sense. Such a move would only add to the government's deficit spending and affect the economy for decades to come.”

Denver Post: “First step toward sanity” March 27, 2003

“... The (Denver) Post has no objection to borrowing the money to finance this war. The urgent need to keep supplies flowing to our troops and the unknowable cost of the war effort leave no alternative...”

“In short, we accept the president's proposal to finance this war on MasterCard. What bothers us is the lack of any long-term plan to eventually pay off the MasterCard - and we don't mean by transferring the balance to Visa.

“This year's federal deficit already seems headed for \$400 billion (gulp). Total federal debt accumulated over the life of the republic is about \$6.5 trillion. Set against such numbers, the notion of piling tax cut on top of tax cut as far as the eye can see is ludicrous.”

CONNECTICUT

Hartford Courant: "Tax Cuts With Spending Cuts" May 5, 2003

"...Mr. Greenspan cited the findings of a recent study by Fed economists that rising budget deficits put upward pressure on long-term interest rates, which act as a drag on economic growth by raising the cost of borrowing for businesses and consumers.

"Lawmakers should heed the Fed chairman's advice. Don't enact huge tax cuts without matching them with spending cuts at a time when, in Mr. Greenspan's words, "the economy is positioned to expand at a noticeably better pace than it has during the past year."

DELAWARE

The News Journal (Wilmington): "Senate wisely cuts Bush tax cut in half as war costs mount" March 28, 2003

"Reaganomics led the United States into an economic quagmire. Common sense, if not sound economic theory, challenges the idea that you can set new spending records while cutting revenue and expect to wind up deficit-free. But the president and his congressional followers refuse to acknowledge this. They are relying on blind faith that everything will be just fine if only they cut taxes...

"The Senate should have rejected all of the president's tax cuts...

"President Bush and the Republican-dominated Congress should abandon their cherished supply-side economic theory in favor of the nation's economic health."

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The Washington Post: "Take the Money and Run" April 21, 2003

"Mr. Bush talked a lot in the Rose Garden about the need for tax cuts "right away," to "do it now," for "immediate tax relief." But if the point is to stimulate the economy, his package isn't particularly well crafted to do that. Just a sliver of the proposed \$726 billion in tax cuts -- 5.5 percent -- would take effect this fiscal year, and only one-fifth would occur by the end of fiscal 2004. Moreover, because the cuts are skewed to the wealthy, much of that money would go to those more likely to save it than to spend it. Perhaps most important, the piece of the president's plan that would likely be left out by keeping the tax cut to a "mere" \$350 billion would be ending the double taxation of dividends -- a change that Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan supports but says would do little to jump-start the economy..."

“Mr. Bush may be banking on postwar popularity to get his way. Or he could be positioning himself to avoid blame -- and point the finger at Democrats -- if the tax cut is limited and the economy still lags. But the voters themselves don't seem to be clamoring for tax cuts or taking to the streets to end the double taxation of dividends; they seem to understand, far better than the White House, the long-term dangers of record deficits, which will approach \$400 billion in the next fiscal year. In any event, as Mr. Bush pointed out in the Rose Garden, he has already won the debate over whether taxes should be cut. "The 'if' is over with," the president said. To paraphrase Woody Allen, he ought to take the \$350 billion and run.”

FLORIDA

Orlando Sentinel: “Avoid tax cut” April 22, 2003

“...in the nation's capital, President George W. Bush is launching a public-relations offensive to seek support for more than \$500 billion in tax cuts, despite federal budget deficits as far as the eye can see. What's wrong with this picture?...

“Any additional debt would force even more borrowing. That would raise the burden of interest payments for future taxpayers while diverting dollars that could be more productively invested in education, transportation, homeland security and other areas.

“Worse, more red ink would leave the federal government even less prepared financially to deal with the huge demands that retiring baby boomers will place on Medicare and Social Security starting in the next decade.

“Last week Congress approved a budget with a tax-cut package worth \$550 billion, but the Senate is balking at any more than \$350 billion. Mr. Bush, eager to show his interest in the economy, is pushing for the higher number.

“Here's a better agenda for the president to present to Congress: Hold off on tax cuts, limit any spending increases to a few priorities and reform Social Security and Medicare to lower their long-term costs.

“The White House says the president is ready to spend some of the political capital he generated with the U.S. victory in Iraq. He could best do that by bringing the federal budget under control, instead of digging the debt hole deeper.”

South Florida Sun-Sentinel: “Senate Must Stick To Guns” March 30, 2003

“The United States Senate has interjected some sanity into the economic debate raging in Washington by slashing President Bush's proposed \$726 billion, 10-year tax cut plan in half.

“That's encouraging, though at this point half measures aren't enough. With the cost of the Iraqi war and the occupation unknown, and with the nation already facing a \$300 billion deficit next year, now is not the time to be talking about tax cuts. Indeed, the president and Congress should be concentrating on putting the nation's fiscal house in order by narrowing the budget deficit, not widening it.

“The full Senate must stick to its guns, and refuse to budge if House-Senate negotiators seek to undermine its principled stand.”

Miami Herald: “Senate putting brakes on proposed tax cuts” March 28, 2003

“This week, President Bush asked Congress for \$75 billion to cover war costs and related anti-terrorist efforts for the next six months. Whatever reservations there may be about the war, our troops are fighting, and we must pay the expenses. Congress should approve this spending. But over the next decade, Iraq and increased national-security costs easily could amount to hundreds of billions, depending on the war's length and the reconstruction needed in its aftermath.

“Add to this the fiscal crises that threaten Medicare, Medicaid, social services and a brewing crisis in Social Security financing. Can the United States afford any tax cut? Should the old, sick and poor bear all of the costs of this war? Even the \$350 billion cap on tax cuts approved by the Senate seems frivolous. It was, nonetheless, a worthy push against a wartime president's wrongheaded budget priorities.”

St. Petersburg Times: “Unconscionable cuts” March 27, 2003

“The struggle for a responsible budget continues as three moderate Republican senators join the Democratic chorus against President Bush's proposed tax cuts...

“While the senators deserve praise for their disciplined stand in the face of political coercion, the struggle for a responsible budget is far from over. More parliamentary tricks are ahead, and the Senate will have to work out its differences with the House, which gave Bush every penny in tax cuts he asked for. The House's version of discipline was to cut the budgets of services that help, among others, veterans and low-income elderly and children.

“A substantial tax cut is certain to be part of a final budget. In a time of uncertainty, the easiest choice is to borrow against the future. But it is wrong.”

Palm Beach Post: “No economic security in the President's budget” March 26, 2003

“The tax cuts were supposed to head off recession, but even proponents have muted that claim. Spread over 10 years and designed to foster long-term investment - if they do anything more than swell millionaires' bank accounts - the cuts are not aimed

where they can light a fire under the economy.

“The Senate, 51-48, reduced the tax cut by half Tuesday, but Mr. Bush and his blindly ideological allies will fight to reverse that vote in conference with the House and keep the country on a track to where it won't be able to afford veterans' benefits tomorrow.”

Herald Tribune (Sarasota): “Inspect Bush's tax package” January 19, 2003

“A well-examined tax reform plan that changed the treatment of dividends but excluded marginal-rate reductions in the upper brackets would have been responsible and palatable when Bush took office and deficits were in check. But that window of opportunity has been slammed shut, and the Congress has an obligation to place the president's proposals in the context of a dramatically different time.”

GEORGIA

Atlanta Journal and Constitution: “Push for wartime tax cut selfish and shortsighted” March 26, 2003

“We have more than 200,000 troops in a foreign country today risking their lives for this country...Tens of thousands are members of the National Guard, many of whom are making significant financial sacrifice in order to do their duty.

“Meanwhile, back here in the safety of home, we are too cheap to pay the bill for them. For the first time in our history, we are refusing to accept the financial sacrifice of war, and instead are actually cutting government revenue. We are shifting the cost to our children and grandchildren, who will have to repay all this money we are borrowing at the same time they're trying to cover our Social Security and medical costs.

“Even under normal circumstances, the selfishness we are showing by demanding wartime tax cuts that we refuse to offset with reduced federal spending would be cause for shame. The comparison with the selflessness of our troops overseas only compounds that shame.”

HAWAII

Honolulu Advertiser: “This is a terrible time for Bush's tax cut bill” March 26, 2003

“Senate Democrats are being credited with a major coup for cutting in half President Bush's proposed \$726 billion tax-cut package.

“On the contrary, they need to be chided for failing to cut the other half.

“Bush's first round of tax cuts, totalling \$1.6 trillion, was a bad idea to begin with - even before an expensive war in Iraq. That's because these tax cuts have already succeeded in destroying one of the nation's most remarkable achievements of the 1990s - a budget surplus.”

IDAHO

Idaho Statesman: “Compared to war budget, tax bill is the tougher call” April 5, 2003

“It would be irresponsible to cut taxes without regard to the war, the deficit and the relationship between the two. So the debate about a tax cut should concentrate both on the size of the cut and whether the cuts will help the economy.”

“The nation can ill-afford a stimulus that does not stimulate...”

“If Congress holds off on a stimulus package, it can better predict the duration and cost of the war. But if it holds off, the economy could improve without tax cuts.”

“Clearly, Congress can't afford to wait on paying for the war in Iraq -- not when troops are in combat, and the Pentagon is saying it could run out of money within two months.”

“The House and Senate passed war spending plans Thursday, and they need to reconcile differences before next week's congressional recess. But Congress needn't and shouldn't rush on a tax bill. It needs to take the time to come up with something affordable and effective.”

ILLINOIS

Chicago Tribune: “Cooling on tax cuts” March 29, 2003

“George Washington is said to have compared the U.S. House to a boiling-hot pot of tea from which legislation flows into the cooling saucer of the Senate. Such was the effect of the Senate last week when it cooled, for a time, at least, a particular passion of President Bush: tax cuts.”

“As it boiled over from the House, the Bush plan would cut taxes by \$726 billion over the next 10 years. The Senate cut that by more than half to \$350 billion. Republican leaders hope to restore Bush's entire tax cut package when both houses of Congress start reconciling their differences in a conference committee next week.”

“Let's hope not. The White House has chosen to ignore the long-term impact of its tax and spending plans. It will be up to Congress to inject some reality in the deliberations.”

Journal Star (Peoria): "Budget can't afford any of Bush's tax cut" March 19, 2003

"President Bush wants \$1.57 trillion in new tax cuts over the next decade, with his economic stimulus accounting for \$726 billion of that. He says the cuts would stimulate and grow the economy, an argument that deserves a skeptical audience for several reasons. First, nothing can stimulate and grow the economy as long as we are paying for a war. Second, the cuts he proposes would take place too gradually to have a stimulative effect. Third, the bigger the national debt, the greater the odds it will neutralize any stimulation. Fourth, the nation can't afford what the president wants.

"To be sure, \$350 billion is better than \$1.57 trillion. But we'd still have to borrow the money to cut the taxes, while we're borrowing the money to wage the war, while we're borrowing the money from baby boomers getting ready to retire. And as stimulants go in a \$10 trillion economy, \$35 billion a year is the equivalent of a cup of decaf...

"But \$350 billion in tax cuts the nation can ill afford is only proportionately better than what the president seeks. All or none is the proper argument here. The president himself should face reality and opt for none."

INDIANA

The Indianapolis Star: "Paying the price of war with Iraq" March 30, 2003

"Reducing the tax cut is also the right thing to do, if only temporarily. The United States is facing a \$300 billion deficit, and the war will be costly. The total price tag of the conflict, foreign aid payments, and occupying and rebuilding Iraq until a stable government can be installed will far exceed the \$500 billion price tag of the first Gulf War.

"Other war-related needs are also likely to emerge. The U.S. airlines industry, which has struggled since the war began, has asked for another government bailout.

"U.S. military planners anticipate a short war, but as Sen. Richard G. Lugar has cautioned, Americans must be prepared to play a key role in Iraq's reconstruction for years to come. Until it's clear exactly how much our role will cost us, reducing the tax cuts is a prudent and cautionary pre-emptive action."

IOWA

Des Moines Register: "Any tax cut is too much" March 28, 2003

"In the middle of a costly war with Iraq, while Medicare and Medicaid are in fiscal trouble, while federal mandates on everything from domestic security to education go

unfunded, and the national debt continues to grow, lawmakers continue to debate tax cuts.

“Worse, they're not debating whether to cut. But how much should be cut.

“Rather than supporting the \$726 billion cut President Bush proposed, the Senate has voted to chop \$350 billion. And Senate Democrats perceive this as a victory.

“It's not a victory. It's the equivalent of chopping an arm off at the elbow instead of the shoulder. And then cheering about it.

“\$350 billion is \$350 billion too much. Any tax cut right now is too much.”

KENTUCKY

The Courier-Journal: “Debt in the trillions” March 11, 2003

“The Bush administration, which pushed through \$1.3 trillion in tax cuts in 2001, now is peddling the notion of cutting revenues further through an additional \$1.5 trillion tax cut.

“Such slavish devotion to taxcutting doctrine under any and all circumstances is reckless in the extreme...

“Republicans, once upon a time, expended a lot of energy proclaiming that the federal government needed to live within its means, just like a family. Well, any family that ran its affairs the way President Bush handles the federal budget would be saying goodbye to the suburbs and hoping it isn't headed for Skid Row.”

MAINE

Portland Press Herald: “Franco-Republicans' proud of Sen. Snowe” April 21, 2003

“...Though the nation is at war and Washington is set to rack up record budget deficits, the president proposed a 10-year, \$720 billion tax cut.

“Backers say this package will help the economy, when in fact it would do the opposite. The huge budget deficits that it would create would be a drag on growth for years. The largest piece of the proposal - eliminating the tax on corporate dividends - would provide no short-term economic stimulus. Economists are split, meanwhile, on its long-term impact, with many saying that it would discourage corporations from taking needed risks and from focusing on growth.

“Snowe and the two other Republicans targeted by The Club, Sen. George Voinovich

of Ohio and Rep. Amo Houghton of New York, rightly see the Bush tax cut package as too large. They've vowed to support no more than \$350 billion in tax cuts over 10 years.

“While no tax cut would be best, Snowe at least is willing to mitigate the damage. Maine's senior senator says that her 25 years in Congress have taught her how difficult it is to tame deficits. She fears that that programs such as Social Security and Medicare could be put at risk if the red ink flows too freely.”

Bangor Daily News: “Tax Cuts that Work” April 17, 2003

“How the president will pressure Sens. Grassley, Snowe, Voinovich and others to break their promises and support a tax cut above \$350 billion is not clear. One possibility had the most popular pieces of the tax cut - the small business expensing or the child tax credit - taken up separately and then passing the full \$350 billion with part of the dividend tax cut, although Democrats would be able to block that maneuver. The White House should avoid the temptation to make this into a contest of wills and focus instead on finding an agreed-upon strategy for stimulating the economy without running up the deficit.

“The president can do that under the level set by the Senate and declare victory, which is a more productive strategy than insisting on a tax cut that creates deficits for years to come.”

MARYLAND

Baltimore Sun: “Caution caucus strikes back” March 27, 2003

“As negotiations over the reduced tax cut begin, the senators' message to the House should be: Take it or leave it.

“Even at the Senate total of \$350 billion over 10 years, the tax cut is still far too large. The nation is awash in red ink, piling up enormous bills for the war in Iraq and facing a long-term cash crunch in Medicare and Social Security.”

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston Globe: “Reckless Republicans” April 15, 2003

“Responsible legislators would accept the need for fiscal discipline. But many Republicans in Congress, following the lead of President Bush, are recklessly committed to tax cuts this year no matter what...”

“(Goldman Sachs) fears deficits over the next 10 years will total \$4.2 trillion. Without the benefit of Social Security surpluses, this figure would soar to \$6.7 trillion.

“Budget deficits absorb money that might be better employed in more productive enterprises. President Bush and the Congress have devised an economic policy that will limit the long-term potential of the US economy.

“Instead of a surplus, Social Security will run annual deficits starting around 2018. A future Congress and president will have to find extra money for Social Security while paying for the other expenses of government. Deficit spending should be restrained now to provide the government with greater financial flexibility when it is needed more. In the interest of future generations, supporters of fiscal discipline should do all they can to limit the size of tax cuts this year.”

MICHIGAN

Detroit Free Press: “Congress should prudently put off plans for tax cut” March 21, 2003

“What will it take to get Congress off the tax-cut track?”

“Both the House and Senate actually have stood up to President Bush's proposal and shaved at it by about an eighth, to \$1.4 trillion over 10 years. But every bit of fiscal news argues for dropping the budget-busting plan flat...

“Congress still has a long way to go on the '04 budget. But the resolutions it OK's now will set the parameters, and be difficult to change. Tax cuts can wait until after realistic budgets are set on everything from war to how much food is on poor children's plates.”

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis Star Tribune: “Fiscal folly; This is no time for tax cuts” March 29, 2003

“With deficits mushrooming, with an apparently lengthy, and unfunded, war raging, with domestic programs getting cut to the bone -- including veterans' benefits that would “support our troops” -- this is no time to pass any tax cut. It is especially no time for one that is heavily tilted toward the wealthiest Americans -- and one that is touted as an economic stimulus but has been broadly panned by economic experts as anything but.

“Senators should be fighting hard to eliminate the entire 2003 Bush tax cut; the one in 2001 was massive. It's time for Congress to show some real fiscal responsibility and tell the financial ideologues in the White House they've had enough.”

MISSISSIPPI

Clarion-Ledger (Jackson): "Sacrifice" March 26, 2003

"The Bush budget and his plan for a 10-year \$726 billion tax cut was questionable in the first place because of its impact on the national deficit. Such a plan now in the face of war costs is even more far-fetched.

"The Senate understands this and voted Tuesday to slash the tax cut plan in half. The House should continue that fiscally conservative course.

"Congress must approve the war spending for the sake of the military effort and homeland safety. The Bush administration should abandon its pie-in-the-sky tax cut plan."

MISSOURI

St. Louis Post-Dispatch: "War and taxes" April 16, 2003

"If the president's tax cut passes, the nation will run a \$400 billion deficit next year, and annual deficits will stretch as far as the eye can see.

"Congress wasn't elected to throw the nation into hock, and some courageous Republicans in the Senate aren't afraid to say so. A handful joined Democrats in the Senate to chop the president's proposed \$720 billion, 10-year tax cut in half. Now the president's in a mood to compromise, lowering the ante to \$550 million. That's still too much.

"The national debt isn't free. We'll pay interest on it for decades. Every dollar of interest is a dollar that can't be used for education, law enforcement, defense, or help for the poor and elderly. The public senses this, and that's why it's not eager for a new tax cut...

"In fact, Mr. Bush is steering the economy toward an iceberg. Massive deficits year after year contribute to higher interest rates. Higher rates can choke off prosperity."

Kansas City Star: "Unfair tax proposal rewards wrong group" January 9, 2003

"There's no real debate over the fact that Bush's proposal on dividends would largely benefit the rich. Some apologists talk about wanting to help the elderly, which doesn't tell the whole story; Bush's dividend proposal would help elderly people *with lots of money in the stock market*.

"Bush's tax package is unfair, short-sighted and fiscally irresponsible. He and members of Congress – particularly Republicans, who now control Capitol Hill – must

develop a far better plan in the months ahead.”

MONTANA

Great Falls Tribune: “Time is not right for major federal tax cuts” April 22, 2003

“If you throw in an \$80 billion war and who-knows-how-much more for rebuilding Iraq, you start to see the folly of tax cuts right now - whether the president's \$726 billion, or the "mere" \$350 billion the senators are holding out for.

“There's an old lesson Congress should learn:

“The first step toward getting out of a hole is to stop digging.”

NEBRASKA

Omaha World Herald: “Fiscal winds of war” March 27, 2003

“...the U.S. Senate, in its surprise vote on Tuesday, got it right: \$ 726 billion was simply too much in the face of an open-ended and obviously costly war with Iraq.”

NEW JERSEY

The Record (Bergen County): “Poor way to boost the economy” April 23, 2003

“There's good news and bad news about President Bush's 10-year, \$726 billion tax cut plan. The good news is that Congress has whittled it to \$550 billion, and may cut it even more. The bad news is that Congress hasn't killed it altogether...

“...the Bush tax cuts would come at a time when many states, including New Jersey, are facing severe budget crunches and are being forced to scale back all sorts of social programs. And because many state taxes are linked to their federal counterparts, states would face even greater revenue shortfalls.

“For example, state taxes on dividends in New Jersey and dozens of other states would automatically be eliminated if the Bush plan were to become law. The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that New Jersey would stand to lose \$117 million in the next fiscal year alone. Rather than helping the states out of a financial bind, the White House approach would only make their budget crises worse.

“This nation is in a recession, and many families are hurting. If the White House truly wants to boost the economy, it should offer targeted, immediate tax cuts to middle- and lower-income Americans -- the very same people who would spend the money.

“Long-term, permanent tax cuts that disproportionately benefit the rich and only make the nation's deficit worse do not make sense.”

NEW MEXICO

Albuquerque Tribune: “Timing on war budget reeks of subterfuge” March 27, 2003

“For months, Congress has been pressing the White House to estimate how much the war might cost so they could make some provision for it in this year's budget or next year's. The White House resisted, insisting it didn't know.

“Last week, the House passed its budget resolution containing the president's \$726 billion tax cut, and Monday the Senate committed itself to a tax cut almost as large. Suddenly, the White House knew exactly how much it needed to prosecute the war for the next six months, \$74.7 billion, and briefed lawmakers on it late in the day...

“Perhaps because they finally got a look at the bill for the war, the senators unexpectedly voted Tuesday, reversing their earlier vote, and cut the president's planned tax cut by more than half, to \$350 billion over 10 years. One hopes this vote reflects a new seriousness about the problem of deficit spending.”

The New Mexican (Santa Fe): “GOP solons retreat along tax-cut front” January 27, 2003

“The White House, having hemmed and hawed over the costs of the Iraqi war, finally leveled with Congress this week: As near as we can figure, top aides mumbled, it's going to cost \$75 billion.

“This foray into honesty served to awaken the fiscal responsibility in a long-lulled Republican Congress, whose members half a year ago handed President Bush all the war powers he needed to launch the invasion, and who more recently have been reticent about budgeting for battle. Nor were they willing to face a domestic financial fact: Our nation is in recession; revenues are down.

“So how, in good conscience, can they carry out the president's dreams of a trillion-dollar tax cut during the decade to come? They can't.”

NEW YORK

The New York Times: “Another Senseless Tax-Cut Attempt” April 23, 2003

“With this year's federal deficit exploding toward the \$500 billion level and the national-debt ceiling needing a trillion-dollar increase, it seems unfathomable that Congress and the White House remain locked in a suicide pact of another tax cut. Yet

here comes that persistent White House sales team with a fresh label on their tax-cut patent medicine. Facing only a small Senate line of Republican resistance, President Bush has sent out aides with some smooth talk about a phased-in, rather than full gulp, version of his beloved dividend tax cut. His plan would cost the Treasury \$396 billion in lost revenues in a 10-year boon accruing mostly to upper-bracket taxpayers.

“The administration move signals a strategic bid in a sorry high-stakes Capitol poker game over the size and nature of another tax reduction. The dispute should be about the wisdom of any tax cut right now in the face of deficit rollovers, costly debt and government retraction from basic services in states across the land. But the G.O.P.-led Congress has already sadly set the outcome somewhere between the \$550 billion package of cuts that are yearned for by the House, and the \$350 billion level that is the working maximum of the Senate's few Republican holdouts, backed by the Democratic minority.”

Rochester Democrat and Chronicle: “Houghton the holdout” April 18, 2003

“N.Y. lawmaker is right to go against GOP brethren obsessed with big tax cut...”

“The tax-cut advocates are clearly nervous now that the Senate agreed to cut Bush's proposed \$726 billion tax reduction package to no more than \$350 billion. Last week, with Houghton's help, the House approved cuts of \$550 billion over a decade...”

“The war costs are exacerbating the nation's economic woes. More revenue is needed.”

Newsday: “Bush's Tax-Cut Windfall Is Too Good To Be True” April 17, 2003

“As President George W. Bush's minions fan out across the country this week and next to drum up support for more federal tax cuts, taxpayers should ask what they'll have to give up in exchange for their little windfall. And when administration hucksters tell you it's basically a free lunch, ask yourself: Doesn't that sound too good to be true? The answer is yes it does, because it is...”

“The Senate last week forced Bush to trim his tax cut target to \$550 billion. That's still way too much to risk on a roll of the dice.”

Ithaca Journal: “Income tax cuts: Right idea, wrong time” April 15, 2003

“President Bush's desire to cut federal revenues today can be described by the old saying, “There is a time and place for everything.” During the economic boom of the late 1990s, a tax cut such as the one proposed by the president would have been more affordable.”

“Eventually, this sluggish economy will recover and there again will be a time for a federal income tax cut, but that time most certainly is not now.”

Buffalo News: “New York's budget hit; Federal spending plan could add billions to a suffering state's burden” March 29, 2003

“House Republicans supporting a federal budget that includes massive tax cuts and reduced aid did New Yorkers no favors this month. Even if one accepts that the spending plan's tax cuts will spur the economy, they also will subtract billions from state revenues at the same time the budget itself could increase state costs in health care. And make no mistake, those costs will cascade down to the local level...”

“The overall GOP gamble is that tax cuts will increase government income in the long run by stimulating the economy and restoring prosperity. That will, theoretically, create more taxable wealth...”

“The last GOP tax cut was supposed to spur the economy. It didn't. The state's GOP representatives in Congress are taking a huge risk by voting for cuts in state aid based on an assumption that this time, things will be different.”

The Times Union (Albany): “The cost of war; The Bush administration's estimate is a limited and optimistic one” March 26, 2003

“The prospect of cutting taxes while the nation is running up war costs is a formula for a return to the huge deficits of the Reagan era. Yet even this prospect did not prevent the House from giving Mr. Bush his full \$726 billion tax cut when it approved a \$2.2 trillion budget last week. The Senate version, while more restrained, is still far too indulgent.”

“The battle isn't over, however, as the White House hopes to persuade the Senate to reverse its vote or, at the least, to increase the size of the tax cut in talks with House negotiators. But the only responsible course remains the one articulated by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz.: Don't cut taxes at all until the real costs of the war are known.”

The Post-Standard (Syracuse): “Fighting the war on credit” March 26, 2003

“Senators who changed their minds cited the cost of the war. Their concern is reasonable, as no one can predict how high that cost will rise. The \$74.7 billion request is only the first installment in what appears, at this juncture, to be an open-ended expense.”

“More than a little irony may be found in the way the sides are lining up over the tax-cut plan. It is supported by conservatives, although it appears to be a contradiction of traditional conservative philosophy, which abhors borrowing to meet current

expenses.

“To be sure, the nation historically has run deficits in time of war. But the government also has asked the people to sacrifice. Advocates of the big tax cut want to postpone that sacrifice until they are safely out of office and beyond accountability.”

Poughkeepsie Journal: “Delay tax cut until war costs are known” March 20, 2003

“No one knows for sure how much the war with Iraq will cost the United States -- nor the amount that will be needed to bolster homeland security during the conflict.

“Therefore, it's an inappropriate time to go forward with a massive federal tax cut that will have long-term consequences.

That doesn't mean President Bush should scrap the idea. But Congress should delay any votes on the matter until the war costs are known.”

NORTH CAROLINA

The Charlotte Observer: “Tax cut not needed” April 29, 2003

“...[W]hat President Bush proposes is not an economic stimulus plan, no matter how hard he argues otherwise. It will provide tax relief, mostly for the wealthy, but only a few of his cuts would even take effect this year...”

“President Bush derides the \$350 billion tax reduction favored by the Senate as a ‘little bitty’ tax cut. That's baloney. With the economy dawdling, the bill for the war beginning to come in, the cost of rebuilding Iraq beyond estimation, the impending retirement of the baby boomers and many other obligations facing the federal budget, Congress shouldn't enact any massive tax cut.”

The News & Observer (Raleigh): “Paying for war” March 26, 2003

“By voting yesterday to slash the tax cuts in half -- a prudent move, even if it doesn't go far enough -- the Senate has forced the budget into a conference committee. Now the loyal opposition in Congress ought to draw its own line in the sand. Saying no to tax cuts during wartime wouldn't be unpatriotic. A realistic budget, assessing the government's costs and raising sufficient revenue, would be a service to the troops and the vast majority of Americans for whom they are fighting.”

The Herald-Sun (Durham): “Feed the deficit now, pay the bill later” March 26, 2003

“Federal social services programs are already reeling from current and expected funding cuts by the administration, imperiling the safety net in cash-starved states like North Carolina. Running up huge deficits will only lead to a lot of unnecessary economic pain, and for that reason as well as others, the \$ 350 billion in tax cuts endorsed by the Senate is quite enough at the moment. Everything else the president wants should be put on the legislative shelf until we can see our way out of the Persian Gulf.”

Wilmington Star: “Greenspan’s math isn’t fuzzy” February 14, 2003

“The Oracle of Greenspan says President Bush's latest economic proposals would do little to help the economy now, but would plunge the nation into dangerous debt just as the huge generation born after World War II starts to retire...”

“After years of deepening deficits produced by the economic fantasies of Ronald Reagan, Republicans and Democrats alike – including President Bush I and President Clinton – were forced to conclude that the best way to promote economic growth and protect the retirement benefits of coming generations was to pay down the deficit.

“Against all the gloomy predictions, we managed to do that during the Clinton years. Deficits turned into surpluses. Mr. Bush and a compliant Congress took care of that right away.

“Now the president wants to dig us even deeper into debt, pretending to believe that national bankruptcy is the prescription for prosperity.

“The Oracle isn't buying it. Neither should Congress.”

Asheville Citizen-Times: “Irresponsible doesn’t begin to describe flaws in Bush’s budget”
February 7, 2003

“The (Bush) budget proposal is a record \$2.23 trillion. It contains a) record budget deficits b) tax proposals that are being presented in a disingenuous manner and are irresponsible to the point of recklessness, and c) contains no money for what appears to be an inevitable war in Iraq.

“Irresponsible doesn't begin to describe the flaws in this budget.”

News & Record (Greensboro): “Bush economic plan ignores job creation” January 12, 2003

“...his massive tax-cutting plan translates into lingering federal budget deficits, a poor choice as war looms in Iraq and homeland security costs mount. Shorter-term goals that create jobs for displaced workers are preferable to revamping the nation’s tax structure. The administration’s approach will be too costly, too ambitious and too

late.”

NORTH DAKOTA

Bismarck Tribune: “Happy Birthday, Amtrak” May 1, 2003

“President Bush should take some of that additional \$ 600 billion in tax cuts he wants to give us and propose that Congress give us something we could use a lot more, a solid public-transportation system -- planes, trains and buses -- that is not always lurching from crisis to crisis.

Business would thank him, the public would thank him and the economy would grow a thousand flowers.”

OHIO

The Repository (Canton): “Voinovich should stand his ground” April 29, 2003

“President Bush has derided as "itty-bitty" the \$350 billion federal tax cut that Ohio Sen. George Voinovich has said he will support...

“Voinovich does not want to further burden future generations that also will struggle to pay their elders' Medicare bills and Social Security benefits. Nor does he want Ohio to face more immediate burdens. He should stand his ground.”

Cleveland Plain Dealer: “The tax cut tour” April 24, 2003

“...Then (the President will) slip into a sales pitch for something the country neither wants nor can currently afford - a \$550 billion, 10-year tax cut package that, masquerading as an economic stimulus package, can only exacerbate a spiraling federal deficit.

“Just as Bush and his core advisers believe that deficits truly no longer matter, Voinovich (and, incidentally, this page) believes they do. And Voinovich - along with Republican Sen. Olympia Snowe of Maine - stands between the president and the Senate majority needed to obtain the president's desired cut. So Bush is here essentially to embarrass Voinovich into going along.

“He could have saved the jet fuel. Although the dividends tax cut Bush seeks might someday be a reasonable step, that day is not now. Not amid talk of a federal deficit approaching \$500 billion next year. Not when Alan Greenspan, the Federal Reserve chairman Bush just reappointed, sees no economic stimulus in a plan he said, if enacted, should be paid for by offsets elsewhere to avoid the danger of deeper

deficits. Not when there is no end in sight to the costs of re-creating Iraq as a democracy.

"If it's economic stimulus the president really wants, he has it aplenty in the \$350 billion in tax cuts the Senate has accepted. There should come a day when a president from Texas realizes that a senator from Ohio isn't intimidated by the roar of Air Force One. This would be an excellent day for that light to dawn."

Dayton Daily News: "Bush tax cut wouldn't move Ohio ahead" April 24, 2003

"There's an amazing boldness about President George W. Bush's visit to Ohio today, wherein he's going to pitch his tax-cut message.

"After all, the president is coming to a state that is wrestling with a two-year \$4 billion deficit - an amount that approaches 10 percent of the state's total spending. Eliminating the federal tax on dividends, as the president proposes, would mean the state would have even less money to meet its needs...

"The last thing Ohio needs is for the feds to adopt a tax cut that reduces the state's revenue further and one that would be most beneficial to wealthy investors.

"President Bush can't just give up altogether on a major idea because a couple senators are holding out. So he's just going to keep pounding away.

"Fine. But Ohioans don't have to look hard or far to see that the president's tax-cutting agenda doesn't make sense here."

Columbus Dispatch: "Deficit Hawks; Voinovich, Snowe know a huge tax cut now isn't in the nation's best interest" April 17, 2003

"With this year's federal deficit expected to set a record at more than \$300 billion and a forecast of total deficits of \$1.8 trillion over the next decade, taxpayers know that an additional tax cut is fiscally reckless.

"Taxpayers, most of whom have credit cards, understand the danger of buying on credit and piling up obligations on their children and grandchildren.

"The only way a big tax cut would make sense now is if the president and Congress were seriously reining in spending. But as the deficit projections attest, they are not...

"...Snow and Voinovich did the right and responsible thing."

The Cincinnati Post: "More harm than good" January 9, 2003

"The president can't have it both ways. He can't simultaneously fight one and maybe two wars, build up homeland security, provide a prescription drug benefit, shore up Medicare and put Social Security on a sound financial footing and at the same time enact a \$670 billion tax cut (over 10 years) without taking on debilitating deficits.

"Even the most fervent supply sider would be hard-pressed to argue that these cuts would generate enough increased consumer and business spending (and hence tax revenues) to keep deficits at a manageable level, given the looming demands of the aging Baby Boom generation for health and retirement security benefits and what appears to be an unrelenting demand for high defense spending."

OKLAHOMA

Tulsa World: "War and taxes" March 24, 2003

"Making huge tax cuts at the same time we are incurring a huge war debt seems foolhardy. Even those who believe that tax cuts stimulate the economy to the point that economic growth offsets lost revenue have to understand that the benefits are not immediate.

"It is important, of course, that Congress support the president in time of war. But that doesn't mean blindly going along with a risky economic plan."

OREGON

The Oregonian: "Paying for war" March 29, 2003

"In the military offensive to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction and oust Saddam Hussein, there mustn't be any scrimping on resources. But it's incomprehensible to think that the nation can meet the needs to be successful in this war while continuing with the president's proposed tax cuts.

"Reducing the tax cut to \$350 billion was a start in the right direction. Congress must come up with a realistic budget."

Statesman Journal (Salem): "Funding war should put tax cuts on hold" March 26, 2003

"So it's illogical for Congress to embrace tax cuts at the same time that it is dramatically increasing national spending. The Senate on Tuesday made a responsible decision by trimming the president's planned tax cuts in half."

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette: “Less is more / Follow the bouncing ball on the size of a tax cut”
April 21, 2003

“Even parliamentary insiders would have a hard time explaining the maneuvers that led to a congressional budget resolution for fiscal 2004 that aims to cut taxes, depending on how you read between the lines, by either \$550 billion or \$350 billion over the next decade.

“Both numbers are lower than the absurdly large \$726 billion in tax cuts originally proposed by President Bush. And both go beyond the sort of temporary, targeted tax cuts that could be justified to jump-start a still-sluggish economy...

“In the current debate on tax cuts, those senators who want to cut taxes by "only" \$350 billion are, relatively speaking, fiscally responsible. They also seem to be more in tune with public opinion: In a poll conducted for The Associated Press, six in 10 respondents opposed more tax cuts while the country remained at war and experienced budget deficits.

“May such prudence prevail as the bare bones of the budget resolution are fleshed out with tax and appropriations bills.”

Philadelphia Inquirer: “Massive tax cuts during a time of war plus big spending hikes equals bad policy” April 13, 2003

“Congressional Republicans in the last week managed to rescue budget insanity from the jaws of fiscal prudence.

“The prudent course, given the hugely expensive war in Iraq and federal deficits looming as large as \$380 billion per year, would have been to shelve the request by President Bush for another round of tax cuts.

“Aside from the unknown cost of occupying Iraq for the foreseeable future, many states here at home face record deficits this year and need more federal aid. If ever there was a year to limit raiding the federal Treasury, this is it.

“But what fun is it for Republicans to control both chambers of Congress if they can't eliminate taxes on dividend income? Why, it would be hardly any fun at all.”

Intelligencer Journal (Lancaster): “Cutting the cut” March 26, 2003

“The United States Senate on Tuesday demonstrated uncommon responsibility by voting to cut President Bush's tax cut plan by more than half on Tuesday...

“The Senate vote came on the same day the Congressional Budget Office forecast a \$1 trillion deficit over the next five years if the president's \$725 billion tax cut plan were approved. The CBO is a nonpartisan agency...

“Taxpayers can stomach paying for the war in Iraq. Asking them to accept a \$1 trillion deficit for the next five years in these uncertain times goes too far.”

Morning Call (Allentown): “President Bush's economic plan: Nothing on the table for hungry states” January 9, 2003

“Most of the analysis focuses on President Bush's proposal to eliminate taxes on shareholders' dividend payments. Though it's only one aspect of his 10-year, \$674 billion plan, it is perhaps the boldest -- the boldest, though not necessarily the best, given the projected loss of hundreds of billions of dollars in tax revenue over 10 years. Ultimately, a ballooning federal deficit means the U.S. government will be less apt to bail out state budgets.”

RHODE ISLAND

Providence Journal-Bulletin: “War and taxes” March 24, 2003

“Even before war with Iraq, President Bush's proposed 10-year, \$726 billion tax cut looked like something that America could ill afford. Even more so now.

“Mr. Bush is meeting some resistance from members of his own party in Congress, which could help scale back the tax cuts to more responsible levels. Unfortunately, it does not seem to be nearly enough.

“Any tax cut – even the Democrats' \$350 billion version – seems irresponsible at a time of rapidly swelling budget deficits and uncertainty about a very expensive war. Huge tax cuts might be politically popular, but they will do little for the present economy and might wreak havoc on the future one.”

SOUTH CAROLINA

The Herald (Rock Hill): “Tax breaks for the wealthy” January 12, 2003

“All you have to do is tally the figures to see that Bush's plan primarily rewards upper-income Americans while doing little to actually stimulate the economy...Middle-class taxpayers, the consumers who so far have kept the economy afloat, receive only a pittance...

“What the nation needs is a stimulus package targeting middle-income taxpayers, job

creation and federal aid for the states – not a tax break for the wealthiest Americans. If saying that constitutes class warfare, where do we enlist?”

TENNESSEE

Commercial Appeal (Memphis): “Bush tax cut could have high price” January 8, 2003

“The problem is compounded by the President’s proposal to accelerate the 10-year, \$1.35 trillion tax cut Congress passed last year – another form of tax relief that provides lopsided benefits to a fortunate relative few. The plan carries the risk of large, long-term deficits that could ignite interest rates and consume capital that otherwise would be available for investment. At a time when the nation is likely to face higher costs for defense and homeland security, as well as health care and retirement, the affordability of the permanent tax cut remains open to doubt.”

TEXAS

The Houston Chronicle: “NET LOSS: Growing federal deficits would defeat aim of tax cuts”
May 3, 2003

“President Bush argues that any tax cut would create jobs, and therefore a large tax cut would create many jobs. Recent history and Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan dispute that theory.

“Since Bush pushed through a \$ 1.4 trillion tax cut early in his administration, the nation has suffered a net loss of almost 2 million jobs. U.S. unemployment climbed to 6 percent last month. President Bush has toured several defense plants to tout his tax cut as a jobs program, but those very plants have suffered layoffs, despite increased spending for national defense and war.

“The loss can be blamed on corporate corruption, terrorism and the Iraq war, but the tax package did not prevent it. Most of the first Bush cut has not kicked in, just as the proposed cut would not become fully effective for a decade. But the president argues, wrongly, that the promise of future tax cuts is enough to stimulate the economy now.

“Fed chief Greenspan says a tax cut unmatched by reductions in spending would exacerbate federal deficits. The deficits already are unacceptably high and due to grow because of the cost of invading and rebuilding Iraq. Growing deficits with no end in sight, Greenspan predicts, would sap private investment capital, push up interest rates and act as a drag on economic growth - exactly the opposite of Bush's argument...

“Some conservative economists have reversed themselves and now argue that deficits don't matter. If that were the case, there would be no excuse not to guarantee

health insurance for every child and prescription drugs for the elderly.

“Others argue that high deficits will curb government spending. But surely plunging the nation hopelessly in debt is not the best way to induce fiscal responsibility.”

Fort Worth Star Telegram: “Backbone: AWOL” April 3, 2003

“Congress is irresponsibly moving forward with the president's tax cut package...

“Every president since Abraham Lincoln has levied a wartime tax to support troops on the field of battle. What Bush has advocated are large tax cuts and spending increases in defense and homeland security while minimizing the effects of expanding debt and discounting the untold costs of occupying Iraq.

“The prudent and conservative policy is to craft a budget that accounts for the worst case of war costs, not the shortsighted seven-month request of \$74.7 billion presented by the White House last week -- finally added, it should be noted, after months of foot-dragging by the president's economic advisers.

“A wise Congress, faced with a current deficit and projection of future ones, would limit spending and put off tax cuts until the course of a nation at war is more secure.”

San Antonio Express-News: “This is not the time for massive tax cut” March 28, 2003

“This is hardly the time for a \$726 billion tax cut that benefits primarily the wealthiest among us.

“It's no time for a tax cut that is close to half that size either, which for now is the Senate's position, although a \$350 billion cut is certainly preferable to the one the White House is pushing.

“For the White House, tax cuts are the miracle cure for whatever ails the nation - in peacetime and war, in good times and bad.

“That is becoming more of a theological position than a responsible economic strategy. Not a company in the world, nor a family, would consider operating on such a budget - if, that is, it expects to stay solvent.”

Austin American-Statesman: “Note to Congress: Wartime isn't tax-cut time” March 26, 2003

“Perhaps aware of how greedy it looked to be slashing taxes, primarily for our most affluent citizens, when Americans are fighting, getting wounded, captured and dying in

war, the U.S. Senate decided Tuesday to give President Bush only half of his \$726 billion tax cut.

“Even half a loaf is too much...

“The war will cost a lot of money, and we have no business foisting the bills on our children and their children. If we think it's worth fighting, then we ought to pay for it -- and if that means no tax cut, so be it.”

Dallas Morning News: “Fiscal Sense; House should follow Senate’s lead on tax cuts”
March 26, 2003

“It isn't that Senate centrists hate tax cuts. It is that they recognize reality. And they decided yesterday to stand up for fiscal sense...

“The Iraqi war will cost well beyond the \$75 billion President Bush requested for the next six months. Saving Social Security and Medicare from bankruptcy will cost more than \$1 trillion. Those demands alone could explode the deficit well beyond its \$246 billion figure. By year's end, Americans could see a \$400 billion deficit.

“It is time to worry. It is time to act. It is time to amend.

“The Senate followed that strategy, and the House should, too. When the chambers meet to resolve their tax differences, House members should recognize the treasury has competing demands. And some, like the Iraqi war, are hard to predict. The budget needs room to breathe.”

UTAH

Salt Lake Tribune: “Bear the Burden” March 19, 2003

“Why, then, is the president so utterly unwilling to push more Americans, particularly the wealthiest Americans, to make even the smallest sacrifice to the cause he has devoted this nation to? Bush is sticking to a ridiculous tax-cut plan that will sap the government of precious resources, when we are already running an annual deficit of \$300 billion and carrying a total debt of \$6.4 trillion, figures that don't even include the billions that will be spent on this planned rescue of another nation.

“It makes no sense.”

Deseret News (Salt Lake City, UT): “Now’s not the time to cut taxes” January 8, 2003

“War is unpredictable...a long, protracted campaign that triggers counter-attacks by

terrorists and Iraqi sympathizers could be hugely expensive. Coupled with giant tax cuts, it could send the budget deficit back into levels not seen in a decade or more, which would stifle growth and hamper investment.

“Congress ought to put the president’s tax plan on the shelf for awhile until it knows better how the men and women in uniform are going to be spending their year.”

VIRGINIA

Roanoke Times & World News: “Cap Bush's gusher of budgetary red ink” March 27, 2003

“Traditional wisdom says that when a man finds himself stuck at the bottom of a hole, the first thing he should do is stop digging.

“The Bush administration, faced with a multitrillion-dollar hole in the federal budget over the next decade, has asked for a bigger shovel instead...

“Congress, take away the president's shovel. This hole is too deep already.”

The Virginian-Pilot (Norfolk, Va.): “Troops fight the war, their kids will pay for it” March 27, 2003

“President George W. Bush is attempting to simultaneously wage wars against Iraq and taxes. As a result, the Iraqi war is being fought on the nation's credit card. Young soldiers and sailors will fight it, and their children will pay for it...

“It is unseemly for a nation to ask for so much sacrifice from its troops in Iraq while treating its civilians at home to indulgences that they cannot afford.”

WASHINGTON

Bellingham Herald: “Senate’s right to halve Bush’s tax-cut package” April 15, 2003

“The war is certain to cost far more than the \$74.7 billion Congress gave Bush in an emergency request for initial war costs. The Republican-controlled Senate, which reduced the tax cut to \$350 billion in a 51-48 vote, appears to understand that, but the House appears to continue to back Bush's full tax cut...

“Congress would be wise to mirror the public mood of caution regarding cuts at a time when our future expenses are so uncertain.”

Seattle Post-Intelligencer: “This is no time for a tax cut” March 26, 2003

“This initial round of war spending will push the 2003 federal budget deficit to a record \$400 billion. So as Congress faces these huge wartime expenditures, it's time to recognize that the proposed tax cut is folly. The Senate began saying that yesterday by slashing Bush's \$760 billion tax cut in half.

“The nation faces tremendous expenditures for war, anti-terrorism and domestic security. Our men and women in uniform, and their families, are being asked to make perhaps the ultimate sacrifice. A foregone tax cut would seem the skimpiest of sacrifices for the rest of us to make.”

WEST VIRGINIA

Charleston Gazette: “Deep debt \$400 billion deficit” March 28, 2003

“...the bizarre part is that Republican leaders in control of Congress still want to approve Bush's new \$726 billion tax giveaway, on top of the \$1.3 trillion write-off he previously awarded to affluent taxpayers. This is astounding.

“After the House passed the full \$726 billion, the Senate voted Tuesday to cut the giveaway in half. Maybe the final figure will be somewhere in between - but any new giveaway at all is a slap in the face to average Americans...

“Now, incredibly, with war costs soaring into the stratosphere, Washington's Republican establishment wants to give a second gigantic gift to the rich - and make up the loss by slashing programs that help average Americans. This is unbelievable. But with the GOP in total control of the capital, it probably will happen.”

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: “Two Cheers for the Senate” March 26, 2003

“...[O]n Tuesday, in a surprise, the Senate voted 51-48 to cut the tax plan by more than half – to \$350 billion. It's a start.

“The reasons not to proceed with this ill-timed, unbalanced tax cut are too numerous to list here, but they include huge budget deficits as far out as the eye can see, a multitrillion-dollar addition to the national debt and the prospect of higher interest rates, suppressed business investment and additional pressure on the Social Security and Medicare systems...

“Yes, it's important to restrain the growth in discretionary federal spending. But the looming deficit crisis cannot be managed on the spending side alone. The president's tax package should be sharply reduced to those few elements - an accelerated and expanded child-care credit, for instance - that give the economy a bit of juice. The rest should be put on hold at least until the nation gets a better handle on deficits, and on the cost of war and its aftermath.”