

OUR VIEW

Sad State of Union

President Bush is anything but stupid. Lest he dig himself a hole in his bid for a White House repeat, George II stuck to the script in Tuesday's State of the Union. He clung mightily to encouraging signs of an economic rebound and his success in toppling Iraq's junta-like regime and capturing Public Enemy No. 1 (bane of the Bush family), Saddam Hussein.

About the nation's fiscal affairs, he said: "We must have an economy that grows fast enough to employ every man and woman who seeks a job." And in stumping for a dividend tax cut and swift implementation of his newest tax relief proposals, he hopes that "all the income tax reductions set for 2004 and 2006 be made permanent and effective this year."

About Hussein loyalists, he said: "If Saddam Hussein (loyalists) do not fully disarm, for the safety of our people and for the peace of the world, we will lead a coalition to disarm them."

Bush didn't just toe the line on not having anything meaningful to say, but did a salesman's job of not saying anything of substance. He stomped all over it.

On other topics of interest, the Texan retreated to his typical spiel, covering no new ground and failing to facilitate a vision. Social Security: parts of it should be privatized. Health care: reigning in malpractice litigation and adding a prescription drug benefit to Medicare (both have bipartisan support). Energy: move toward independence and focus on renewable, environmentally friendly sources. Domestic issues: repeal the marriage tax penalty.

On Iraq, he failed to address an issue Democratic South Dakota Sen. Tom Daschle brought up Monday in a speech at the National Press Club. He said, "The American people deserve to hear why we should put hundreds of thousands of American troops at risk, spend perhaps hundreds of billions of dollars, risk our alliances and inflame our adversaries to attack Iraq."

In fact, that National Press Club event, in which Daschle and Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., spoke, offered a better synopsis of what Bush should have addressed. They rightfully railed over the president's dividend tax cut plan, saying it benefits the wealthy at the expense of surging budget deficits, called Bush to task for under funding a slew of mandates, from K-12 education to homeland security.

It's one thing to articulate a vision, then rustle enforcement legislation through. It's another to go about the tough job of finding money-by re-appropriating it, obtaining it by cutting fat from other areas or creating revenue-generating initiatives-to put feet to the vision. Bush hasn't done that. Until he does, what few beneficial programs he has will continue to be catastrophic failures (No Child Left Behind) and mark his presidency as both hollow and shallow.

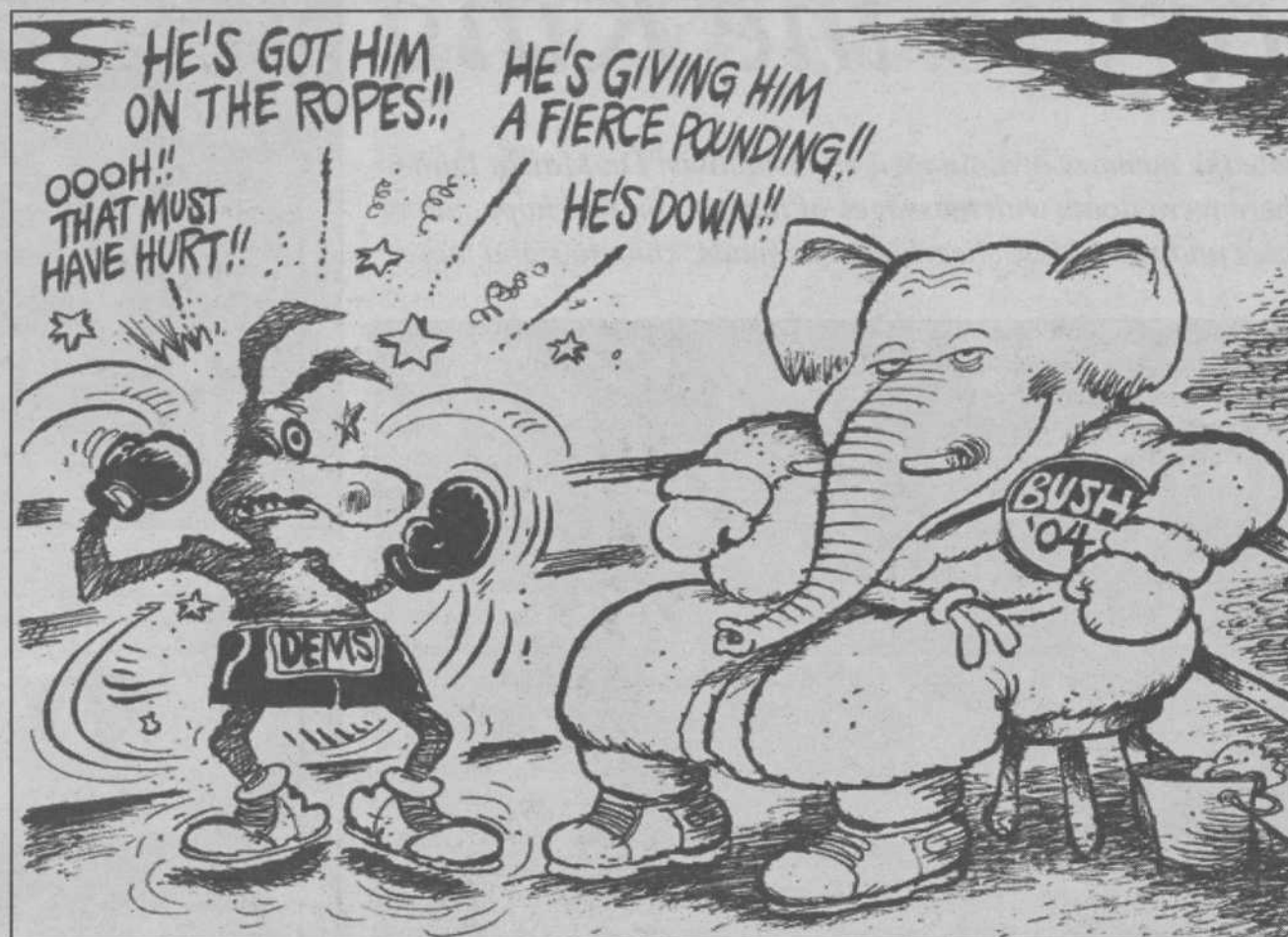
Daschle summarized it well: "The real test of the President's speech isn't how many promises he makes, it's whether he provides the leadership to make good on those promises."

Iowa Down? 49 to Go

If ever the all-eggs-in-one-basket theorem applied, it's in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination. Case in point: Howard Dean, Mr. Anointed, became Mr. Disappointed when the all-important Iowa Caucus-perennial kick start of the sprint to the presidency-christened Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry its winner, with Dean finishing a disappointing third. To borrow a sports euphemism from ESPN's Chris Berman: "That's why they play the game." Rephrased: "That's why they have the polls."

Whoever wins this Democratic war of attrition-things might not get clearer until late in the fourth quarter-let's hope there's enough left of them to take on Bush.

POINT OF VIEW



Douglas good man for a supreme job

By Louie Overstreet
Special to Sentinel-Voice

While I was aware with the passing of the highly regarded jurist, Myron Leavitt, a vacancy now exists on the Nevada Supreme Court, I was unaware that someone who looks like me was considering submitting his name to fill the vacancy on our state's highest court.

This news was shared with me during the 23rd Annual Martin Luther King banquet.

Eddie Taylor, Nevada State Board of Education Member Marcia Washington, Councilman Lawrence Weekly, and Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams did their usual fine job of staging the parade and banquet.

A number of people for whom I have a great deal of respect "hipped" me to the fact that the Chief Judge of the Eighth Judicial Court Michael Douglas was seeking support for his application to fill the vacancy created by the untimely passing of Nevada Supreme Justice Myron Leavitt.

Hannah Brown, Barbara Robinson and Jerry Young were all over me about silence in this column. Their perfunctory support of Judge Douglas is understandable. He is a good judge and, more importantly, in my mind is that I know him to be a decent, caring, and committed human being. In this regard, it has been my observation, in many venues in different



LOUIE OVERSTREET

states of our great union, that a judge who possesses the foregoing mentioned character traits are in great demand but in short supply.

I am sure you feel as I do. Citizens have a right to be suspicious of politicians who only come around when they need something. Read that to mean money and votes. Make no mistake about it. Here in Nevada, seeking judicial office, is a highly political process.

Before I forget, which seems to be the case more often than it was a couple of decades ago, I must tell you Judge Douglas does not fit the usual profile of a political judge. You are likely to see him attending and supporting a number of community unity and betterment activities. He is approachable and works the crowd with the ease of a person who truly cares. He does not exhibit the stiffness of many politicians who make the excuse that they have another event to attend and at the first chance they get head for the exit.

For those of you who do not believe being a "nice person" necessarily translates into someone being qualified to serve on the state's highest court, then allow me to share with you Brother Douglas' qualifications.

He attended California State at Long Beach undergraduate school and graduated from California Hastings School of Law in 1974. Judge Douglas has been licensed to practice law in the state of Nevada for two decades. He has served in the capacity of district judge for more than eight years. He is so highly regarded that during the last election he ran unopposed for the seat in which he has served with distinction. While pursuing a distinguished law career, he has also found the time to serve on boards outside of the legal community. His community service work has been recognized by over a dozen organizations.

He constantly receives

high marks from attorneys who practice before his bench for his knowledge of the law and judicial temperament. Lawyers who judge judges only do so begrudgingly. Thus, for District Judge Michael Douglas to annually receive high marks from those with whom he has constant interactions is noteworthy.

Now back to the orders of the day, as I noted getting appointed to a judicial vacancy at any level, qualifications notwithstanding, is a political process. In this regard, I am making a personal plea to you to help a brother out by supporting Judge Michael Douglas to become the first African-American to serve on Nevada's Supreme Court. Support him not because of his race but because he has prepared himself and paid his dues to earn your support.

The governor fills term vacancies on the Nevada Supreme Court.
(See Overstreet, Page 12)

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