

President to use State of Union to revive federal tax proposals

By SCOTT LINDLAW

Associated Press Writer
WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush will use this week's State of the Union address to try to revive a proposal that would allow younger workers to invest a portion of their Social Security taxes in the stock market, aides say.

His election-year agenda also calls for pressing Congress to make already-enacted tax cuts permanent, such as the elimination of inheritances taxes and reductions in capital gains taxes.

Bush is considering whether to renew his push for a new kind of tax-preferred savings accounts that could be used for retirement, college, health care or other purposes.

Bush will address the nation in a televised speech before a joint session of Congress at 9 p.m. EST Tuesday, three years to the day after his inauguration and one day after the Iowa presidential caucuses.

Approaching a battle for re-election, Bush is expected to highlight economic growth and successes in the fight against terrorism, most notably the capture of deposed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

It will be a stay-the-course message at a time when his Democratic rivals are urging a change at the White House.

"He needs to make the case as best he can that people are better off and more secure than they were four years ago, and that maintaining the status quo is the better course for the nation," said Phil Trounstone, the director of the Survey and Policy Research Institute at San Jose State University.

"He has to be political but deft. It can't sound like a political speech," said Trounstone, a former communications director for ex-Gov. Gray Davis of California.

"He's got to sound like he is a statesman and the leader of the nation, not a politician and the leader of his party."

The partisan atmosphere of the campaign year may diminish the chances of major action on Bush's initiatives, some of which have languished for years.

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But the administration hopes that last year's approval of sweeping changes in Medicare and the addition of a prescription drug benefit will clear the way for action on Bush's proposal to partially privatize Social Security.

As a candidate, Bush said he would shore up future funding for Social Security by giving workers the option of staying in the current retirement system or investing a portion of their Social Security taxes in individual retirement accounts.

Workers who chose to invest would receive a smaller Social Security benefit when they retire, which would be supplemented by earnings from their investment accounts.

Bush also is considering whether to renew his push for lifetime savings accounts that could be used for any purpose, with tax-free withdrawals, and for retirement savings accounts in which money could not be withdrawn tax-free until the account holder reached a set age.

As originally proposed last year, contributions to the accounts would not be tax-deductible. Yearly contributions would likely be capped at \$7,500.

Bush has already announced two large-scale proposals this month, rather than saving them for the State of the Union address.

On Jan. 7, he asked Congress to grant legal status to millions of undocumented workers in the United States.

A week later, he said he wants to establish a long-term presence on

the moon to serve as a springboard for ventures deeper into the solar system.

Rolling out those big initiatives ahead of the State of the Union garnered Bush several days of public attention, rather than one or two if he had saved them for Tuesday, Trounstone said.

In the State of the Union speech, Bush is likely to forcefully defend the immigration initiative against criticism from conservatives and from liberals alike, one administration official said.

Other officials said they expected Bush to renew his call on Congress to make his tax cuts permanent.

Some of the reductions Bush enacted, such as the estate tax, phase out during this decade but come back in 2011.

One conservative activist who talks to White House officials often said Bush is under pressure to call for a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage.

But Bush is unlikely to wade into such a polarizing issue at the starting gate of an election year, the conservative activist said.

Ken Khachigian, who wrote speeches for Presidents Reagan and Nixon, said Bush needs to defend his policies while "laying out a few new things to spice up the policy agenda so that he's not just sitting back."

"Without stooping to the same shouting you're getting on the Democratic side, give a very presidential response to the criticisms," Khachigian said he would advise Bush.

Solving crimes



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Kansas Bureau of Investigation Special Agent Mark Kendrick showed students in Sue Nielsen's extended learning program at Colby Middle School how fingerprints are lifted from a crime scene during a lesson Thursday afternoon. Nielsen said the students will spend about two weeks learning about forensic science, including everything from fingerprinting to odontology (the study of bite marks). The students will also solve a crime. Nielsen said this is the second year students have studied the unit.

Lawmakers to discuss alcohol in Lawrence

LAWRENCE (AP) — The Lawrence city commission will discuss ways to slow the proliferation of downtown businesses that sell alcohol, saying the growth of drinking establishments is changing the character of the area.

"I think once you get a certain concentration of drinking establishments, an area becomes like Aggie-

ville in Manhattan or Westport in Kansas City," Commissioner Boog Highberger said.

Commissioners will discuss the issue Tuesday. In 1994, the commission tried to limit businesses that sold only alcohol by requiring new drinking establishment licenses downtown to make 55 percent of their income from food sales. But

the requirement didn't apply to the 29 drinking establishments existing at the time.

The food sales rule makes it easy to qualify for drinking establishment licenses. Aside from the "grandfathered" bars, officials say, there are 15 downtown businesses that have drinking licenses — making a total of 44.

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Words cannot express our appreciation for the kindness you expressed to us during Mom's short illness and at the time of her death. We THANK YOU for the donations to the memorial, masses, food, flowers, prayers and the many cards of concern. A special thank you to Father George Kochuvelikkakam and Father Roger Meitl, for the beautiful funeral service, the organist Betty Schieferecke and soloist, Ken Lang for the beautiful music. The Alter Society for the meal they served to our guests after the service and to Rick, Dori and Derek of Pauls Funeral Home for their services and concern. Thank you to Dr. LaDonna Regier and staff of Colby Medical Surgical Center for their care and concern for our Mother. Thank you to the Hospice Staff of Phillipsburg for their expertise, care and concern for all of us. Your generosity overflowed and our hearts were deeply touched by all of you. Mom's life is our legacy, her love was her gift and our memories of her are the comfort we'll keep in our hearts forever. May God Bless Each of You. The Etta Marie Sulzman Family Wayne, Deanna, Carrie & Brian Sulzman Kelvin & Vicky Sulzman Rhonda & Adam Sabatka Loran Sulzman Randy Sulzman Dana, Justin, Bailey & Brittany Foss Stacy, Brian & Ainsley Wolf Kayla & Bruce Weigel

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