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**QUICK FIXES; [City Edition]**

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**Full Text** (380 words)

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CORRECTION: \*\*\* CORRECTION PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 20, 2003 FOLLOWS \*\*\* Tuesday's editorial, "Quick Fixes," erroneously urged President Bush to use "the line-item veto power everyone seems to have forgotten he has." The Supreme Court struck down the law authoriing such power in 1998.

The White House and congressional Republicans are catching some heat for their sudden insouciance regarding deficits, and they should. President Bush's budget holds spending growth to roughly 4 percent while adding needed funds to national defense, but it's still too big. Unfortunately, there is no quick and easy way to trim the budget without doing serious harm to essential programs.

Wait a second - yes, there is. Washington could free up literally hundreds of billions for homeland security, budget-balancing, and tax cuts simply by eliminating farm programs and pork-barrel projects.

Farm subsidies cost the American public twice: once in the form of direct payments to farmers (or, more accurately, farming corporations - rare is the yeoman farmer eking out a life on a few dozen acres who gets any government swag), and again by keeping prices artificially high at the supermarket. They serve no function except to distort the market in order to line the pockets mostly of corn, wheat, cotton, rice, and soybean growers, along with some dairymen in the Northeast. (Smaller sums go to - among others - honey, wool, and mohair producers as well.)

Pork-barrel projects resemble snowflakes. They are insignificant by themselves, but in large numbers can cause serious harm. When the budget comes back to him laden down with picayune additions, President Bush should use the line-item power everyone seems to have forgotten he has and excise such absurdities as the proposed Advanced Traffic Analysis Center at North Dakota State University. According to a spokesman for North Dakota Senator Byron Dorgan, places such as Fargo have "horrendous" traffic problems; Bismark's traffic woes are "significant." Supposedly the center will help address this crisis of biblical proportions.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of such absurd federal outlays drain resources from genuinely essential federal functions. Pork is not directly to blame for terrorist attacks or the Columbia disaster. Nevertheless, it is absurd that intelligence agencies should lack sufficient resources, or that NASA must scrimp and save, so Congressmen can buy votes back home with other people's money.

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People: Bush, George (President)

Section: *Editorial*

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