

February 13, 2004

Bush Acts to Ease the Furor Over Jobs Shipped Abroad

By ELISABETH BUMILLER

HARRISBURG, Pa., Feb. 12 — [President Bush](#) on Thursday sought to quell a ruckus over remarks by one of his top economic advisers, assuring a crowd that he was concerned about the loss of American jobs to other countries, an increasingly potent issue in the 2004 campaign.

"There are people looking for work because jobs have gone overseas," Mr. Bush told a gymnasium full of supporters and students at Central Dauphin High School here. "And we need to act in this country. We need to act to make sure there are more jobs at home, and people are more likely to retain a job."

On Monday, N. Gregory Mankiw, chairman of the president's Council of Economic Advisers, told reporters that "outsourcing" — companies' practice of taking work done by Americans and moving it to low-wage countries abroad — was "probably a plus for the economy in the long run" because it reflected an expansion of free trade benefiting all nations, including the United States. Mr. Mankiw has since recanted, saying in a letter to the top House Republican, Speaker J. Dennis Hastert of Illinois, that "my lack of clarity left the wrong impression that I praised the loss of U.S. jobs."

In an election year when Democrats are regularly attacking Mr. Bush for the loss of millions of jobs during his presidency, Mr. Mankiw's initial remarks have been criticized by members of both parties as insensitive and politically tone-deaf.

Mr. Bush did not mention Mr. Mankiw during his hour-and-a-half visit, his 25th to Pennsylvania, which he lost in the

2000 election and wants to win this year. But here in a state that has lost about 84,000 jobs during his presidency, he pushed his job-training and education programs, and said one solution to jobs' moving overseas was to train Americans for higher-paying work at home.

"It used to be, you know, crank somebody out of high school, and if they could run a backhoe, that's going to be fine," Mr. Bush said. "And there's nothing wrong with backhoe drivers — we're going to need them. But we're also going to need computer programmers, or people working in the health sciences."

Mr. Bush has asked Congress for \$500 million in the next fiscal year for education and job training programs, including \$250 million for partnerships between community colleges and employers and \$120 million to improve math education. He has also asked for \$28 million more to train teachers to teach Advanced Placement courses, which can qualify students for college credit.

[John Kerry](#), who is leading in the Democratic presidential primaries, issued a statement on Thursday with Barbara Hafer, the Pennsylvania state treasurer, a Democrat, describing Mr. Bush's call for more money for job training as "ludicrous" because all that Pennsylvania had seen was "continued devastation and double talk."