

Bush proposes time limits on reception of Pell Grants

The proposal would place an eight-year limit on all grants given to students trying for four-year degrees

By Emily Ayshford
Minnesota Daily (U. Minnesota)

(U-WIRE) MINNEAPOLIS — President George W. Bush proposed Tuesday a time limit that would restrict the number of years students can receive Pell Grants.

The money saved from the time limit would go toward low-income grants for students studying science or mathematics in college, according to the proposal.

The plan proposes an eight-year time limit for Pell Grants for four-year degrees, and a four-year time limit for two-year degrees.

Bush outlined parts of the proposal

at South Arkansas Community College in El Dorado, Ark.

Conditions on the time limit are still unclear.

Larry Bloom, manager of the University of Minnesota's undergraduate services, said that a time limit already exists on Pell Grants. Students can only receive grants up to 150 percent of the time needed for the degree, he said.

For example, students attending school full-time for a four-year degree can receive the grant for six years, and students attending part-time can receive the grant for 12 years.

It is unclear whether the eight-year time limit would apply to full- or part-time students.

"If it just sets a hard and fast eight-year limit, that would be a negative thing," Bloom said.

The maximum Pell Grant amount is currently \$4,050 per year.

The proposed Presidential Math

and Science Scholars Fund would provide \$100 million in grants to low-income students eligible for Pell Grants. Although the program would be separate from the Pell Grant program, students would receive an additional \$5,000 to study math or science.

Bloom said that merit and specific areas of study have not previously played a role in determining who is eligible for grants.

"It has never been there before," he said. "It has always been if you've been admitted to a school, it just looks at you economically."

But any grants are helpful to students, Bloom said.

"Any time any needy student can get more money, that's a good thing," he said.

Emily Ayshford is a reporter for the Minnesota Daily.

Rice: Administration couldn't have prevented 9-11 attacks

National security adviser Condoleezza Rice provided sworn testimony Thursday

By Ron Hutcheson
Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

WASHINGTON — National security adviser Condoleezza Rice acknowledged under intense questioning Thursday that President Bush was told a month before the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks that al-Qaida terrorists seemed to be plotting to hijack airplanes.

But Rice insisted in three hours of testimony before the Sept. 11 commission that the government couldn't have predicted or prevented the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

"The problem is that the United States was effectively blind to what was about to happen," she told the 10-member panel. She refused to concede any mistakes by the Bush administration, standing her ground in the face of combative questioning from the commission and recent criticism from former White House counterterrorism adviser Richard Clarke.

Rice's appearance in the cavernous wood-and-marble hearing room was a moment of high drama, but her sworn

testimony failed to resolve questions about Bush's approach to terrorism before Sept. 11. Clarke told the panel last month that the president and his advisers had failed to confront the threat and all but ignored repeated warnings of a possible attack.

"There was no silver bullet that could have prevented the 9-11 attacks," Rice said.

But previously classified documents and other evidence compiled by the bipartisan commission show that the attacks didn't come as a complete surprise. In a series of tense exchanges, commissioners put Rice on the defensive on some key issues.

She backed away from her previous assertion that no one could have predicted that terrorists would use an airplane as a missile. In fact, various intelligence agencies had produced 12 reports over a seven-year time span suggesting that possibility.

Democrats on the panel grilled Rice about a special CIA briefing for Bush at his Texas ranch on Aug. 6, 2001, focusing on the possibility of an al-Qaida attack.

Although the actual document, known as the President's Daily Briefing, or PDB, remains classified, commissioner Richard Ben-Veniste

pressed Rice to disclose its title: "Bin Laden Determined to Attack Inside the United States."

Another commissioner, former Democratic Sen. Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, revealed that the briefing included FBI reports of "suspicious activity in the United States consistent with preparations for a hijacking."

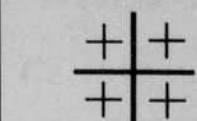
Rice said that she and Bush didn't take additional action as a result of the briefing because the FBI was already investigating possible hijacking operations.

Other commissioners challenged Rice's assertion that FBI agents around the country were put on high alert in the spring and summer before the Sept. 11 attacks because of a dramatic increase in intelligence pointing to a devastating terrorist assault.

"To date, we have found nobody — nobody — at the FBI who knows anything about a tasking of field offices" to escalate anti-terror efforts, former Democratic Rep. Tim Roemer of Indiana told Rice. "Nothing went down the chain to the FBI field offices on spiking of information, on knowledge of al-Qaida in the country."

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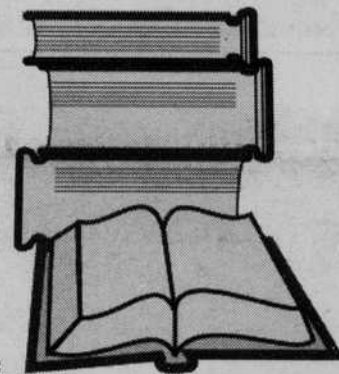
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