

Congressional Budget Cuts Threaten Financial Aid

By Niko Klus
NEWS ANALYST

As a part of the 1996 budget plan, congressional Democrats and Republicans have tentatively agreed to phase out \$100 billion of "excess" spending over the next seven years; 40 percent of which is to come at the expense of education. The main programs to be heavily axed by the Republican budget plans are the federal government's direct lending loan program and Pell Grants.

Direct loans are those administered directly by the federal government to students, thus eliminating all middlemen. They remain at a fixed low interest rate and are paid back upon graduation from college as a monthly percentage of income. Indirect loans, on the other hand, are those lent by banks or private entities and subsidized by the federal government. These loans are given by agencies such as UNC's main lender, College Foundation Inc.

Congress wants to reduce direct loans to include only the 10 percent of the colleges and universities that were included when President Clinton established it in 1993. Many analysts, such as Barmak Nassirian, director of policy analysis for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, claim the G.O.P. is simply trying to protect the special interests of banks, who stand to gain

more than \$8 billion if the government drastically reduces its direct loan* program. Republicans claim the decentralization plan is only for the benefit of reducing bureaucracy.

Yet, as Denver politician Rep. Strickland said, "Plans to cut \$40 billion are just wrong. It is equivalent to unilaterally disarming during the Cold War or walking away from the space race." The government stands to lose very little money by keeping the program.

Pell Grants, another hot topic in Congress, are on the chopping block as well. As much as 40 percent of grant money could be cut from the block grants that help needy college students and their families pay for an education.

Those hit hardest by the proposed cuts will, no doubt, be those whose checkbooks and pockets realize costs for the 1995-1996 school year have risen 6.5 percent. The average tuition at a public university is \$2,280 while a private college's tuition tips the scales at just over \$10,000. Average tuition costs have jumped at four times the rate of inflation, a 38 percent raise since 1989. The cost of a college education has doubled in price since 1980. It is no wonder that 50 percent of college students receive financial aid; 75 percent of which comes from the federal government.

President Clinton, in his State of the Union Address, offered hope for those who feel financially

Jordan, Former Texas Representative, Dies

by Ursula Nakonoko
STAFF WRITER

The first black woman elected to Congress and an advocate for the racial unity and a distinguished political figure, Barbara Jordan, died January 17 at the age of 59.

Loosing a battle with viral pneumonia brought on by health complications with leukemia, Jordan died in her home state of Texas. Jordan also suffered from multiple sclerosis during the last decade of her life.

Daughter of a Baptist minister, Jordan was born February 21, 1936 in Houston, Texas. Her father taught her that if she played by the rules, did the right thing, and had enough good, solid judgment and common sense, that she would be able to do whatever she wanted with her life.

And that's what she did. Graduating from Texas Southern University in 1956, Jordan went on to Boston University and earned a law degree from there in 1959. Jordan's oratorical skills helped advance her political career. In addition to becoming the first black woman to be elected to the U.S. Congress, Jordan was also the first black woman to be elected to the Texas Senate.

She was also appointed by President Carter to serve on his Advisory Board on Ambassadorial Appointments and, after retiring from politics in 1992, she was chosen by President Clinton in 1993 as chairperson of the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform.

Prior to her death, Jordan was a professor at the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas in Austin. She advocated that education expanded and enhanced one's opportunities.

Jordan, who also suffered for years from multiple sclerosis, died at the Austin Diagnostic Medical Center. Jordan was buried January 20 in the Texas National Cemetery alongside other famous Texans, a tribute to her accomplishments.

