

Bush promises area cops more federal help

BY ALICE COLLINS
STAFF WRITER

President George Bush brought his re-election campaign to Oakland County Monday, surrounding himself with law enforcement officers and pledging to provide more federal assistance for their fight.

It also gave him an opportunity to talk about what have become his recurring campaign themes —

family values and the bad messages conveyed to children on TV and in music.

The audience in the Southfield Pavilion was limited to about 300 invited guests, most of them from local, county and state police agencies, prosecutors and judges and the news media.

Former Oakland County prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson, now Republican candidate for county

executive, kicked off the question-and-answer forum by asking the president to comment on his war on drugs.

"No. 1, it's priority," Bush responded, "and not without major progress in the reduction in the amount of cocaine being used by teenagers." Supply countries like Mexico and Colombia are cooperating, "but there are still problems with Peru... We've got to

keep persisting to reduce demand in this country." The war's still going, he said, and if Congress would pass his crime bill package, it would help.

Bush sat on a stool surrounded by his up-close audience that had been waiting for more than an hour. His stop in Southfield preceded a GOP dinner in Detroit.

He called the forum "non-political" but he came and left with

Gov. John Engler at his side while few high-level Democrats were present in the audience.

"This is a strange political year in which anything you say is interpreted for political gain," said the president, "but I feel very, very strongly for backing police officers."

In most instances the questions were friendly and his responses welcomed.

Farmington Hills police Lt. Martin Bledsoe asked the president to please stand up for police in view of the "heavy police bashing" throughout the country resulting from the Rodney King incident and the Los Angeles riot.

Bush said he sympathized with the police view that bashing had been carried to excess. "When there's (police) brutality you've got to correct it right now... but I hope nobody in our administration is over reacting to (Los Angeles)."

West Bloomfield police Chief Ron Cronin asked Bush for federal help in limiting a community's liability for accidents and injuries not occur during police chases. "Lawsuits are costing millions of dollars," Cronin said, "and the state legislature hasn't been able to do anything to help."

"If I had my way, yes," the president responded. "This officer is so correct, the American people want this done." Bush blamed the trial lawyers lobby in blocking such legislation. "They're tough," he said.

Southfield resident Gerald Battle put his hand up several times but was not picked to ask a question. He said he wasn't unhappy with Bush's responses, but that his question would have been more specific.

"I would have asked him to be more specific on economic and education programs as they relate to inner cities, especially regarding young African-American and Hispanic males who are both the victims and the perpetrators of crime."

Wixom resident Levada Austin-Glessey, a chapter leader of Victims of Murdered Children, wasn't satisfied with Bush's answer to her question. "What's the administration doing for survivors of homicide victims?"

Bush noted that there was something for victims of crimes in his proposed crime bill package.

"I would like to see some action, all I'm seeing now are words," Austin-Glessey said in an interview after the program. She would like to see counseling for homicide victim survivors like that available for rape victims, she said.

Southfield police Chief Joseph Thomas, who had a seat of honor up front along with the governor, Patterson and current Oakland County prosecutor Richard Thompson, concluded the program by presenting the president with a plaque making him an honorary member of the Southfield Police Department.



JERRY ZULYANSKI/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Helping hand: President Bush pledged to support the efforts of law enforcement. In return he asked members of the law enforcement community to help re-elect him.

Presidential visit prompts hard work, \$18,000 in costs

BY ALICE COLLINS
STAFF WRITER

What does it cost to host the president of the United States for 35 minutes?

Roughly \$18,000 "and a lot of hard work for a very short period of time," said Southfield city Administrator Robert Block.

But despite some confusion, the city expects the Bush/Quayle Re-election Campaign Committee and/or "some other Republican Party organization" to pay for most of it.

While controversy surrounds who will pay what the city considers the U.S. Secret Service's share, bills totalling \$11,050 have been passed on — \$5,613 to the Bush/Quayle committee for facilities and additional manpower and \$5,437 to the Secret Service in care of the Bush/Quayle campaign for police overtime and other security.

Southfield will pay roughly \$7,200 "for things we would normally have done in the course of the year, but not right away," DeMaagd said.

Southfield received a letter Tuesday from the Secret Service "saying it's not the proper agency to be billed on it (security)."

"We don't know at this point who's going to pay that \$5,437," he said, "but we're still expecting it to be paid by the Bush/Quayle campaign or other Republican Party organization."

Bush's visit triggered a frenzy of around-the-clock preparations and work during the brief stopover.

Southfield manpower costs totaled \$4,281 in overtime for police; \$497 for Southfield paramedics; \$358 for public safety dispatch; and \$301 for public safety communications.

A Southfield Fire Department life support unit accompanied President Bush throughout his stay in the Detroit area.

Because it is beneath the pavilion where the president was to appear, the parking garage was kept empty.

The lower level of the Southfield Public Library, which is next to the garage, was closed from 4-6 p.m. for security reasons.



DAN DEAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Presidential perch: Adam Novak, 7, above, sits on his dad Ed Novak's shoulders to get a better look at President George Bush's limousine as it arrives Monday at the Southfield Pavilion. Right: Southfield police and secret service agents covered the Southfield Pavilion high and low for the visit.



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