

# On the List: Survivors and Newcomers

## At Agencies Stated for Termination, Officials Remain Hopeful but Mindful of Pressure

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Some have dodged the bullet for more than a decade. Others have been killed before, only to rise like Lazarus and walk again. Still others are brand new on the death list.

The House Budget Committee yesterday listed 372 federal Cabinet departments, agencies, programs, boards, commissions and authorities that it would like to see abolished, block-granted, compressed or privatized in the interest of achieving a balanced budget.

Some of these are old friends—really old friends. The Interstate Commerce Commission, founded in 1887 to regulate surface transportation, has been on death row since the Reagan administration, but survived. Now the Budget Committee under Chairman John R. Kasich (R-Ohio) will have its chance to kill it.

Some slated for oblivion are newer, and conjure up warm memories. The Christa McAuliffe Fellowships honor the schoolteacher who died aboard the space shuttle Challenger in 1986. The program, funded for \$2 million annually, grants stipends for teacher sabbaticals and innovative classroom programs.

Some are well-known, not only in the United States but all over the

world. The Voice of America, begun in 1942, broadcasts in 47 languages to some of the most oppressed people on Earth, bringing hourly news and explaining the United States in such programs as "Talk to America," "Music USA," "Press Conference USA" and "Americana." The House budget proposes to eliminate it.

Some are a mystery to almost everyone but specialists. The Administrative Conference of the United States, which recommends reforms in administrative law, is 30 years old, costs \$1.8 million per year, and died twice in the House in the last two years, only to be resurrected by the Senate each time.

"We've been marked for death before, and I would really like to say we will make it again," said Connie Harshaw, acting director of the conference. "But with everybody under the microscope, I don't know."

Some are ideological. Reagan administration budget director David A. Stockman wanted to cut federal aid to education in half—only a year after the Education Department was founded in 1980. Now the entire department and 130 of its programs are on the block, a testament to the endurance of the conservative wish list.

Some are even bipartisan. The Clinton administration last year sent Congress legislation to "privatize"

four electric power marketing agencies and sell off part of the government's oil reserves. All of this appeared on yesterday's House list.

The Kasich plan also hopes to kill the helium reserve program, cut the Defense Department procurement work force, end the Government Printing Office's monopoly and halt aid to many U.S. Pacific islands. The Clinton administration has tried these before, either separately or as part of Vice President Gore's "reinventing government" initiative.

Even Republican favorites take a hit. The Points of Light Foundation, a George Bush initiative, could lose half its \$10.5 million budget if federal funding disappears. "Anyone who takes federal funding has to be prepared for that," said Barbara Lohman, the private foundation's communications director. "We're making plans as if the money won't be there."

"We'll be making the case to Congress," she said, arguing that "we should be encouraging volunteerism, not trying to figure out how to cut it." But if Congress doesn't agree, she said, "we think people will come in and pick up the slack."

Others who look for help, however, will need more than a few million. The Corporation for National Service, at \$781 million per year, puts young people to work in a variety of

community and volunteer programs. Many of them are President Clinton's creations, but deep inside the corporation is VISTA, the 1960s granddaddy of job training for low-income people.

"It's death," said Rick Allen, chief external affairs officer for the Corporation for National Service. "It isn't a haircut; it's decapitation." Allen blamed the Republican Congress for going after Clinton—"politics as usual," he called it. A remedy? "We think that public support will ultimately prevail over the politics of the Capitol," he said.

Still others exude confidence. The \$282 million-per-year Appalachian Regional Commission, which aids poor regions in 13 Appalachian states from New York to Alabama, has been on the block before and was not impressed yesterday—an easy attitude when eight of your governors are Republicans.

The proposal obviously is "a serious threat to our existence," said congressional liaison Guy Land. "Were it not for the strong support from the GOP governors, I would be more worried. We enjoy bipartisan support."

And others are simply wondering why they made the list at all. The Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corp., created in 1972 to restore the

## DEPARTMENTS AT RISK

### ENERGY



Manages nuclear weapons stockpile, coordinates efforts to curb nuclear weapons proliferation, oversees the environmental cleanup at weapons facilities and manages programs aimed at developing domestic energy supplies.

Energy operates on a \$17.5 billion budget and employs about 20,500 federal workers and 132,500 contract workers. The department recently announced cost-saving initiatives to substantially reduce its budget and work force over the next five years.

### EDUCATION



Manages 240 programs that cover virtually every aspect of schooling, sends billions of dollars in grants to local school systems, regulates college student loans and tracks national education statistics.

The department's budget this year is \$32 billion. It has about 5,100 employees, down from 7,500 when it opened 15 years ago. Earlier this year, department leaders proposed cutting \$727 million from their budget and abolishing 68 programs.

### COMMERCE



Established in 1913, Commerce employs 36,000 workers, including 20,069 in the Washington area. Its fiscal 1995 budget is \$4.214 billion, and President Clinton's fiscal 1996 budget request for the department is \$4.686 billion.

Commerce agencies include: the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the National Telecommunications Information Administration, the Patent and Trademark Office, the National Technical Information Service, the International Trade Administration, the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration, the Bureau of Export Administration, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Economic Development Administration, the Minority Business Development Agency, the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

21 blocks of Pennsylvania Avenue between the Capitol and the White House, was given 25 years to finish the job. They've got \$6.8 million for 1996, then the clock runs out.

"We always understood we would complete our mission, and eventually

close our doors," said director of corporate affairs Anne Hartzell.

No hard feelings.

*Staff writers Laurie Goodstein, Rene Sanchez, Kathy Sawyer, Al Kamen and Stephen Barr contributed to this report.*