

**U.S. Senate Republican Policy Committee**  
**Larry E. Craig, Chairman    Jade West, Staff Director**

January 25, 2001

**I Know Gale Norton — And She's No Bruce  
Babbitt**

*The following are recent quotes on President-elect Bush's nomination of Gale Norton for the office of Secretary of Interior.*

“ ‘These are extremely qualified individuals who would be a great addition to the Executive Branch. This coalition of organizations and individuals will make our voice heard on Capitol Hill and will defend these men and women against malicious attacks by the left.

“ ‘Liberal groups such as People for the American Way and the National Abortion Rights Action League have launched vicious personal attacks against Senator John Ashcroft and Gale Norton. Americans for the Bush Cabinet will counter those claims by presenting the truth about these nominees and will work to rally the support among the American people that these individuals deserve.’ ”

*(David A. Keene, Chairman of the American Conservative Union, U.S. Newswire, 1/10/01)*

“ ‘She will bring a balanced approach ... to multiple use management of federal public lands,’ said Laura Skaer, executive director of the Northwest Mining Association, a trade group based in Spokane, Wash.

“ ‘... Norton over the years has been a frequent and outspoken supporter of more local, state and private involvement in crafting the nation's environmental programs.

“ ‘She believes the laws of the United States apply to departments of the federal government as well,’ said former Sen. Malcolm Wallop, a Wyoming Republican who now heads Frontiers of Freedom, a conservative advocacy group heavily involved in Western land issues.”

*(H. Josef Herbert, AP Online, 1/9/01)*

“It is a lesson in hypocrisy to hear Democrats questioning whether attorney general nominee John Ashcroft, labor secretary nominee Linda Chavez and interior secretary nominee Gale Norton will uphold and enforce the laws of the land, regardless of their political views of those laws.

“This, coming from a party that has for eight years demonstrated a willingness to wink at perjury in the chief executive, for example, or a vice president whose wonkish memory went blank on three different occasions when questioned under oath about Buddhist campaign fund raisers.  
{ ... }

“Questions about Ashcroft, Chavez and Norton are not about their integrity or intellect, for no one would dare question these people on that score. Rather the questions emanate from the politics of the left, from a deeply partisan desire to destroy the political viability of candidates whose philosophies they oppose.

“So, Democrats have been parsing the nominees’ records, not for an evaluation of intellectual discernment and administrative ability, but rather to discover a single act or statement that can be used to defeat them and can be made into a rhyming couplet for Jesse’s lemmings.”

*(The Atlanta Journal and Constitution, Editorial, 1/9/01)*

“And, from every account, she is brilliant — one who, in the words of Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Paul Gigot of the *Wall Street Journal*, ‘understands the environmental politics of the West.

“Even environmental groups in Colorado describe her as fair, open, and intelligent, and as one who was ‘always willing to discuss things with us.’ ”

*(Anchorage Daily News, 1/9/01)*

“She must be some kind of a criminal because, as we continue to desperately beg for oil from OPEC, she wants to drill in Alaska – something Alaskan politicians want.

“Sure, it might displace a few polar bears, but if we don’t go along with her ideas, it won’t be the polar bears freezing. It will be babies in The Bronx whose parents can’t afford the rocketing home-heating costs.

“Bill Clinton, when forming his administration, promised that those under him ‘would look more like America.’

“Well, it seems to me Dubya is doing better at it – and the Democrats are hating every bit of it.”

*(Steve Dunleavy, The New York Post, 1/8/01)*

“ ... Yet with U.S. Attorney Henry Solano, a Democrat, she established a federal-state environmental-crimes unit to more forcefully tackle violators. Even-handed and a consensus-builder are terms used to describe Norton.”

*(The Des Moines Register, Register Editorial Writer, 1/9/01)*

“ ‘The environmental community has always looked for boogeymen to help them raise money,’ said Jeanne Adkins, a former campaign manager for Norton. ‘She certainly has her philosophical beliefs, but she’s also one of the most pragmatic people I know. She never, ever jumps to irrational conclusions. And she’s not going to do any opening of lands to drilling or mining until she has a sign that it’s an appropriate area to go into.’ { ... }

“ ‘She’d never dream of selling off national parkland,’ said [Denver lawyer Connie] Brookes [a longtime friend who worked with Norton at the Mountain States Legal Foundation, the Denver-based property-rights legal clinic founded by James Watt]. ‘What you might see is a reluctance to ask for a federal order to take away someone’s farm for a bird sanctuary. Instead, Gale would support an easement. This will not be a slash-and-burn secretary of interior.’ “

*(Patrick May, Mercury News, 1/17/01)*

RPC Staff Contact: Lauren DeBellis - 4-2429